

GREAT MILLS HIGH SCHOOL

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Spring 2009

Dear Future English 10 Honors Students,

Welcome to Sophomore Honors English! This letter provides your Summer Reading Assignment for 2009-10. Please read it carefully so that you understand what is expected of you prior to the first day of school in August.

English 10 Honors involves the study of world literature, including drama, fiction, poetry, visual media, and the essay. Frequent critical reading and writing assignments provide students with the opportunity to improve their skills as they prepare for the High School Assessment, PSAT and SAT, and Advanced Placement English. Students are expected to be organized, self-motivated learners. Managing multi-step projects and meeting deadlines is emphasized. Students are encouraged to seek additional support from the instructor as needed.

In addition to filling your summer with fun reading, **you students are required to read two works of literature this summer.** I recommend that you complete the reading assignments in order listed to match next year's course of study. It is a good idea to purchase copies of the summer texts so that you may annotate (mark the text) as you read. However, you may choose to borrow copies from the library, a relative, or a friend and keep separate reading notes.

1. *Siddhartha*, by Hermann Hesse
2. *Julius Caesar*, by William Shakespeare

Students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of their reading through completion of two assignments, described below. The value of these assignments is to strengthen your understanding of the literature. Use of study aides, such as a book about Hinduism or plot summaries of Shakespeare's play, is encouraged. However, NO study aide is an effective substitution for reading the text. Students who rely on the Internet to "find out" what the books mean will find their understanding both limited and unoriginal. Plagiarism will result in a zero grade. All students are expected to understand that copying another person's work amounts to stealing.

ASSIGNMENT 1: Siddhartha's Journey

Rather than being a study of religion, Hesse's novel is an examination of the traditions, culture, and values of India through the journey of a man's search for perfect truth and insight. Though the story may be simple, the concepts revealed within it are not.

In a written essay, explain how the character of Siddhartha changes as the story progresses. Use details and examples from the text to show Siddhartha's development; you are encouraged to consider how Siddhartha's relationships with other characters reveal the changes in his own character.

ABOUT CHARACTERIZATION: A reader's understanding emerges through the writer's use of *characterization*, the use of literary techniques to create a character. Think about the following as you plan your essay:

How Writers Create Character

1. What the character says to other characters in the story
2. How the character behaves in the story
3. What the character is thinking or saying to himself or herself
4. What other characters say about that character
5. Direct description

FORMATTING: Essays are expected to be typed, double-space, in Times 12 point font. A header at the top of the page should include your name, date, class, and assignment name. Students who choose not to follow these format guidelines will be expected to re-do their work for late credit.

ASSIGNMENT 2: Character and Power in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*

Create a character description for each of the major characters in *Julius Caesar*. Be sure to include Caesar, Marcus Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Marc Antony, Octavius, Calpurnia, and Portia. In each paragraph, identify at least three character traits (psychological as well as physical) and explain what evidence in the story supports your ideas about characterization.

If you quote text from the play, remember to use quotation marks and indicate the act, scene, and line number. For example, act one, scene two, lines 34-37 would be written as (I, ii, 34-37).

Finally, create a character web that shows the character in *Julius Caesar* whom you feel is the most powerful person in the story. Represent the connections of the most powerful person to the other characters by adding key words and text details to show how that person has power over the others in the play.

IMPORTANT: Keep your annotated texts or else keep notes from your reading that you can review prior to reading assessments during the school year.

Students are expected to have familiarity with both *Siddhartha* and *Julius Caesar* from their summer work, yet can expect to develop further understandings through in-depth class study.

If you have questions as you work, please email me at joffenbacher@gmail.com and I will respond within a few days. I look forward to teaching you next year!

Sincerely,

Jeanette Offenbacher
Honors English Teacher