

Literary Genres – Summer Reading

Your summer reading, to help prepare you for 9th Grade English at Visitation, will include **TWO WORKS**: one a **play** and the other a **novel**. For the play, you are to complete an associated study guide and answer an essay question your first week of class. For the novel, you will choose from the list below and complete an essay according to my guidelines.

First, the novel: choose one! (they are listed in order from more challenging to less challenging)
Rebecca by Daphne DuMaurier. A young woman (her name is never revealed to us) falls in love with Maxim DeWinter, a wealthy widower several years her senior. When the new Mrs. DeWinter arrives at Maxim's beautiful manor house, she learns that the first Mrs. DeWinter – the beautiful and charming Rebecca – died very mysteriously. I am a secret fan of Gothic romances, and this one is spell-bindingly fantastic (also a great prep for our reading of *Jane Eyre* during second semester)!

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie. Junior is a ninth-grader who lives on the Spokane Indian Reservation with his family. Early on in the book, Junior transfers from his reservation school to an all-White school 20 miles away -- a move that alienates him from both his best friend and the other Spokane Indians, who resent Junior for leaving. This book is both brilliantly funny and very sad, and it offers a very honest commentary on Indian life in this country. I really love Sherman Alexie as an author, and this is just one of my favorite reads. *Contains some mature language.*

North of Beautiful by Justina Chen. Chen's novel tells the story of Terra Cooper, a teenage girl, struggling with her dysfunctional family, her search for real friends, and the true meaning of beauty. The sustained metaphor of searching for "true north," the cartographical/geographical references further enhance Terra's deepening awareness of her self and how one navigates the various tensions and issues that arise in one's life. This is a gentle, lovely little book.

Now, choose a character from the book you read and write your essay on the topic below:

An epiphany can be described as a sudden moment of insight or understanding that causes a character to change or act in a certain way. In the novel that you read, the main character(s) experience at least one epiphany during the course of the plot.

Your book review will consist of a one-paragraph essay, in which you discuss the epiphany the main or supporting character experiences. Be sure to include an introductory sentence or two as well as a concluding sentence. In the body of your paragraph, you should answer the following questions:

What was the character's epiphany or realization? Be specific.

What event, occurrence, or moment in the story triggered the character's epiphany? Be specific.

In what ways did the character change as a result of this epiphany? In other words, what was he/she like before the epiphany, and what is he/she like afterwards? Be specific.

Checklist:

- Your essay should be approximately 1½ pages in length.
- Please be sure that your full name and date are in the upper left-hand corner of the paper.
- This paper should be typed, double-spaced in Times New Roman (or similar) 12 pt. font.
- Be sure to write a strong topic sentence. You should include the title of the work, the author, and your main idea in the topic sentence. Remember: the topic sentence needs to mention both the title of the book and should summarize your whole paper.
- **Your topic sentence may NOT be “For summer reading, I read...”**
- Use concrete, accurate evidence – and at least two quotes – to support your ideas.
- Please do NOT summarize the plots of this book. Your job is to answer the questions – not tell me about the plot.
- Pick a book that you haven’t already read and that you enjoy reading. If you choose a book and don’t like it, then choose something else. Summer reading should be fun!
- I am not looking for your opinions regarding the books. In other words, don’t tell me how much you liked/disliked the books or the characters or the plots, etc. Your goal is to answer the given questions clearly and in depth.
- Read your writing aloud to catch awkward sentences and phrases. Fragments, run-on sentences, and spelling errors will not be accepted.

Next, the play!

Inherit the Wind by Robert E. Lee and Jerome Lawrence. Written in 1955, Lee and Lawrence’s work tackled the controversial courtroom drama that occurred in 1925 when a substitute science teacher, recruited by the ACLU, taught Darwin’s Theory of Evolution in place of Creationism (thus breaking a Tennessee law). The point of the drama is not to disprove the Bible but to speak against blatant “McCarthyism” and to uphold intellectual freedoms.

Complete the associated study guide to help you prepare for your essay question and to assist you in your understanding of the drama.

Due Dates:

Please note that the summer reading assignment must be completed before the first day of school in August. Your essays and study guides must be submitted on the first day of school (not during 9th Grade Orientation Week).
