

**OAKBROOK PREPARATORY SCHOOL  
HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER READING – 2009**

**Honors and CP English students, choose two books from your grade list. (Make sure you read the unabridged version.) You must write an essay on each book; topics are included in this packet. Essays are due the first week of class. Specific dates will be announced by your English teacher.**

**\*AP English assignments follow grade 12 CP assignments.**

**9<sup>th</sup> Grade Assignments**

*The Good Earth*

Wang Lung is the central character in *The Good Earth*. His strengths and weaknesses are examined and bared before the reader. Identify three of Wang Lung's strengths and three of Wang Lung's weaknesses. Provide at least two examples from the text to support each one. Use direct quotations to support your ideas.

*Of Mice and Men*

In this novel, John Steinbeck explores the value of meaningful connections between human beings. How do these connections (*and* the lack of them) impact characters in this play? Use direct quotations to support your ideas.

*The Hobbit*

When the novel begins, Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit who prefers to read about an adventure rather than have one. Identify at least three ways that Bilbo changes over the course of the book and provide at least two examples from the text to support each one. Use direct quotations to support your ideas.

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

In some way, Tom Sawyer's story is the story of childhood. In other ways, it is a story about growing up. Describe two ways that Tom matures in the course of the novel and provide at least two examples from the text to support each one. Use direct quotations to support your ideas.

*The Call of the Wild*

In this novel, Buck the dog must adjust to the realities of life in the frozen Klondike. What does Buck learn about life in the Klondike? How must Buck transform himself in order to survive there? (Think about the title!) Use specific examples and direct quotations to support your ideas.

**10<sup>th</sup> Grade Assignments**

*The Scarlet Letter*

How are Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale changed by their sin? Are these changes external, internal, or both? Is one transformed more than the other? Identify at least two changes for each character and use specific examples and direct quotations to support your ideas.

### *The Awakening*

This question has two parts. First, explain the motivations for Edna Pontellier's act at the end of the novel. Identify at least two things/people/ ideas she is trying to escape and explain why. Second, decide if her final action is cowardly or heroic. Support your answers with examples and direct quotations.

### *The Jungle*

The American Dream can be described as the opportunity for success through honest hard work. Upton Sinclair exposes another reality behind the American Dream in this novel about corruption in the meatpacking industry. Identify at least three things that prevent Jurgis and his family from achieving their American Dream. Support your ideas with examples and direct quotations.

### *My Antonia*

Willa Cather's novel examines the immigrant's desire for the American Dream. Identify three challenges immigrants face in this novel. In the face of these challenges, are they able to fulfill their dreams? Is Antonia? Why or why not? Support your ideas with examples and direct quotations.

### *The Glass Menagerie*

Which member of the Wingfield family is the focus of Tennessee William's play? Decide which character is the play's focus and explain why—does he or she change, grow, win the audience's sympathy etc. Then choose three words to describe that character. (E.g. Tom is stubborn.) Provide at least three examples from the play to support each selection.

## **11<sup>th</sup> Grade Assignments**

### *Jane Eyre*

Erica Jong, in her "Introduction," in the Signet Classic edition, states:

*The universe of JANE EYRE operates according to female laws. Jane's success as a heroine depends on her breaking all the rules decreed for nineteenth-century women.*" (p. viii).

To what extent is Jane Eyre an appropriate heroine for the feminist movement? In what ways, if any, does she fall short? Give examples from the novel to support your conclusions.

### *Oliver Twist*

*Oliver Twist* is full of thievery. Some of it is committed by criminals like Sikes against respectable people, while some of it is committed by "respectable" people like Mrs. Mann and Mr. Bumble against the poor. How are these two types of thievery different? What do they have in common? How do other people "rob" Oliver of his identity? What does the prevalence of thievery in the novel say about the world that it portrays?

Use examples and direct quotations to support your ideas.

*Lord of the Flies*

School boys are stranded on a tropical island. Initially, their situation feels like a welcome reprieve from school while they await rescue from adults, but as time goes on, events on the island take a grim turn. Choose a character (Ralph, Piggy, Simon, or Jack) and identify three ways that character changes over the course of the novel. Use at least three examples to describe each change. What do these changes reveal about human nature? Use direct quotations.

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

Is Tess a tragic heroine trapped in circumstances beyond her control or is she a passive coward? Use at least five examples and direct quotations to support your answer.

*The Quiet American*

This question has three parts. First, what reasons does Fowler give for setting Pyle up? Do you accept those reasons? Could there be other reasons? Second, how are Fowler and Pyle alike? How are they different? Three, both Fowler and Pyle have blood on their hands. Is one character more or less heroic than the other? Use examples and direct quotations to support your ideas.

## **12<sup>th</sup> Grade CP Assignments**

*The Grapes of Wrath*

The American Dream can be described as the opportunity for success through honesty and hard work. What has happened to the American Dream in Steinbeck's novel? What happened to the Joads' dream in Oklahoma? What is their new dream? What do the Joads (and the reader) realize about the condition of the American Dream in the twentieth century? Use examples and direct quotations to support your ideas.

