

World Literature II Summer Reading Assignment 2010

Dear 10th graders:

May 2010

World Literature II continues the study of great works of world literature that you have already begun this year. One of the themes we discuss all year is what motivates humans to behave as they do and thus what kind of government best suits them. To this end, I am asking you to think about these questions as you read this summer. I am asking you to read **four books this summer**: one is your choice, then you must choose one of three, and two are required.

In June: read whatever book you want (hint: choose a happy one because the rest are sort of mind shaking) and email me one of the following **by July 15**:

A letter of recommendation telling me why you think we should admit the main person in your book to Crossroads;

A book review by a little known but soon to become famous critic (*id est*: YOU);

OR A deleted scene from the novel that you write yourself (this one only works with a work of fiction)

In July: Please read one of the following three novels:

Lord of the Flies by William Golding- (1954) British novel set during World War II

Player Piano by Kurt Vonnegut- (1952) American novel set in "the near future"

Watchmen by Alan Moore- (1986-7) British graphic novel set in the 1980s (read the novel—watching the movie instead will make it impossible for you to do the assignment in August)

WARNING: All of these books are disturbing because they are about some of the terrible things human beings do to one another. I have listed them from least to most upsetting. You choose your own level. YOU WILL CREATE AN ASSIGNMENT IN AUGUST WITH A GROUP BASED ON THE NOVEL YOU CHOOSE.

In August: read

***Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury**

***Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley**

The following homework assignment is **due on the first day of school**. No creative excuses will be accepted. If your dog eats it, please bring in your dog.

This assignment will be used as the notes to prepare **for the essay that you will be writing on these two novels** after we discuss them during the first two weeks of school.

For those who feel you want to read more, here is a list of other British works you are encouraged to explore:

Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte

One of the most passionate stories of the power of possessive and demanding love, the story is set in a landscape that is as wild and powerful as the hero and heroine.

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte

Charlotte Bronte tells the suspense-filled story of a poor governess in a house of deep, dark secrets. As Jane comes to understand herself, she also learns about the secret lives of those around her.

Moonstone by Wilkie Collins

Collins was one of the first mystery writers to use a detective to solve the case, a crime involving the theft of a diamond that once adorned a Hindu idol. One of the best mysteries ever written, it contains rich language and plot. (Walt Whitman High School)

Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens

This is the famous story of the orphaned boy who roams the streets of London with a gang of pickpockets before he discovers his true place in life.

The Mayor of Casterbridge by Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy is a master at exploring the minds of characters who have made a mistake. When the mistake of his youth comes back to haunt him, the mayor has to deal with the consequences.

Dracula by Bram Stoker

When Bram Stoker's *Dracula* appeared in 1897, the most astute praise came from the author's mother, who wrote to her son: "It is splendid. No book since Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein* or indeed any other at all has come near yours in originality, or terror." (Walt Whitman High School's notes)

Have a great summer and enjoy your reading!

About your SUMMER ASSIGNMENT...

A utopia is a Latin term meaning “no-place.” It was an imaginary island created by Thomas More in his book *Utopia*. It describes a place that seems to be socially or politically perfect. A dystopia is its opposite.

All of the novels you are going to read describe worlds that initially appear to be perfect. We will be examining the aspects that make these societies perfect and imperfect and talk about the aspects of human nature that make them this way.

Note: The title *Brave New World* comes from a famous line in William Shakespeare’s play *The Tempest*, a play which John, a major character in the novel, has read. Huxley makes several **allusions** to *The Tempest*, a play of love and magic and spiritual regeneration. But the most important piece you need to understand is that Miranda, the heroine, lives on an isolated island, and she has never seen any humans besides her father. In the beginning of the play, a crew of noblemen and sailors is deliberately shipwrecked there by her father, Prospero, who has magical powers. When she finally sees these human beings, Miranda cries out, “O brave new world, / That has such people in it!”

Huxley uses this comment and several other speeches from the play to explore his *Brave New World*. As you read the novel, think about John’s comment on the brave new world to which he has come.

1. In addition to reading, please complete the following notes as you read.

Whenever you begin a work of literature, you immediately begin to think about the characters:

Who is this person?	(description)
What is he/she like?	(character)
What does he/ she really want?	(motivation)
What does he/she do or say that seems truly important?	(behavior and beliefs)

For the following characters:

Fahrenheit: Guy, Beatty, and Clarisse

BNW: Bernard, John, and Lenina

you should locate **at least**:

one quotation describing his or her physical appearance
two quotations showing distinguishing features of his or her personality
two quotations showing motivation (for this you may need to make inferences)
an action that you feel is indicative of the nature of his or her character
(do not forget page numbers for each quotation!)

Please use the following chart, or type your answers into the one on the website, or you can take notes as you read.

This assignment will be collected on the first day of school, and you will use it as the basic notes for our discussion and your essay.

2. Please answer the following five questions—one set for each of the two required novels. You may type or write them on a separate sheet of paper.

- 1) What are the government’s goals? What do they say they are doing to make people happy?
- 2) What symbols do you believe the author is using? What do they seem to represent?
- 3) What are some of the aspects of this society that you find disturbing? What have people given up to gain their “perfect world”?
- 4) What does each author seem to be saying about human nature?
- 5) What aspects of his society do you think each author is critiquing?

Additionally, students entering 10th grade need to have learned the Latin bases in Lessons 1-15 in *Everyday Words from Classic Origins* as well as a couple of vocabulary words for each base. The book is available from Lisa Straub in the front office (367-8085 X 203). Every student needs one.

If you lose this sheet, you can find the assignment on the website (www.crossroadscollegeprep.org) or call me (Anne) at home (721-4521) or at school (367-8085). Please contact me if you have any questions.