

9th Grade Honors Summer Reading Assignment – 2015

<u>Teacher</u>	Casey Rocchini
<u>Course</u>	Honors English 9
<u>Objective</u>	The student will develop skills in reading, analyzing, and interpreting literature through his/her experience with Willa Cather's <i>My Antonia</i> . He/she will also demonstrate analytical and writing skills by utilizing the writing process to develop a five paragraph essay on one of the assigned topics.
<u>Overview</u>	The summer reading assignment is a three part assignment. The first and second parts focus on reading and examining Willa Cather's <i>My Antonia</i> while keeping a journal that thoroughly documents the student's experience with the book. The third part of the assignment requires the student to respond to the novel by writing a five paragraph essay that demonstrates both his/her understanding of the novel and his/her ability to write a concise and coherent expository essay.
<u>Assessment</u>	Students will be assessed using the attached rubrics.
<u>Credit</u>	The assignment must be completed and submitted by hard copy to Mrs. Rocchini on the first day of school: Monday, August 24th. The essay and journaling assignments are each worth 100 points. If the assignments are not turned in by the due date, the student will receive a 10% grade reduction per day late. If the assignment is not completed at all, the student will receive a zero, which will have a significant impact on his/her first-nine-weeks' grade, as well as the final course grade. Plagiarism of any kind on either assignment will result in a grade of zero.

Curriculum Link

My Antonia will begin the Honors English 9 student's journey into self-discovery-themed literature through an independent reading and analysis of the novel.

Context

My Antonia is a novel reflecting on a young boy's growth in the ever-changing American frontier. The novel is narrated by this boy, Jim Burden, after he has grown into an adult. In the novel, he relates the story of his friendship with Antonia Shimerda, who is the daughter of Bohemian immigrants who settle in Nebraska during the late 1800s.

It is important to note that the novel lacks a standard plot structure (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution), and this is explained in a statement made by Burden in the introduction of the book: "I didn't take time to arrange it. I simply wrote down pretty much all that her name recalls to me. I suppose it hasn't any form" (Cather 2). For this reason, Cather uses other methods to make her novel achieve unity, including the main theme (the relationship between mankind and his/her environment) and the symbolism behind the land and the seasons. Be sure to be aware of both of these subjects as you read and respond to the novel!

Contact Information

Questions should be directed to Mrs. Rocchini at crocchini@rsd.k12.pa.us or 412-828-1800 ext. 1041. Please include your first and last name and "Honors English 9" in the subject line of any emails you send.

*If you lose your assignment over the summer, you can access a copy through the high school website.

Honors English 9 – Summer Reading Assignment

Each student entering Honors English 9 is required to complete a summer reading assignment. This year students will be reading *My Antonia* by Willa Cather, keeping a reader's journal, and writing an essay in response to the novel. **The assignment is due on the first day of school: Monday, August 24th.**

Students are required to:

- Read the novel completely. This book is divided into five separate books (sections).
- Keep a journal of *student-created* summaries, questions, comments as they read.
 - This journal should be divided by book and chapter. The student should briefly summarize each chapter in his/her own words (with the exception of using quotations with page numbers if necessary) and write at least one question and one comment per chapter. The journal will be submitted with the essay. The student should type the journal responses if possible. If a student cannot type the journal, please keep in mind that neatness will be considered as a portion of the grade. Each book, chapter, summary, question, and comment should be clearly labeled as in the sample below:

Book I – The Shimerdas

Chapter I

Summary – In chapter 1 of Willa Cather's *My Antonia*, Jim, the narrator, travels by train with a hired hand named Jake Marpole to Nebraska to live with his grandparents. During the trip he sees Antonia and her family for the first time. She is described as being "as bright as a new dollar....[with] pretty brown eyes, too!" (6). When he arrives in Nebraska, he describes his coach driver, Otto, as someone who "stepped out of the pages of *Jesse James*" because he looks fierce, menacing, and storied (7). He also comments on the "nothingness" that seems to surround him there, which makes him feel like he has been "left behind, erased, blotted out" (8).

Question – Who is Jesse James and why might he be important?

Comment – I think I better look up Jesse James so I can understand what Jim is talking about.

- Write a five-paragraph expository essay in response to **one** of the following prompts about the novel:
 1. Trace Antonia's life from her childhood to her later years. What personal characteristics keep her going through her many hardships?
 2. Characterize Antonia's mother, father, and her brother, Ambrosch. How does each one affect Antonia?
 3. Compare and contrast the lives of Jim Burden and Antonia. Explain what drew them together and enabled them to become close friends.
 4. Jim becomes a symbol or representative of the sophisticated world of business – both its good and bad qualities. Explain what Antonia symbolizes in the story. Think about the parts of her life that are important to her and the values she embodies.

This essay should:

- **Be five paragraphs in length**
- **Include the title (underlined or italicized) and the author somewhere in the introductory paragraph**
- **Include at least one direct quotation *with parenthetical citation* to support your analysis of the text in each body paragraph**
- **Be written from third-person point of view (do not use: I, me, my, mine, you, us, etc.)**
- **Be typed in 12 point Times New Roman or Calibri font**
- **Be double-spaced**

Honors English 9 – Five Paragraph Essay Reminders

- Introductory Paragraph includes:
 - an attention grabber such as:
 - Question
 - Fact/Statistic
 - Anecdote
 - Generalization
 - Quote
 - background information on your topic
 - a **three-pronged thesis statement** with a direct statement of the three main ideas of the essay
- Three Body Paragraphs should:
 - be presented in a logical order (presented in the same order as the thesis statement)
 - have topic sentences, supporting details, and concluding sentences for each paragraph.
 - Use specific and credible evidence to support your analysis of the text such as:
 - Examples from the text
 - Direct quotations with parenthetical citations
- Concluding Paragraph should:
 - begin with the restated thesis statement
 - summarize the 3 main ideas of your essay
 - end with a thought-provoking statement

NOTE: Since the title and author will be identified in the introductory paragraph, a properly completed parenthetical citation must only include the page number in parenthesis after the closure of the quote followed by a period. This format can be seen in the sample journal entry.