*The Secret Life of Bees*

Describe three ways that Lily changes in the course of the novel. Who and/or what is the impetus for these changes? Use specific examples and direct quotations to support your ideas.

*A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen

How does Nora change as the play progresses? How do we know? Why does Nora leave at play's end? Who benefits from this course of action? Use specific examples and direct quotations to support your ideas.

*The Stranger* by Albert Camus

Is Meursault really a threat to his society? Does he deserve the death penalty? Is he more or less dangerous than a criminal who commits a crime with clear motive? Use specific examples and direct quotations to support your ideas.

*The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka

Gregor Samsa wakes up one morning. He is late for work...and he is a bug. Life as an insect is Gregor's reality and his family must deal with this transformation. But no one ever wonders why this metamorphosis occurred. This seems like an obvious question.

Why don't Kafka's characters ever ask it? Use specific examples and direct quotations to support your ideas.

### **AP English**

**AP students must read all of the following and write essays on *The Grapes of Wrath* and *A Doll's House*. Students will be tested on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* during the first two weeks of class.**

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Test)

*The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

The American Dream can be described as the opportunity for success through honesty and hard work. What has happened to the American Dream in Steinbeck's novel? What happened to the Joads' dream in Oklahoma? What is their new dream? What do the Joads (and the reader) realize about the condition of the American Dream in the twentieth century? Use examples and direct quotations to support your ideas.

*A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen

How does Nora change as the play progresses? How do we know? Why does Nora leave at play's end? Who benefits from this course of action? Use specific examples and direct quotations to support your ideas.

**Any serious study of English literature requires knowledge of certain background materials which will help make the study not only more enjoyable but also add to one's understanding and appreciation.**

**Familiarity with the following is necessary and required.**

Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* (an indispensable reference source)

Selected readings from the **King James Bible**:

Genesis            1:1-3:24 (The Creation and the Fall)  
                          4:1-15 (The First Murder)  
                          6:5-9:17 (The Flood)  
                          11:1-9 (The Origin of Language)

Isaiah             52:13-53:12

Luke                2:1-52 (The Birth and Youth of Jesus)  
Matthew           5:1-7:29 (The Sermon on the Mount)  
Luke                15:1-32 (The Parables of Jesus)  
Matthew           26:14-75 (The Betrayal of Jesus)  
                          27: 1-66 (The Passion of Christ)  
                          28:1-20 (The Resurrection)

*The Divine Comedy* (optional but highly recommended)  
Read the summary appearing at the beginning of each Canto.  
*Inferno* (all)  
*Purgatorio* (Cantos I, II, XIX, XXVII, XXX, XXXI)  
*Paradisio* (Cantos I, III, XXI, XXXII, XXXIII)

## **GUIDELINES FOR WRITING YOUR ENGLISH ESSAYS**

- 1. Have a thesis sentence that clearly states the idea(s) discussed in your paper.**  
Remember, your thesis must be **specific!** Do not simply restate the topic.

**Sample topic: How does the Beast change in *Beauty and the Beast*?**

AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT NOT TO DO:

In *Beauty and the Beast*, the Beast changes a great deal.

AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

In *Beauty and the Beast*, the power of Belle's love redeems the Beast, changing him into a handsome prince; more importantly, the power of the Beast's love for Beauty transforms him into a kind and unselfish person who is worthy of Beauty.

UNDERLINE YOUR THESIS SENTENCE.

- 2. Begin paragraphs with specific topic sentences that refer back to ideas in your thesis.**

Topic sentences should not include examples or quotations.

AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT NOT TO DO:

In *Beauty and the Beast*, the Beast releases Beauty so she can help her father, even though it means he will remain a lonely beast.  
(This is an example, not a main idea.)

AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

In *Beauty and the Beast*, the Beast reveals how much he has changed when he makes unselfish choices out of love for Beauty.

(This is the main idea of your paragraph. Now use examples such as the one above to support it.)

UNDERLINE TOPIC SENTENCES.

- 3. Remember, incorporate direct quotations within your sentences. Do not let them "float" in your essay.**

AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT NOT TO DO:

William Cullen Bryant explores death in his poem "Thanatopsis." "The last bitter hour." This quotation refers to the death we must all face.

AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

In "Thanatopsis," William Cullen Bryant explores that "last bitter hour" (9), that hour of death, which comes to all people.

- 4. When using direct quotations, cite the page number in parentheses after the quotation.**

EXAMPLE: Because her Jody does not understand her, Janie's life with him becomes monotonous and unfulfilling; she begins to feel like "a rut in the road" (72) with no hope for the future.

- 5. Remember to underline or italicize long works of literature, such as novels, dramas, and epic poems.**
- 6. Your essays must be typed double-typed in Times New Roman 12-point font with one inch margins.**
- 7. Length requirement: two pages MINIMUM.**
- 8. Include name, date, and period in the upper left corner of your paper. Number all pages after the first page.**

**DUE DATE: THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASS**