

College Composition Summer Reading

Welcome to College Composition! As your first grade in the course, you are required to complete a summer reading assignment. The reading and assignment are due on Friday of the FIRST WEEK of school.

Guidelines:

- ❖ **Choose one of the texts listed below.** Your school can provide you with a copy of a book; however, it is first come-first served, as there are limited amounts of each title. You also have the option to purchase your own copy, borrow from the library or download an ebook. Either way, it is your responsibility to obtain a copy.
- ❖ **Actively read your book and complete a dialectical journal**—see template & guidelines below. Your template can be typed and emailed to me or neatly handwritten. The rubric for the journal is on the last page of this packet.
- ❖ On Friday of the first week of school, you will need to **informally present what book you read and your response to one of the following questions:** *What did I find in my book that deepened my understanding of—history? Society? A social issue? Another literary work? Another person? Or my own life?*

Dialectical Journal

—a dialectical journal is one in which you are actively reading and “conversing” with and even questioning the text.

Complete 35 journal entries, 10 from the early part of the book, 15 from the middle sections, and 10 from the ending. Each entry needs to include: a quote, page number(s), and your response (minimum of 45 words each). The response is NOT a summary; it should include inferences, connections to your own experience or other books/movies, comments/opinions, interpretation of literary devices and reflective questions. Here is a sample template:

| Quote | Chapter & page #'s | Response |
|-------|--------------------|----------|
| | | |

Book Options

A Doll's House by Henrik Isben

A Doll's House is a three-act play in prose by Henrik Ibsen. It premiered at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 21 December 1879, having been published earlier that month. The play is significant for its critical attitude toward 19th-century marriage norms. It aroused great controversy at the time, as the protagonist, Nora, leaves her husband and children because she wants to discover herself. Ibsen was inspired by the belief that "a woman cannot be herself in modern society," since it is "an exclusively male society, with laws made by men and with prosecutors and judges who assess feminine conduct from a masculine standpoint."

A Gathering of Old Men by Earnest J. Gaines

One afternoon, Candy Marshall, a white plantation owner, discovers that a Cajun farmer, Beau Boutan, has been shot in Mathu's, a black man's yard. She enlists the help of seventeen other old black men by having them come to Mathu's yard, each with a shotgun and one empty number 5 shell. She and the men all claim to be responsible for the murder in an effort to protect the guilty party. Meanwhile, Sheriff Mapes arrives at the scene to arrest the real murderer (most likely Mathu, as he was the only black man who stood up against racism and the Boutans and capable of shooting a shotgun). The sheriff also wishes to keep Beau's father, Fix Boutan, from coming to lynch the Mathu, who he presumes killed Beau.

A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams

Set in the French Quarter of New Orleans during the restless years following World War Two, *STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE* is the story of Blanche DuBois, a fragile and neurotic woman on a desperate prowl for someplace in the world to call her own.

Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt

"When I look back on my childhood I wonder how I managed to survive at all. It was, of course, a miserable childhood: the happy childhood is hardly worth your while. Worse than

the ordinary miserable childhood is the miserable Irish childhood, and worse yet is the miserable Irish Catholic childhood.”So begins the luminous memoir of Frank McCourt, born in Depression-era Brooklyn to recent Irish immigrants and raised in the slums of Limerick, Ireland. Frank’s mother, Angela, has no money to feed the children since Frank’s father, Malachy, rarely works, and when he does he drinks his wages. Yet Malachy—exasperating, irresponsible, and beguiling—does nurture in Frank an appetite for the one thing he can provide: a story.

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

Aldous Huxley’s profoundly important classic of world literature, *Brave New World* is a searching vision of an unequal, technologically-advanced future where humans are genetically bred, socially indoctrinated, and pharmaceutically anesthetized to passively uphold an authoritarian ruling order—all at the cost of our freedom, full humanity, and perhaps also our souls.

Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson

Jekyll and Hyde is a gothic novella by Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson, first published in 1886. It is about a London legal practitioner named Gabriel John Utterson who investigates strange occurrences between his old friend, Dr Henry Jekyll and the evil Edward Hyde. The novella’s impact is such that it has become a part of the language, with the phrase “Jekyll and Hyde” entering the vernacular to refer to people with an unpredictably dual nature: usually very good, but sometimes shockingly evil.

East of Eden by John Steinbeck

Set in the rich farmland of California’s Salinas Valley, this sprawling and often brutal novel follows the intertwined destinies of two families—the Trasks and the Hamiltons—whose generations helplessly reenact the fall of Adam and Eve and the poisonous rivalry of Cain and Abel. *East of Eden* is a work in which Steinbeck created his most mesmerizing characters and explored his most enduring themes: the mystery of identity, the inexplicability of love, and the murderous consequences of love’s absence.

First They Killed My Father by Loung Ung

From a childhood survivor of the Cambodian genocide under the regime of Pol Pot, this is a riveting narrative of war crimes and desperate actions, the unnerving strength of a small girl and her family, and their triumph of spirit. One of seven children of a high-ranking government official, Loung Ung lived a privileged life in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh until the age of five. Then, in April 1975, Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge army stormed into the city, forcing Ung’s family to flee and, eventually, to disperse. Loung was trained as a child soldier in a work camp for orphans, her siblings were sent to labor camps, and those who survived the horrors would not be reunited until the Khmer Rouge was destroyed.

In the Lake of the Woods by Tim O'Brien

Related to issues of the Vietnam War theme, *In the Lake of the Woods* follows the struggle of John Wade to deal with a recently failed campaign for the United States Senate. After moving to Lake of the Woods, Minnesota, John discovers one morning that his wife Kathy is missing. Through the use of flashbacks of John's childhood, college years, and Vietnam experiences, as well as testimony and evidence from affected characters, the novel provides several hypotheses for the disappearance of Kathy Wade, leaving the decision up to the reader.

