



Summer Reading, 8th grade, 2009

Dear students entering 8th grade,

For your summer reading, please read Ernest J. Gaines's novel *A Lesson Before Dying* and Sandra Dallas's *Tallgrass*. We recommend you read beyond these, too, as reading broadly for pleasure is one of the traits that unites people who succeed academically as well as serving as an inexpensive window onto multiple worlds.

Part one of your assignment is to keep a journal of evidence. Please use the attached document as your template. It is recommended that you create these charts *as you are reading*. Upon completion of each novel, return to edit and revise the chart.

Part two of your assignment is to write two analytical paragraphs after completing the four charts. After completing 1A and 1B, ask yourself what conclusion you can draw about change in the novel. Does Jefferson, Grant, or the community grow in any significant fashion? The answer to this question will form the topic sentence for your analytical paragraph on *A Lesson Before Dying*. After completing 1C and 1D, ask yourself what conclusion you can draw about change in Dallas's novel. Does Rennie, her parents, Daisy, or the community of Ellis grow in any significant fashion? The answer to this question will form the topic sentence for your analytical paragraph on *Tallgrass*.

Please use Crossroads College Prep's *Handbook of Research and Writing* as a guide to completing these assignments. If you do not know the formal rules of writing an analytical paragraph, page 11 of the Handbook has a checklist for a body paragraph that you may follow. Each piece is explained in the pages that follow. The paragraph must be typed and follow MLA guidelines (page 20), use quotations from the text as evidence, have correct citations, and have a Work Cited entry at the end (page 23). The paragraphs should be proofread and perfectly edited.

Your charts will each receive a grade as will each of your analytical paragraphs. They are due on the first day of school in August. Additionally, students entering our 8th grade need to have learned the Latin bases in Lessons 1-4 in *Everyday Words from Classic Origins* as well as a few vocabulary words for each base. The book is available from Lisa Straub in the front office (367-8085 X 203). Every student needs one.

Enjoy your reading!

Bobby Bloch and Sarah Pierson Wolff

*This letter is also available on the Crossroads College Prep website or at
<http://sites.crossroadscollegeprep.org/summerreading/>*

Part 1A – **BIAS** in *A Lesson Before Dying*

List moments in *A Lesson Before Dying* that are evidence of bias. Initially, please list all evidence that you encounter. Find at least 20 examples; return to your list later to cut it back to the BEST ten examples of bias; they should represent different types of bias as well as different characters' feelings.

Quotation	Page	Bias against what?
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Part 1B – **Growth** in *A Lesson Before Dying*

List moments in *A Lesson Before Dying* that are evidence of growth. Initially, please list all evidence that you encounter. Find at least 20 examples; return to your list to cut it back to the BEST; they should represent different types of growth as well as different characters' feelings.

Quotation	Page	What type of growth?
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Part 1C – **BIAS** in *Tallgrass*

List moments in *Tallgrass* that are evidence of bias. Initially, please list all evidence that you encounter. Find at least 20 examples; then return to your list and cut it back to the BEST ten examples of bias; they should represent different types of bias as well as different characters' feelings.

Quotation	Page	Bias against what?
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Part 1D – **Growth** in *Tallgrass*

List moments in *Tallgrass* that are evidence of growth. Initially, please list all evidence that you encounter. Find at least 20 examples; then return to your list and cut it back to the BEST ten; they should represent different types of growth as well as different characters' feelings.

Quotation	Page	What type of growth?
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