

American Literature
Summer Reading Project
2018-2019 School Year

This Summer Reading project will constitute as your first major grade for American Literature. Those that turn this project in by August 10th will receive extra credit added to their grade. Otherwise, this project is due (for standard credit) by August 30, 2018.

Directions:

1. You will read two books: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston and *Dreams from My Father* by Barak Obama.
2. Take a look at the list of projects provided. You must do FOUR (4) of them (two for each novel), and ONE writing assignment.
3. Choose your projects according to your strengths. There's something for everyone. Projects that don't address all the directions will earn a sub-par grade.
4. Likewise, make sure your writing assignments answer the prompt entirely. Make sure you have addressed what the prompt asks you to address. Fully. Entirely. When in doubt, write more, but not for the sake of writing. Make it substantive. Words on a page that fulfill a length requirement but have no substance will earn a sub-par grade. Conversely, writing assignments that fall short of the length requirement will not fare well, either.
5. Good Readers use annotations! You are strongly encouraged to use the annotation guide provided in this packet as you read each novel.

Writing Prompts for American Literature Final Project

You must do one writing assignment AND two creative projects.

Choose one of the following prompts and compose a three page essay (must include a full introduction, body(ies), and a fully developed conclusion) based on one of the books that you read. You need a thesis statement and supporting evidence. Your paper should be well-organized. All papers will be typed in 12 point Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins and double spaced. The final paper should adhere to MLA formatting guidelines. Include citations and textual evidence.

(see <http://owl.english.perdue.edu> for MLA Citation help)

Choose ONE Writing Prompt from below and complete one Full 3-page Essay

1. One of the most revealing types of conflict occurs when a character's inner struggles are resolved at great personal price. Often, the character learns a lesson, but too late to help himself or another character. Explain how, in the work that you read, a character struggles but fails to learn a lesson in time, and thus, serves as an example for the reader. In your essay, focus on the conflict within the character. Be sure to include the price paid as part of the resolution and the lesson to be learned.
2. Often in literary works, authors choose a physical object which takes on a special significance in the work and becomes a symbol of something beyond itself. Show how, in the work that you read, the author uses a symbol to convey an important meaning. In your essay, focus on the symbol and what it symbolizes. Be sure to discuss how the author uses it to convey a message to readers. You may choose three important symbols from the novel, or you may choose to elaborate on one symbol in all three body paragraphs.
3. Authors often use descriptive details to develop a setting for several purposes. In an essay, explain how the setting of your book related to events from the plot, related to characters, or built suspense. You may write one body paragraph about each aspect of setting, or you may choose to elaborate on one particular aspect (plot, character, suspense) in all three body paragraphs.
4. What is the theme of the novel? In your introduction, state the theme of the novel. In your thesis, explain how the theme is developed. In your body paragraphs, give specific examples of scenes from the novel in which the author developed the theme.
5. Discuss the author's use of figurative language. Identify three examples of figurative language from the novel. Why did the author use these examples? What impact does the figurative language have on characterization, description of setting, mood, foreshadowing, theme, or the novel overall? In your essay, use a different example in each body paragraph. Be sure to explain the significance of each use of figurative language.

Creative projects

In addition to choosing one of the writing prompts above, you must pick and complete two of the projects below on each of your novels. Do not use the same project twice. In total, you will turn in four (4) different projects; two (2) for each novel. Your Project should show that you are knowledgeable about your book and that you have read and thought deeply about the book. Be creative; take pride in your work.

