

AP English Summer Reading
2011 – 2012 School Year

The theme for this year's summer reading is **Journeys**. Often in literature a physical journey may lead to self-discovery, mark a transition in a character's life, or be symbolic in some way. Sometimes, too, a character's journey may be psychological or spiritual rather than physical. For this summer you must read closely and react thoughtfully to two novels or epics. In addition, you must read and respond to two lengthy (500 words +) newspaper or magazine articles from one of the following publications: *The New York Times* (www.nytimes.com), *The Washington Post* (www.washingtonpost.com), *The New Yorker* (www.newyorker.com), or *The Atlantic Monthly* (www.theatlantic.com).

Read one novel or epic during the month of July, the other during the month of August. Choices that have an asterisk next to them have been particularly popular with students in the past.

July choices: choose one from the list below

Chopin's *The Awakening* *
Danticat's *Breathe, Eyes, Memory*
Dinesen's *Out of Africa*
Defoe's *Moll Flanders*
Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars* *
Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* *
Kerouac's *On The Road*
Kingsolver's *The Bean Trees*
Lahari's *The Namesake*
McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* *
Melville's *Billy Budd*
Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*
Russo's *Empire Falls*
Silko's *Ceremony*
Smiley's *1000 Acres*
Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*
Wright's *Black Boy*

August choices: choose one from the list below

Cervantes *Don Quixote*
Ellison's *Invisible Man*
Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*
Frazier's *Cold Mountain* *

Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*
Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*
Homer's *The Odyssey*
Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* *
Irving's *A Prayer for Owen Meany*
Kingston's *Woman Warrior*
McCarthy's *The Road* * or *Blood Meridian* *
Melville's *Typee*
Morrison's *Beloved*
Proulx's *The Shipping News*
Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*
Voltaire's *Candide*
Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities* or *I am Charlotte Simmons*
Wharton's *Summer*

Technical Requirements: for the summer assignment and for submitting rough drafts in AP English, you will need a gmail account. Many of you probably have these accounts already. If not, go to gmail.com or the Google home page and set up an account.

Required Response: for your responses, you are required to post eight blog entries over the course of the summer, three entries for each of the two novels and one entry each month for the newspaper articles. To access the blog, go to www.sad6.k12.me.us/~dmurphy and click the AP English link. You will see a link to specific blogs (July Entry # 1, for example). After you write your entry, post as anonymous but place your first name and last initial at the end of your write-up so that I know who has posted. Each novel entry should begin with the date of your entry and an important quotation from the section of the text that you read. While part of each entry should summarize what you have read, the majority of the entry should be your *reaction to* and *analysis of* this section of the text. Each entry should be about 200 words, which is the equivalent of a single typed page. I am looking for your thoughtful engagement with the text. Post your first entry when you have read about a third of the book. Post your second entry when you have read about two-thirds of the book. Post your third entry when you've completed the novel.

Each newspaper/magazine entry should begin with a one paragraph summary and link to the article. Be sure to note the name of the publication (e.g. *New York Times*), the author, the article title, and the date of publication. Then react to the article in the second and final paragraph. I will post a model entry online by the end of June.

By the end of the summer you will have posted a total of eight entries (three for each novel + 2 newspaper/magazine posts). The blog entries will count as your first **essay grade**.

Test: also, you will be tested on the summer reading upon your return. The test will be modeled on a past Open Essay question from the AP English Literature exam. Below is one of the questions from last year's AP English Literature Exam.

Palestinian-American literary theorist and cultural critic Edward Said has written that "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted." Yet Said has also said that exile can become "a potent, even enriching" experience.

Select a novel, play, or epic in which a character experiences such a rift and becomes cut off from "home," whether that home is the character's birthplace, family homeland, or other special place. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the character's experience with exile is both alienating and enriching, and how this experience illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. You may choose a work from the list below or one of comparable literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.
Heart of Darkness, Jane Eyre, King Lear, Things Fall Apart . .

Due dates: All blog entries for the first book are due by the end of July. All the entries for the second entry are due by August 27th. I will close the blogs at the end of each period.

Questions: If you have any questions, e-mail me at dangmurphy@yahoo.com or dmurphy1333@gmail.com

Do not come in the first day of class and tell me you did not understand the assignment.

Remember: This is the minimum amount of reading that you should be doing this summer. For some things, more is better. Reading frequently is an effective way to improve your reading and increase your knowledge.

Have a great summer. Feel free to email me, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Mr. Murphy