

Poteet High School
GT English
Summer Reading
2010-2011

Welcome to GT English. The focus this year is literature from the renaissance forward, and the summer reading prepares you for what is to come.

Assignment I: Voltaire and Irving Stone

Read and annotate the attached Voltaire excerpt from “Of the Principle of Action.” Write your response to the piece (about a paragraph), along with two or three questions you have about the work on the back of the page. Bring this with you on your first day of class. Annotating is an art that you will learn, but you should comment and question as you read. Write comments about his ideas, his language, and your responses.

Then turn your attention to *The Agony and the Ecstasy* by Irving Stone. You should not have trouble finding the novel at any bookstore, but don’t wait until the last minute. As you read the book, keep a dialectical journal. Plan to turn it in on the first day of English class. Use regulation notebook paper only, not a spiral notebook, and write only on the front of the page. Do not type your notes because I want you to write as you read. I suggest that you read a chapter, stop and write down your marked quotations, and then respond to them. If you read the novel first then try to go back and hunt passages, the effort required will double. Expect a test over the novel on the second day of class.

My expectations for the dialectical journal are simple: Write personal responses to quotations you pull from the text. Responding personally means that you are to interact personally with each passage selected and tie it to the book in some way. **Choose passages that relate to the Concept of The Human Condition including obsession, social position, guilt, ambition etc.** Start each entry with the book you are taking the passage from. You will have two columns on the page. First writing the quotation (and page number in a parenthetical citation) in the left hand column, then adding your commentary in the right hand column. How many entries do you need? The answer is up to you. Enjoy the book, and comment on significant passages.

From Book I: “I can’t believe it. Look, everyone, Michelangelo has won!” (25)	your commentary
“Thank you for returning my drawings. I hope they have been helpful” (59)	your commentary
“Perhaps” (62).	your commentary

If you own your own book, you will probably want to mark the quotation on the page, too, so that it will be easy to find later. It may take a few chapters before you get the characters straight, but if you persevere, you will soon find yourself engaged. Read the entire book; you will enjoy it. If you do not read it, you will feel **very** left out when we discuss it because those who **do** read the whole thing get excited when talking about it. You might even have one of your parents read it along with you for discussion purposes and to help you get through the first part.

Assignment II: *Romeo and Juliet*

After reading the play *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare, you will choose two characters—one major, one minor—and create a mask for each of them. Each mask must be representative of the character and display the personality traits that directly affect the character's fate. While you are reading, take notes on the different characters, how they act, and what finally happens to them. This information will help you with the creation of the masks.

The Mask Criteria:

- Display the personality of the character it is representing
- Represent the fate or outcome of the character
- Wearable
- Show creativity
- Brief oral presentation

Some materials you may use, in case you are having a moment of doubt:

Cardboard	sequins	ribbon
Felt	glitter	paint
Fabric scraps	stickers	hardware supplies
Construction paper	feathers	fishing supplies
Tin foil	macaroni	Tissue paper
Pictures	plaster of Paris	the sky is

the limit, in other words - - don't spend a bunch of money

I would suggest reading this play with a group of your friends because plays are meant to be heard, not read silently. Choose roles, act some of it out—the more you throw yourself into it, the more you will get out of it.

The mask will be due the first day you have English. Be prepared to speak about one of your masks, and wear comfortable shoes as we may do some Renaissance dancing as well.

Assignment III: Action Hero - -Choose your own adventure.

The third work you read this summer will be a self-selected novel. This means that I trust you to choose a novel you have not read before--your integrity here is key. The point of this assignment is to get you to read something new. You never know, you may discover a favorite new author. Be sure the novel is appropriate for you and your family--please choose a novel that your parents approve.

Hopefully, you will read a novel in which the protagonist, the action hero, is compelled into some kind of action--this means we are using the term "action hero" very broadly. (For those of you returning to me, you understand the concept of "hero" as an archetype and not as in superhero or something like that.) Please do not get caught up in trying to find a book where the protagonist does something "heroic." All he or she must do is be driven into some kind of action, and most protagonists must be, otherwise it would be a pretty lousy story.

After reading your book, you get to write a poem, an "Action Hero Sonnet." The purpose of this sonnet is twofold. First, it is to familiarize you with the concept of the sonnet by trying your hand at writing one. Second, you are going to show me how your protagonist is compelled into action as required in the list above. Please make sure you follow these directions for the format of the sonnet; otherwise, you will make this assignment much harder on yourself.

