



AMERICAN LITERATURE SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT

Students are required to read TWO books over the summer.

- **Book #1 Requirements:**
 - One book is required from the reading list below. These books are connected to our class's content (American Literature themes). All students will keep a dialectical journal for this book (see handout for directions).
 - When students return to school in the fall, they will be required to complete a writing assessment related to their summer reading. This will be their first grade for American Literature.
- **Book #2 Requirements:**

Students will read a book of their choice based on their lexile.
Students will perform a book commercial for their class during the first weeks of school.

If a student only reads ONE book, then that student will only receive credit for ONE assessment. The same book cannot be used on more than one assessment! You also may NOT choose any book that you have read for a previous class. These books should be completed BEFORE fall semester begins.

AMERICAN LITERATURE SUMMER READING LIST

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn-Mark Twain

The Awakening-Kate Chopin

The Jungle-Sinclair Lewis

Uncle Tom's Cabin-Harriet Beecher Stowe

Ethan Frome-Edith Wharton

In Cold Blood-Truman Capote

Reservation Blues-Sherman Alexie

The Absolute True Story of a Part-time Indian-Sherman Alexie

Of Mice and Men-John Steinbeck

Caramelo-Sandra Cisneros

The Invisible Man-Ralph Ellison

Tender is the Night-F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Scarlet Letter-Hawthorne

A Prayer for Owen Meany-John Irving

Tortilla Curtain-TC Boyle

The Joy Luck Club-Amy Tan

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn-Betty Smith

Farewell to Arms-Hemingway (or any book by Hemingway)

The Sun Also Rises-Hemingway

For Whom the Bell Tolls-Hemingway

The Grapes of Wrath or East of Eden-John Steinbeck

Cold Mountain-Charles Frazier

To Kill A Mockingbird-Harper Lee (only if you have not already read this book!)

Beloved-Toni Morrison (or any Morrison)

Age of Innocence-Edith Wharton

Ceremony-Leslie Marmon Silko

Their Eyes Were Watching God-Zora Neale Hurston

Slaughterhouse Five - Vonnegut

Bean Trees-Barbara Kingsolver (or any book by her)

Black Boy OR *Native Son*-Richard Wright

On the Road- Jack Kerouac

The Bell Jar- Sylvia Plath

Fahrenheit 451-Ray Bradbury

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest-Ken Kesey

Snow Falling on Cedars-David Guterson

Directions for Dialectical Journals:

What is a dialectical journal?

According to the New Oxford American Dictionary, “dialectical” means “relating to the logical discussion of ideas and opinions.”

How do I create these notes?

The setup is simple. At the top of the page, list the title and author of the work. Divide your paper in half vertically. At the top of the left hand column, write “quotes”, and at the top of the right hand column, write “notes.” It is up to you to determine whether you handwrite or type and print your journal entries. The overall goal of keeping this type of journal is to record what you are thinking as you are reading, so that your impressions, questions, and ideas about the text are not lost. Your journal entries should reflect the meaning that you are building for yourself from the reading. They should reveal what you are thinking: your struggles, as well as your insights about the reading. Your journals are meant to build YOUR analytical skills, so DO NOT CONSULT

OUTSIDE SOURCES for your journals. You need TEN journal entries from throughout ENTIRE book. In other words, don't do them for the first two chapters and then stop.

What might a sample dialectical journal entry look like?

Think of this journal as a place for you to interact with the text. As we read, we often have "Aha!" moments. Something on the page really resonates with us for some reason. Copy that portion of the text, citing its page number. Use of ellipsis (...) is fine for long quotes, as long as you write down the part of the quote you'll be exploring. Then, record your thoughts about the language use, including sentence structure and figurative language, a word that confuses or intrigues you, plot, characterization, theme, allusion, a personal interpretation, and connections to other texts or to your own life.

Here are two sample dialectical journal entries from the first chapter of Ian McEwan's novel, *Atonement*:

| Quotes | My Notes |
|---|--|
| <p>"But hidden drawers, lockable diaries and cryptographic systems could not conceal from Briony the simple truth: she had no secrets...Nothing in her life was sufficiently interesting or shameful to merit hiding; no one knew about the squirrel's skull beneath her bed, but no one wanted to know." (5)</p> | <p>The author is creating a unique character here. He shows Briony's need for order with the way she keeps her possessions. Briony thinks about her own existence in a way that makes me feel sympathy for this young girl and curiosity about her keen intelligence and sense of purpose in life.</p> |
| <p>"Yes. Unable to push her tongue against the word, Briony could only nod, and felt as she did so a sulky thrill of self-annihilating spreading across her skin and ballooning outward from it, darkening the room in throbs. She wanted to leave, she wanted to lie alone, facedown on her bed and savor the vile piquancy of the moment, and go back down the lines of branching consequences to the point before the destruction began." (14)</p> | <p>I'm very impressed with McEwan's ability to inhabit the mind and the emotions of this character. He captures Briony's wish to start over, to undo the events that she has unintentionally begun. But he also reveals that she feels some type of pleasure in this pain... his diction here is pitch perfect and demonstrates the angst of this thirteen year old girl and the idea that everything is such a big deal to her.</p> |

CHOOSING A BOOK: LEXILE LEVELS

There are many factors that affect the relationship between a reader and text, including content, age-appropriateness, reader interests, suitability of the text, and text difficulty. The Lexile measure of a book—a measure of text difficulty—is a good starting point in the book-selection process, with other factors then being considered. The Lexile measure should never be the only factor considered when selecting a book.

What is a Lexile?

- Lexiles can range from approximately 200 to 2000.
- A Lexile is the level of book that a student can read with 75% comprehension.

Which book should you read?

- Choose books with a Lexile from 100 below to 50 above your score. For example, if you read at 830L, you should pick a book with a Lexile range of 730L-880L.

FIND A BOOK USING LEXILES!

1. Log on to your computer and open an internet window.
2. Type in the following address: <http://www.lexile.com/fab/>
3. Add the lexile level (on the front of this sheet) and hit submit.
4. Select your interests.
5. Browse through the list of books generated just for you!