1. Create a life-sized model of your favorite character and dress him/her as he/she would be dressed in the book. Write a paragraph explaining the character's role in the novel. Use literary terms.
2. Create a sculpture of character. Use any medium you choose – soap, clay, sticks, wire, stone. Etc. Describe how the character is important to the plot.
3. Write a diary that one of the story's main characters might have kept before, during, and after the book's events. Remember a character's thoughts and feelings are very important in a diary. Minimum of ten entries.
4. Dramatize (act out) a scene from the book and tell why it was an important scene to the plot of the story. You can either do this live or use a video recording. A script must accompany you project.
5. Build a miniature stage setting of a scene in the book. Be prepared to explain why the setting is important to the events in the book.
6. Make sketches of various scenes from your book. Explain why the scenes are important. Minimum of four.
7. Write/Produce a movie trailer for your book. For this project, you may only use books that have not already been made into movies.
8. Dress as a character from your book and act out an important scene. Tell why the scene is important to the novel.
9. Construct a diorama of an important scene from your novel.
10. Write a letter to the main character of your book asking questions, protesting a situation, and/or making a complaint or suggestion.
11. Create a timeline for the events in your novel.
12. Create a mini-comic book that reflects the plot of the story.
13. Create and perform a puppet show of your novel.
15. Design a CD soundtrack for your novel. Create a jacket for the CD and be prepared to tell why you selected each song. Minimum of ten songs. Must be PG-13
16. Create a painting of a scene from the story. Explain the importance of the scene.
17. Create a board game complete with questions that demonstrate your knowledge of the novel. You must have rules for the game, including how to play and how a person wins.

19. Use a cereal box to tell about your book. Cover your box with paper. Write a new title; place that on the front of the box. Place a short explanation of the plot of the book on the back. Add catchy phrases about the book all over to get people to want to read the book. Include pictures of the characters and the author's name.

20. Take photographs to represent someone in your story and the changes that the character experiences. For example, if a character is sad all of the time at the beginning of the book you could take a picture of something blue as a symbol to represent being sad. If an event changes the character to make him happy, you might want to take a picture of something that makes you think of happiness. Paste your pictures in a scrapbook.

23. Create a pretend Facebook, Instagram or other social media page for your main character. Who are they "friends" with? What does their profile look like? Create 10 posts from the character and at least three responses from friends. Simple "Likes" do not count as posts/responses.

25. Create a website for your book. Your Website should have a minimum of four pages and information about the page on each. You need to incorporate your knowledge of the novel in this project and convey that in a reasonable fashion.

27. Create a Power Point or Prezi presentation of your novel.

28. Create a plot mobile. Include pertinent information such as characters, setting, conflict, climax, and resolution.

29. Make the main character the "Tiger of the Day." Explain how your character displays trust, integrity, growth, effort, and respect.

30. Create a blog for one of the characters who is not the main character. You must have at least five blog entries.

32. Create a travel brochure for your book. Focus on a particular setting and explain through pictures and text why we would want to visit. Make it neat and professional looking.

33. Create a story board that summarizes the major themes in your novel. You must create at least four storyboards.

34. Create a poster that artistically depicts at least four literary terms that are present in one of your novels. For each literary term, you need to define the term, provide the quote you're using and depict the term visually.

HOW TO ANNOTATE A TEXT

1. At the top of the page or on a post-it, mark the important plot events. Every page will not necessarily be marked.
2. Be sure to figure out any unfamiliar words through context or by using a dictionary. You can write the definitions right in the text for yourself.
3. Highlight and mark for yourself any conflicts that occur with the main character (protagonist). Note your ideas about these conflicts in the text (who / what is involved, attempts to resolve conflicts, etc).
4. Highlight and mark for yourself words and phrases that help describe the personality of characters. Note your ideas about the characters right in the text (personality, motivation, fears / dreams, etc).
5. Highlight and mark for yourself any symbolism and note your ideas in the text as to what abstract ideas or concepts these tangible objects may represent.
6. Don't mark too much. If you mark everything, nothing will stand out.
7. Once you are completely finished the book and annotating, pick the three most important thematic statements from the following list that your book addresses. Write those themes on an inside cover or any blank pages of your book AND find supporting evidence from the text to support your ideas. Mark those supporting passages with post-its.
 - a. A just individual has obligations toward society.
 - b. A just society has obligations it owes to an individual.
 - c. Individual freedom is limited by . . .
 - d. An individual can develop methods for judging right and wrong.
 - e. . . . kind of government is effective.
 - f. Society must contend with the dichotomies presented by freedom and equality.
 - g. An individual can experience redemption through . . .
 - l. The accumulation of money and power leads to a loss of spirituality.

