

AP Literature and Composition: Summer Reading Assignment 2015-2016

Required Reading:

Gaines, Ernest J. *A Lesson Before Dying*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.
(ISBN-13: 9780375702709)

Assignment:

1. Divide book into fourths. These divisions don't need to be exact, so don't hack a chapter in two to accomplish this. Just divide it into four sections of approximately the same length.
2. For each fourth, keep a reading response journal to keep track of your thoughts, feelings, reactions, questions, etc. to that fourth of the novel. Do NOT summarize the novel. I have read it; I know what happens! Use the attached reading response sheets for this. Your responses should be handwritten and legible. I strongly advise you to complete this response log *as* you are reading. It is much more difficult to complete *after* you've read.
3. For each fourth, you will also choose a quotation that seems particularly important, provocative, interesting, thematic, etc. Write this quote in full and include the page number. In addition to recording the significant quotation, you will also explain why that quote is important to the novel as a whole. Use the important quotations sheet for this. Your quotations and explanations should be handwritten and legible.
4. Once you have completed the novel, choose one of the old AP essay questions listed below. Write an essay in response to your chosen prompt. Your essay should be about 500-700 words. Your essay must be typed and printed. Please double-space your work and use a readable font (such as Times New Roman). Follow MLA formatting guidelines.

Option A:

1999 AP Question: The eighteenth-century British novelist Laurence Sterne wrote, "No body, but he who has felt it, can conceive what a plaguing thing it is to have a man's mind torn asunder by two projects of equal strength, both obstinately pulling in a contrary direction at the same time."

From *A Lesson Before Dying*, choose a character (not necessarily the protagonist) whose mind is pulled in conflicting directions by two compelling desires, ambitions, obligations, or influences. Then, in a well-organized essay, identify each of the two conflicting forces and explain how this conflict within one character illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole.

Option B:

2011 AP Question: In a novel by William Styron, a father tells his son that life "is a search for justice."

Choose a character from *A Lesson Before Dying* who responds in some significant way to justice or injustice. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze the character's understanding of justice, the degree to which the character's search for justice is successful, and the significance of this search for the work as a whole.

This assignment is due on the first day of school, August 19, 2015.