The title of your sonnet is the character's name.

An Elizabethan sonnet consists of three quatrains and a couplet. You might want to google those terms. Each line is made of ten syllables, not nine, not eleven, ten (10).

Oh, and it's a rhyming poem, not free verse (again, go to Google).

We note rhyme scheme by letters – the As rhyme, the Bs rhyme, you get it.

Contents of
each quatrain
(not necessarily in the order listed)

Rhyme scheme
of this sonnet

Setting	1 A
Time / place	2 B
Mood	3 A
Back story	4 B
Character	1 C
Traits	2 D
Motivation	3 C
Conflict	4 D
Minor Characters	1 E
Foil / villain	2 F
Relationships	3 E
	4 F
Resolution	1 G
Hero	2 G

Your sonnet should be typed and ready to turn in the first day you have English.

HINT: Read the prologue of *Romeo and Juliet*. That is an Elizabethan Sonnet that you can use as an example.

The list of books we read this year reflects a broad range of styles and time periods. Because we engage in close reading analysis, students are encouraged to purchase their own copies of the works we will study for the sake of convenience (reading ahead, marking passages, and writing notes in the text).

Othello by William Shakespeare
Great Expectations by Charles Dickens
Frankenstein by Mary Shelley
Metamorphosis by Kafka

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens
Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoevsky
The Stranger by Albert Camus
Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett

Additionally, you will read one of the following works later in the year, but which one you read will not be determined until then:

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen
Sense and Sensibility by Jane Austen
Emma by Jane Austen

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde
Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte
Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte

Just find a spot in the shade (or a beach), sip a cool lemonade, and enjoy reading. I will be doing the same thing, and I can hardly wait!! Have a great summer. I look forward to our time with these intriguing works.

Let me know if you have questions.

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OF THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTION

Everything is in motion, everything acts and reacts, in nature.

Our sun turns on its axis with a rapidity that astonishes us; other suns turn with the same speed, while countless swarms of planets revolve round them in their orbits, and the blood circulates more than twenty times an hour in the lowliest of our animals.

A straw that is borne on the wind tends naturally towards the centre of the earth, just as the earth gravitates towards the sun, and the sun towards the earth. The sea owes to the same laws its eternal ebb and flow. In virtue of the same laws the vapours which form our atmosphere rise continually from the earth, and fall again in dew, rain, hail, snow, and thunder.

Everything, even death, is active. Corpses are decomposed, transformed into plants, and nourish the living, which in their turn are the food of others. What is the principle of this universal activity?

This principle must be unique. The unvarying uniformity of the laws which control the march of the heavenly bodies, the movements of our globe, every species and genus of animal, plant, and mineral, indicates that there is one mover. If there were two, they would either differ, or be opposed to each other, or like each other. If they were different, there would be no harmony; if opposed, things would destroy each other; if like, it would be as if there were only one—a twofold employment.

I am encouraged in this belief that there can be but one principle, one single mover, when I observe the constant and uniform laws of the whole of nature.

The same gravitation reaches every globe, and causes them to tend towards each other in direct proportion, not to their surfaces, which might be the effect of an impelling fluid, but to their masses.

The square of the revolution of every planet is as the cube of its distance from the sun (which proves, one may note, what Plato had somehow divined, that the world is the work of the eternal geometrician).

The rays of light are reflected and refracted from end to end of the universe. All the truths of mathematics must be the same on the star Sirius as in our little home.

If I glance at the animal world, I find that all quadrupeds, and all wingless bipeds, reproduce their kind by the same process of copulation, and all the females are viviparous.

All female birds lay eggs.

In each species there is the same manner of reproduction and feeding.

Each species of plants has the same basic qualities.

Assuredly the oak and the nut have come to no agreement to be born and to grow in the same way, any more than Mars and Saturn have come to an understanding to observe the same laws. There is, therefore, a single, universal, and powerful intelligence, acting always by invariable laws.

No one doubts that an armillary sphere, landscapes, drawings of animals, or models in coloured wax, are the work of clever artists. Is it possible for the copyists to be intelligent and the originals not? This seems to me the strongest demonstration; I do not see how it can be assailed.