Annotation is a key component of close reading. Since we will annotate texts all year, you need to develop a system that works for you (within the following guidelines). Effective annotating is both economical and consistent. The techniques are almost limitless. Use any **combination** of the following:

- ✓ Make brief comments in the margins. Use any white space available – inside cover, random blank pages, etc.
- ✓ Make brief comments between or within lines of the text. Do not be afraid to mark within the text itself. In fact, you must.
- ✓ Circle or put boxes, triangles, or clouds around words or phrases.
- ✓ Use abbreviations or symbols – brackets, stars, exclamation points, question marks, numbers, etc.
- ✓ Connect words, phrases, ideas, circles, boxes, etc. with lines or arrows.
- ✓ Underline – CAUTION : Use this method sparingly. Underline only a few words. **Always combine** with another method such as comment. Never underline an entire passage. Doing so takes too much time and loses effectiveness. If you wish to mark an entire paragraph or passage, draw a line down the margin or use brackets.
- ✓ Highlight – use CAUTION – don't highlight everything!
- ✓ Create your own code.
- ✓ Use post-it notes ONLY if you have exhausted all available space (unlikely).

Close Reading. What should you annotate? Again, the possibilities are limitless. Keep in mind the reasons we annotate. Your annotations **must** include comments. I want to see evidence of thinking.

- . Have a conversation with the text. Talk back to it.
- . **Ask questions** (essential to active reading).
- . Comment on the actions or development of a character. Does the character change? Why? How? The result?
- . Comment on lines / quotations you think are especially significant, powerful, or meaningful.
- . Express agreement or disagreement.
- . Summarize key events. Make predictions.
- . Connect ideas to each other or to other texts.
- . Note if you experience an epiphany.
- . Note anything you would like to discuss or do not understand.
- . Note how the author uses language. Note the significance if you can:

- ☆ effects of word choice (diction) or sentence structure or type (syntax)
- ☆ point of view / effect
- ☆ repetition of words, phrases, actions, events, patterns
- ☆ narrative pace / time / order of sequence of events
- ☆ irony
- ☆ contrasts / contradictions / juxtapositions / shifts
- ☆ allusions
- ☆ any other figure of speech or literary device
- ☆ reliability of narrator
- ☆ motifs or cluster ideas
- ☆ tone / mood
- ☆ imagery
- ☆ themes
- ☆ setting / historical period
- ☆ symbols

The most common complaint about annotating is that it slows down your reading. Yes, it does. That's the point. If annotating as you read annoys you, read a chapter, then go back and annotate. Reading a text a second time is preferable anyway.

Approach the works with an open mind. Let them inspire you and stretch your imagination. If you have questions before school starts, feel free to email me.

USING ANNOTATIONS TO ENHANCE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF A TEXT

If you have the habit of asking a book questions as you read, you are a better reader than if you do not. But . . . merely asking questions is not enough. You have to try to answer them. *And, although that could be done, theoretically, in your mind only, it is easier to do it with a pencil in your hand.* The pencil then becomes the sign of your alertness while you read.

When you buy a book, you establish a property right in it, just as you do in clothes or furniture when you buy and pay for them. But the act of purchase is actually only the prelude to possession in the case of a book. Full ownership of a book only comes when you have made it a part of yourself, and the best way to make yourself a part of it – which comes to the same thing – is by writing in it. Why is marking a book indispensable to reading it?

- First, it keeps you awake – not merely conscious, but wide awake.
- Second, reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The person who says he knows what he thinks but cannot express it usually does not know what he thinks.
- Third, writing your reactions down helps you to remember the thoughts of the author.

For this class, and for these reasons among others, you will be asked to annotate the novel selected for your outside reading. Feel free to purchase your own copy to annotate as you read. If you are using a borrowed copy, however, you will need to use post-it notes placed at the spot where you are commenting. Your copies of the novels will be collected and graded at the end of each novel unit.

NOTE: The outside reading assignment must be read *and* annotated before class begins. It is perfectly okay to add to your markings (in fact I encourage you to do so) after you finish the book and are working on an essay, but the bulk of the job should be done in conjunction with your reading for class preparations.

NOTE: If you find annotating while you read to be annoying and awkward, do it after you read. Go back after a chapter or assignment and then mark it carefully. You should be reading assignments twice anyway, so this isn't any less efficient than marking as you read and then rereading the material.

