

Summer Assignments for English 9 Honors

Reminder: “Optional” student in-service, to discuss readings and assignments, on WED AUGUST 11, 10 - 11 a.m. in the Arts & Science building. All assignments are due on the first day of school. Expect an additional evaluation in class.

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

The Once and Future King (Sword in the Stone—find the ORIGINAL 1958 version of *The Sword in the Stone*) T.H. White

The Girl in Hyacinth Blue Susan Vreeland

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

1. For *The Girl in the Hyacinth Blue*

In a five paragraph essay, analyze three moral choices and their outcomes that were made in the novel. (In your essay, consider the following: What were the choices based on? Describe the situations and the characters. Were they good choices? Were they the best choices that could have been made? [e.g., Cornelius' treatment of his father; Cornelius' decision regarding what to do with the painting; Saskia's use of the seed potatoes; Aletta's killing one baby; Adriann's giving up the other baby; Vermeer continuing to paint rather than taking a wage-earning job; Magdalena taking money from her husband's strongbox to buy the painting....]). Be sure to be as specific as possible when writing your essay, and be sure to structure your paper by using the **outline**. It may also be helpful to refer to the **rubric** to remind yourself of those points in which your essay will be assessed.

LITERARY ANALYSIS RUBRIC

4 This essay is excellent because it

- Has a clear introduction which includes the author's full name, title, and genre
- Includes a clear thesis or focus and a * Method of Development
- Includes a purposeful conclusion that restates thesis and closes with an implication, revelation, or interesting insight
- Is amply supported with reasons, examples, details, and quotes while avoiding plot summary (three or more supports per paragraph)
- Demonstrates superior understanding of the text and subject matter
- Uses effective organization throughout
- Uses transitional words and phrases between sentences and paragraphs for a smooth flow
- Demonstrates effective syntax (a variety of sentence lengths and structures) and formal diction (word choice) avoiding the first and second person , wordiness, and redundancy

- Demonstrates accuracy in the use of the literary present tense, grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Uses proper format: 12 font Arial Double spaced

3 This essay is good because it

- Has an introduction which includes the author's full name, title, and genre
- Includes a clear thesis or focus and a *Method of Development
- Includes a conclusion that restates but does not repeat thesis and adds an interesting insight
- Is supported with reasons, examples, details, and quotes (at least 3 supports paragraph) and avoids plot summary
- Demonstrates good understanding of the text and subject matter
- Has good organization throughout
- Uses transitional words and phrases between sentences and paragraphs
- Demonstrates appropriate syntax (sentence length and structure) and formal diction (word choice)
- Demonstrates, generally, accuracy in the literary present tense, grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Uses proper format: Typed in 12 font Arial and double spaced

2 This essay is average because it

- Has an introduction but is lacking one or more of the following: author's full name, title, genre
- Has a thesis or focus but wanders and may not include a Method of Development
- Includes a weak conclusion that simply repeats the thesis
- Is supported minimally with reasons, examples, details, and quotes
- Lacks full understanding of text and subject matter
- Shows occasional weakness in organization
- Uses transitions but not throughout; may be choppy
- Demonstrates basic understanding of syntax and formal diction; uses colloquial language
- Demonstrates inconsistency in verb tense, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Has minor inaccuracies in format

1 This essay is below average because it

- Lacks a thesis or focus or shifts
- Excludes author's name, title, or genre in the introduction
- Lacks closure and a conclusion
- Does not develop or support ideas sufficiently
- Lacks basic organization
- Is choppy and lacks transitions
- Lacks basic control of syntax and formal diction; uses clichés and simplistic structure

- Has many errors in tense, grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Is not typed in 12 font arial and is not double spaced

*A Method of Development (MOD) is sometimes called a MAP and can be included with your thesis statement or can be a separate sentence always within the introduction. Here is an example for this particular essay. This example combines the thesis and MOD.

EXAMPLE:

In this novel many characters, including Aletta, who is a supposed witch, Saskia, who is a farmer's wife, and Cornelius, who is a tormented math teacher, face difficult moral dilemmas that ultimately reveal the great impact that Vermeer's painting has on their lives.

If this were your thesis and MOD statement, then your first body paragraph would discuss Aletta's moral choice and all of its implications, the second body paragraph would discuss Saskia's moral choices and all of their implications, and the third body paragraph would discuss Cornelius' moral choices and all of their outcomes or implications. As you can see, the MOD is a good way for you to organize your thoughts in your essay and it makes it easier for your reader to follow.

2. For The Once and Future King (Sword in the Stone)

Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Some questions will require a few sentences, while others may require a full paragraph. Type your answers double spacing only between each response as I have done here with the questions. Spelling and grammar do count. * It would be a good idea to peruse these questions before you begin reading and then annotate your text as you read so that answering these questions will be easier for you. If you borrow a book from the library you may choose to use post it notes to annotate.

1. What does this novel say about education? Discuss the many ways in which the Wart learns and the many ways in which different societies of people and animals learn as portrayed in the book.
2. What types of government systems are represented by the various societies which the Wart visits? What are the distinctive characteristics of these systems? What are the pros and cons? What does a member of these societies need to do in order to survive? How is each leader in each society characterized? Why would Merlyn want the Wart to visit these specific societies?
3. Why does this novel about the Middle Ages in which knights and warriors were so highly praised offer a silly character like King Pellinore and his endless quest? What does the novel seem to say about quests?

4. How are the Wart and Kay foils? What type of a person is Kay according to Merlyn and the author? Provide specific descriptions for each character. For example, if you say that the Wart is compassionate and Kay is not, in which incidents is this shown?
5. What does the novel say about the Middle Ages? Was the feudal system a bad one?
6. How does the author create humor in this parody of the Middle Ages and its knights and quests? Point out as many instances of anachronisms as possible.
7. Explain the significance of Merlyn's words: "Education is experience and the essence of experience is self-reliance." Is it feasible to use an experiential approach in education today?
Also, what are the advantages and disadvantages of learning through self-reliance?
8. What is the significance of the Rabbi and Elijah parable? Do you agree or disagree with its teaching? What do you notice as the defining characteristics of the parable as a genre?
9. What is the significance of the Badger's Creation Story?
10. What does the Badger mean when he says that the ends of life are "to dig and to love your home"?
11. What does the author think about war? Defend your answer using all of the instances in which war and warriors whether human or animal are discussed. Do you agree with the author's or the various characters' views of war?
12. Comment on the various ideas verbalized by Merlyn such as his ideas on knights, learning, and the use of magic and "only fools want to be great."
13. Are there any lessons that the young boys learn in Kay's Forest Adventure? What do they learn about leaning itself? About women and women leaders?
14. What does the Wart say he would do if he were to be a knight?