

Summer Reading 2008

Honors Classical Literature

Welcome to Classical Literature! Our literary heritage began long ago with works written and read by individuals who lived in entirely different circumstances than we now enjoy. This year, we will explore those archetypal models on which we have built our own modern literary masterpieces, and look for those human connections which transcend time.

Your study begins this summer with two novels: one a classic adventure story written in 1844, and the other a rich fictional imagination of a classic painting set in 17th century Holland. These two stories embody classic themes such as revenge, betrayal, family relationships, the nature of love, and choices—all of these are focal points of the texts we will study throughout the rest of the year. In order to practice active reading and hone your literary analysis skills, each student will complete a reading journal assignment for both works. This assignment is described in detail on the back of this paper. The journal must be submitted on **September 2, 2008**. Upon your return to school in the fall, you will take a test and write an essay on the assigned reading. The journal assignment will account for 50% of your summer reading grade and the test and essay will account for the other 50%.

You must read both of the following texts and complete the accompanying assignment.

The Count of Monte Cristo by Alexandre Dumas (Abridged Version)

While a nice introduction to the tragic downfalls of characters like Oedipus and Okonkwo, The Count of Monte Cristo, most notably is a story of revenge. How far will one man go to achieve ultimate revenge?

...Set against the turbulent years of the Napoleonic era, Alexandre Dumas' thrilling adventure story is one of the most widely read romantic novels of all time. In it the dashing young hero, Edmond Dantes, is betrayed by his enemies and thrown into a secret dungeon in the Chateau d'If - doomed to spend his life in a dank prison cell. The story of his long, intolerable years in captivity, his miraculous escape, and his carefully wrought revenge creates a dramatic tale of mystery and intrigue, and paints a vision of France - a dazzling, dueling, exuberant France - that has become immortal (Bantam Books).

Girl with a Pearl Earring by Tracy Chevalier

This particular novel offers an introduction to one of the thematic units of study sophomore year, "Class, Gender, and Ethnicity: An Examination of Identity." This engrossing novel will demand your attention with its rich language and emotional tension.

Through the eyes of its protagonist, the modest daughter of a tile maker who in 1664 is forced to work as a maid in the Vermeer household because her father has gone blind, Chevalier presents a marvelously textured picture of 17th-century Delft. The physical appearance of the city is clearly delineated, as is its rigidly defined class system, the grinding poverty of the working people and the prejudice against Catholics among the Protestant majority. From the very first, 16-year-old narrator Griet establishes herself as a keen observer who sees the world in sensuous images, expressed in precise and luminous prose. Through her vision, the personalities of coolly distant Vermeer, his emotionally volatile wife, Catharina, his sharp-eyed and benevolently powerful mother-in-law, Maria Thins, and his increasing brood of children are traced with subtle shading, and the strains and jealousies within the household potently conveyed (Publishers Weekly).

Enjoy the books and have a great summer!

Summer Reading Journal Assignment

For both The Count of Monte Cristo and Girl with a Pearl Earring you will keep a double-entry journal. In the journal you must identify at least **five significant quotations** for each work of literature. Significant quotations are passages in the work which:

- evoke strong sensory experiences
- prompt you to connect to another piece of literature, or a current or historical events
- demonstrate point of view
- reveal characterization
- reveal theme
- have rich language (diction)
- have striking syntax (grammatical construction of sentences) or organization
- illustrate a conflict, major or minor

Your double-entry journal must have the appropriate heading and must be typed in size 12, Times New Roman font. All entries must be formatted as the example provided. This example demonstrates not only the formatting required, but also the types of responses you should give.

Double-Entry Journal Example

Student Name
Summer Reading Double-Entry Journal

August 28, 2008
Honors Classical Literature

Quotation	Response
<p>Text: <u>The House on Mango Street</u>*</p> <p>Passage: Marin under the streetlight, dancing by herself, is singing the same song somewhere. I know. Is waiting for a car to stop, a star to fall, someone to change her life (27).</p> <p>*This is a sample. When you do your double-entry journal, you will write either <u>The Count of Monte Cristo</u>, or <u>Girl with a Pearl Earring</u> in that space.</p>	<p>Context: Esperanza has been watching Marin in the evenings. Her observations help her get to know Marin and interpret what her actions might mean. Esperanza has a sense that Marin is just waiting for change to happen to her.</p> <p>Significance: Esperanza understands that Marin thinks her life will change when someone comes into her life. That someone will be a man. Marin knows she can use her physical attractiveness to escape Mango Street. Esperanza appears to relate to Marin because she says, "I know." Esperanza also has dreams of changing her life and rising above her current situation on Mango Street. I think that Esperanza would like to be an active participant in her destiny and <i>make</i> change happen, rather than wait for her destiny to happen <i>to</i> her. She sees Marin as another example of what her life could be if she does not leave Mango Street.</p> <p>Stylistic devices in this passage include symbolism and alliteration. A falling star is something you wish upon and thus symbolizes Marin's dependency on something outside herself to bring change. The author uses alliteration to establish rhythm in this passage: "Same song somewhere."</p>