For the sake of standardization of annotating for class and for grading purposes, your book notes should follow this format:

Inside Front Cover Character list with small space for character summary and for page references for key scenes, moments of character development, etc.

Inside Back Cover Themes, allusions, images, motifs, key scenes, plot line, epiphanies, etc. List and add page references and / or notes as you read.

Bottom and Side Page Margins Interpretive notes, questions, and / or remarks that refer to meaning of the page. Markings or notes to tie in with information on the inside back cover.

Top Margins Plot notes – a quick few words or phrases that summarize what happens here (useful for quick location of passages in discussion and for writing assignments).

Additional Markings: underlining – done while or after reading to help locate passages for discussion, essays, or questions
brackets – done while or after reading to highlight key speeches, descriptions, etc, that are too long to underline easily.

Chapter Summaries / Titles. At the end of each chapter, write a brief summary of the plot as it occurred in that chapter. This does not have to be long or greatly detailed, but should include all relevant incidents. Use plot-related language (TP, CF, CX, RA, etc.) whenever possible in your summary. Supply an instructive title for each chapter of the book. This may prove useful for books in which chapters are already titled. This practice will help you solidify your understanding of a chapter in just a few of your own words.

Underlining. Within the text of the book, underline or otherwise note anything that strikes you as important, significant, memorable, etc. If possible and profitable, write brief comments within the side margins that indicate your motivation in underlining. Focus on the essential elements of literature (plot, setting, characterization, point of view and theme) and any other aspects of literature study as instructed by your teacher. You need not underline every word. Often, I underline isolated words and phrases. Occasionally, I connect such underlinings with a line, in essence creating a new sentence, a distillation of ideas or meaning.

Vertical Bars. Use vertical bars and double vertical bars together with abbreviations and symbols to indicate passages that contain important themes, wonderfully nuanced descriptions, especially delightful phrasing and/or syntax, provocative assertions, figurative language, etc. And, of course, write comments and analytical snippets to clarify your thinking.

Vocabulary / Unusual Diction. Within the text of the book, circle words that are unfamiliar to you or whose use strikes you as unusual or inventive. Look up words in a dictionary that seem essential to an understanding of the meaning or the sense of the author. If it helps to do so, jot a brief definition or synonym nearby.

Questioning. Actively engage the text and further / confirm your understanding of each chapter by writing at least two open-ended questions for each. Short essay questions are most useful. If you have time, you may profit, however, from writing multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching, and true / false questions as well.

Shifts. Note all shifts in point of view. Note all shifts in time. Note all shifts in diction and syntax.

Final Thoughts on Annotation. I expect you to think critically about what you are reading. While the amount of annotation may vary widely from page to page, any notes you add to a text will help you to read more critically – any attempt to annotate your book will help you to understand the reading as you read – and, I hope this handout has made clear, will help you return to the reading with confidence later.

Annotation is a discrete skill, and like any skill, it takes significant practice to hone your ability to the point of acquiring expertise. So push the pencil! Push the pencil! Push the pencil!

Marking and Note-Taking Tips (optional)

- Use one color ink to do initial marking while reading, then go back with another color or colors to mark more thoroughly once you have finished a larger section, have had time to think about it, and are able to see development of images, etc., more clearly.
- As chapter or sections end, stop to index page numbers on your front cover list of character information and traits as well as on your back cover list of themes, images, allusions, etc.
- Do underlining as you read and side margin notes as you finish a page or two.
- Add to side margin notes during class discussion also.

Some *suggested* ABBREVIATIONS / SYMBOLS

b/c = because

+ = and

W/ = with

W/O = without

b/t = between

e.g. = for example

ex = example

info = information

b4 = before

↗ = increase, improvement, rising

↘ = decrease, decline, falling

* = important

** = very important

*
= of the utmost importance, crucial to understanding

▶ = use caret to point to an exact location

▲ = change

PLOT = plot item (and / or use one of the following:

EXP = exposition

TP = turning point

CF = conflict

RA = rising action

CX = climax

FA = falling action

RES = resolution

CH = characterization

S = setting

POV = point of view (mention type: 1 person, limited omniscient, etc.

TH = theme

LT = literary term (identify the term by name – irony, tone, foreshadowing, personification, metaphor, symbol, etc.