

English II Honors: World Literature Summer Reading & Assignments 2015-2016

Summer is a time to recharge and pursue your own interests. Thus, you are encouraged to read for pleasure and share those experiences with your schoolmates at the beginning of the year.

However, as a member of the English II Honors class, you will be going above and beyond the whole school expectations for pleasure reading. Honors students are challenged to broaden their literary and cultural horizons and to articulate—in writing—well-supported analyses of literature.

Therefore, in addition to completing the “Hero Test” for the Summer Reading Program (you may choose one of the novels below to accomplish this or [hopefully] read books, articles, etc. of your choice), you will read three FANTASTIC and influential world literature novels for this class:

A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier, by Ishmael Beah

The Kite Runner, by Khaled Hosseini

All Quiet on the Western Front, by Erich Maria Remarque

Each of these novels has a unique cultural and historical context; if you find that you need (or want) to know more about the setting, by all means do a little research! Learn about Afghanistan before Russia, look up what happened in Germany during WWI, or research the recent conflicts in Sierra Leone. This may be helpful when completing your assignment.

Those who were not in Honors Freshman English should also find a copy of

Writing Tools by Roy Peter Clark

as it will be used for our summer assignments (and hopefully during the year). If you want to learn about what good writers do—and read about it in an interesting way—then you will LOVE this book. (I have a feeling you will also need it for AP English, so this is not a bad book to own!)

Keep in mind that if you do not read the novels assigned novels or complete the attached assignments, you should not expect to remain in the English II Honors Class. The summer reading is a prerequisite for the class, providing a valuable foundational experience upon which we will all build our reading and analytical skills.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Feel free to email me during the summer with any questions or comments you might have at JGillespie@griswoldpublicschools.org or to share journals in an email to the address above.

I will generally check my email several times a week (except for those few days when I’m away on vacation) and will happily address any questions, concerns, or entertaining stories about summer vacations gone awry. Have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Gillespie
(Room 4231)

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The Assignment:

1. Review the “Tools”

Skim through the chapters in the “Special Effects” and “Blueprints” sections of *Writing Tools* by Roy Peter Clark. These are not only great tips for writers, but many of these “tools” are great for readers to remember when trying to find the words to express what makes a novel (or article, etc.) so wonderful.

While I implore you to read the books first for pleasure, having these tools in mind as you read so that you can “jot” a note when you find something transcendent isn’t a bad idea!

2. Read/Reread and Take Notes on Each Novel

There are two schools of thought in regards to this piece:

Some people may want to keep a reader’s journal, noting important details, quotations, and your own questions and impressions *as you read*. OR, if you buy the book, *I highly recommend annotating, or writing questions and responses on the text itself, as you read (sticky notes can be helpful for this)*.

Others may want to read the book with nothing (except, perhaps, the ability to bookmark a page) and then *reread* and record notes. Some people find this makes the experience more enjoyable and helps take the guessing out of finding the “important” things.

These notes are for your benefit and will be helpful in remembering specifics about the novel for *assignments in the fall*; though I will check the notes to evaluate your reading process, the amount that you note is ultimately up to you.

3. Write a Response to Each Novel

In addition to any notes you take to help you comprehend and recall specific details for our beginning of the year activities, you are **REQUIRED** to specifically address **three questions for each** of the honors summer reading novels.

Responses may be **NEATLY** typed or legibly handwritten on loose paper (not a notebook or journal book) and should be stapled together if submitted in hard copy. Include the title and author of the novel at the top left of each section, and put your name on the top right of each page (in case my 2-year-old unbundles them).

You may also elect to “Share” your responses with me via Google Docs (which I use a lot) OR email your responses to me at JGillespie@griswoldpublicschools.org.

The Questions:

A. How is the setting important to the story and the narrative point of view?

Record your impressions of the setting of the novel: What do you know (or what did you **THINK** you knew) about this culture, country, and/or part of the world? What do you know about the time period or context for the setting? (In order to consider its impact, you might want to consider what makes this different from the time/place in which you live.)

Use specific details from the novel to support your answer. To fully answer this question you must be attentive to the author’s descriptions, selecting at least one passage (with page numbers) for each novel to support your own evaluation of the setting.

B. Record and explain an interesting, “worthwhile,” and unique passage from the novel.

Identify at least one important passage (ex. a few sentences, a few lines of dialogue) from the novel: the words/phrases/paragraph might reveal an important aspect of a character’s personality, a critical event in the plot, an insight into the theme of the novel, or a beautifully phrased description.

Be sure to accurately write the full quotation, enclose it in quotation marks, cite the page number on which you found the passage; then, discuss why you chose the passage and what you believe is its particular importance to the novel as a whole. You may want to refer to Writing Tools for ideas of what to look for.

C. Explain what “tools” the author uses wisely (and perhaps unwisely) that contribute to its quality and decide: is this novel worthy of study?

Upon your conclusion of each novel, reflect upon the “writing tools” used by the author and write your final impression of the story. Did you think it was well-written and worthy of study? Explain why or why not, providing at least two reasons.

Be open and honest about your opinion, but be able to defend yourself; you MUST therefore discuss specific examples in support of your conclusions. Responses like, “I just didn’t like it” or “I thought it was an OK plot,” are not adequate responses. Refer to Writing Tools (and your own prior knowledge of literary terms) for specific literary techniques, narrative elements, and other choices made by the author.

These responses will demonstrate to me that you have carefully read and considered the books, and they will provide you with material for future assessments and discussions.

Remember: This is my first impression of your reading and writing skills, so make sure it is an accurate one by doing your best work. There is no required length, but please don’t write me a novel of your own (yet).

Bring your **notes** and **responses** with you *on the first day of school*.
(I will check these on the first day of class, so better to be safe than sorry!)

4. The Hero Test: Complete the “Hero Test” sheet for the novel that you feel has a “hero” most in line with your pre-reading definition.

A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier, by Ishmael Beah

The Kite Runner, by Khaled Hosseini

All Quiet on the Western Front, by Erich Maria Remarque

*If you wish to use a different reading selection for your required “Hero Test,” that is fine—just don’t forget to do it!