

Honors Humanities [AP Language and Composition] Summer Assignment 2015

Hello!

Welcome to Honors Humanities [AP Language and Composition]. You may have heard a bit about the class by now, but if not, let me fill you in a bit. The Humanities course has been a traditional requirement of the South Kingstown High School for quite awhile. It is a course that explores culture, for the most part. While our focus will primarily be on the major cultural periods of western civilization, we will also incorporate perspectives from other civilizations.

As we explore each cultural period, we will look at how the literature, art and music reflect the historical context of the times. We will also examine the treatment of a variety of themes over the centuries and between cultures. It will be a journey through time, of sorts. In fact, many of our stories involve journeys. Thus, the journey will be one of the first motifs we will explore.

With this in mind, you will be reading two wonderful pieces of literature this summer, each of which tells the story of a journey. You will read Homer's *Odyssey*, an epic poem about the Greek hero Odysseus' journey home after battling the Trojans for ten years. It is one of literature's greatest stories. You will also read Herman Hesse's novel *Siddhartha*, a tale of a physical as well as a spiritual journey that touches on both eastern and western cultural themes. You will complete reading journals for both books.

Materials

For your journaling, you will need a spiral notebook and a pen. The journal is a tool to help you reflect on what you read, and will be a helpful reference for class discussion and writing assignments. The time you spend writing an entry for a chapter should NOT be longer than the time you spent reading. For both readings, the journal is a great place to also jot down new words that you come across to look up. Keeping a dictionary handy isn't a bad idea, either.

Books: I recommend purchasing your own books. These are the two books you will need:

- Homer's *Odyssey*: Robert Fitzgerald translation. **NO Substitutes, please.**
- Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha*. Bantam Books edition is fine, but others are acceptable.

*** If you prefer to borrow a school copy, please see me before the end of exams to sign out books.***

Summer Assignment Part I

***The Odyssey* by Homer (Robert Fitzgerald translation; no substitutes!)**

While it may take you awhile to get used to the rhythm of this epic poem and its unusual names, it is worth the investment. As you read, jot down 3-4 observations and/or page references for each chapter. Begin each entry with the title of the chapter, and record your observations. Remember, you shouldn't be spending more time writing than you spend reading. Keep entries concise and focused. **These notes will be used for an in-class essay in September. Basically, your goal is to have a quick reference to find details relevant to the underlined items for writing or discussion.**

- Observations should **not** be plot summary.
- Focus on themes that you see emerging. For example, in Book I, you should note that the theme of greed and folly doubling man's suffering is introduced.
- Focus on what you learn of Greek culture as you read as well.
- Consider character development as another item to observe.
- Make note of what constitutes epic style.
- Consider how the story's themes might be relevant today.
- Be sure notes are formatted with a sense of organization and focus.

A sample page for *Odyssey* notes:

Chapter 1: A Goddess Intervenes

Theme(s):

- Zeus points out that “greed and folly double the suffering in the lot of man” in first chapter.
- Gods and their role in our lives. Athena seems to want to help Odysseus

Culture:

- The gods open the story; they are obviously important in this culture.

Modern Link:

Greed on Wall Street; CEO salaries

Character:

- Athena seems to take a great interest in Odysseus. Why?
- Odysseus is described as a “wanderer” and “harried for years on end.”

Vocabulary: harried (adj): tormented

Summer Assignment Part II

Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha*

Students usually have very positive feedback to this novel. It is very straightforward and readable, but also thought-provoking. It is the story of a young Indian man named Siddhartha who leaves the comforts of his wealthy family's home in search of enlightenment. You may find it helpful to read this after *The Odyssey* so that you might observe some similarities and differences. For each chapter, record 3-4 observations. **DO NOT** simply summarize the story. React to it; comment on passages; quote and respond; draw comparisons to *The Odyssey* or other things you've read or learned about; reflect on themes you see emerging; comment on symbols and patterns; focus on stylistic elements Hesse uses; etc. If you are spending more time on a chapter's entry than you did reading, you are overdoing it. I'd like your observations to be thoughtful, inquisitive, attentive, etc., but they do not need to be dissertations. Again, begin each entry with the title of that chapter. A page per chapter should suffice.

Guidelines/Requirements:

- Please make sure your name is on all journals and article summaries.
- Please use a standard sized notebook and pen for journaling.
- Please be sure journals are **LEGIBLE**.
- All work will be due the first week of school. This will count towards your Q1 writing grade: Journal grading will be based on insight and engagement with texts
- Remember: **NO PLOT SUMMARIES** for the journal entries.
- Late journals will not be accepted.
- Budget your time and be focused and concise. See you in September!
- a little bit a day will get the job done. **AVOID PROCRASTINATION!!**