Mousetrap & Other Plays by Agatha Christie

From "The Mousetrap" (the longest-running play in history) to "Ten Little Indians" and "Witness for the Prosecution" (both made into classic film thrillers), here are eight brilliantly staged acts of murder featuring twice as many suspects and final-curtain twists.

Nickeled & Dimed by Barbara Ehrenreich

Our sharpest and most original social critic goes "undercover" as an unskilled worker to reveal the dark side of American prosperity. Millions of Americans work full-time, year-round, for poverty-level wages. In 1998, Barbara Ehrenreich decided to join them. She was inspired in part by the rhetoric surrounding welfare reform, which promised that a job -- any job -- can be the ticket to a better life. But how does anyone survive, let alone prosper, on \$6 an hour? To find out, Ehrenreich left her home, took the cheapest lodgings she could find, and accepted whatever jobs she was offered. Moving from Florida to Maine to Minnesota, she worked as a waitress, a hotel maid, a cleaning woman, a nursing-home aide, and a Wal-Mart sales clerk.

The Odyssey by Homer

Composed at the rosy-fingered dawn of world literature almost three millennia ago, *The Odyssey* is a poem about violence and the aftermath of war; about wealth, poverty and power; about marriage and family; about travelers, hospitality, and the yearning for home.

One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey

In this classic novel, Ken Kesey's hero is Randle Patrick McMurphy, a boisterous, brawling, fun-loving rebel who swaggers into the world of a mental hospital and takes over. A lusty, life-affirming fighter, McMurphy rallies the other patients around him by challenging the dictatorship of Nurse Ratched. He promotes gambling in the ward, smuggles in wine and women, and openly defies the rules at every turn. But this defiance, which starts as a sport, soon develops into a grim struggle, an all-out war between two relentless opponents: Nurse Ratched, backed by the full power of authority, and McMurphy, who has only his own indomitable will. What happens when Nurse Ratched uses her ultimate weapon against McMurphy provides the story's shocking climax.

Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier

"Last Night I Dreamt I went to Manderley Again...With these words, the reader is ushered into an isolated gray stone mansion on the windswept Cornish coast, as the second Mrs. Maxim de Winter recalls the chilling events that transpired as she began her new life as the young bride of a husband she barely knew. For in every corner of every room were phantoms of a time dead but not forgotten—a past devotedly preserved by the sinister housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers: a suite immaculate and untouched, clothing laid out and ready to be worn, but not by any of the great house's current occupants. With an eerie presentiment of evil tightening her heart, the second Mrs. de Winter walked in the shadow of her mysterious predecessor, determined to uncover the darkest secrets and shattering truths about Maxim's first wife—the late and hauntingly beautiful Rebecca.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon

Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow. This improbable story of Christopher's quest to investigate the suspicious death of a neighborhood dog makes for one of the most captivating, unusual, and widely heralded novels in recent years.

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde

The Importance of Being Earnest opened in the West End of London in February 1894 during an era when many of the religious, social, political, and economic structures were experiencing change – The Victorian Age. The English aristocracy was dominant, snobbish and rich – far removed from the British middle class and poor. Oscar Wilde's madcap farce about mistaken identities, secret engagements, and lovers' entanglements still delights readers more than a century after its 1895 publication and premiere performance.

The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan

Four mothers, four daughters, four families whose histories shift with the four winds depending on who's "saying" the stories. In 1949 four Chinese women, recent immigrants to San Francisco, begin meeting to eat dim sum, play mahjong, and talk. United in shared unspeakable loss and hope, they call themselves the Joy Luck Club. Rather than sink into tragedy, they choose to gather to raise their spirits and money. "To despair was to wish back for something already lost. Or to prolong what was already unbearable." Forty years later the stories and history continue.

The War of the Worlds by H.G. Wells

The War of the Worlds was one of the first and greatest works of science fiction ever to be written. Even long before man had learned to fly, H.G. Wells wrote this story of the Martian

attack on England. These unearthly creatures arrive in huge cylinders, from which they escape as soon as the metal is cool.

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe

Things Fall Apart is the first of three novels in Chinua Achebe's critically acclaimed African Trilogy. It is a classic narrative about Africa's cataclysmic encounter with Europe as it establishes a colonial presence on the continent. Told through the fictional experiences of Okonkwo, a wealthy and fearless Igbo warrior of Umuofia in the late 1800s, *Things Fall Apart* explores one man's futile resistance to the devaluing of his Igbo traditions by British political and religious forces and his despair as his community capitulates to the powerful new order.

Grading Rubric

| | Exemplary | Good | Adequate | Below Average |
|-------------|---|--|---|--|
| Text | Meaningful & detailed passages are selected. Entire text is covered thoroughly. | Selects meaningful passages; covers the entire text. | Selects clear passages that cover most of the text. | Passages are not selected with care, or seem random; only parts of the text are covered. |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Response | Response is thoughtful & includes comments on literary devices, & how they contribute to the text. Connections are insightful and ask reflective questions. Length is at least 45 words and contains few to no errors in usage. | Response is mostly thoughtful and includes some comments about literary devices and how they contribute to the text. Some connections are made and at least one reflective question. Length is at least 45 words. May contain several usage errors that do not affect meaning. | Response attempts interpretation of passage and literary devices. Some connections and or reflective questions are posed. Meets the length of 45 words and may contain multiple usage errors that do not significantly affect meaning. | Response lacks interpretation and primarily summarizes the passage instead. There are too few comments, questions or connections made. It may not meet the 45-word requirement and may contain multiple usage errors that affect meaning. |
| Comments | | | | |
| Name/Score | | | | |