

## AP English Literature and Composition Independent Reading Guidelines

Students are required to independently read one novel or play each 9-week quarter of the school year. Students will complete a three-part assignment on each novel--an essay, a reading journal, and a Major Works' Study Guide. These assignments will have "hard due dates." The essays will be turned in to Turnitin.com. The reading journals and Major Works' Study Guides must be turned in on the due date or be subject to the late work deduction. In addition, a progress check on reading journals will be conducted mid-quarter.

### LIST OF NOVELS

QUARTER ONE – Your choice of Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen or Beloved by Toni Morrison

QUARTER TWO – The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver

QUARTER THREE – Any Shakespearean comedy (except A Midsummer Night's Dream or The Tempest)

Two Gentlemen of Verona

Merry Wives of Windsor

Measure for Measure

Comedy of Errors

Much Ado about Nothing

Love's Labor's Lost

Merchant of Venice

As You Like It

Taming of the Shrew

All's Well That Ends Well

Twelfth Night

Winter's Tale

QUARTER FOUR – Death of a Salesman\*\* by Arthur Miller (\*\*in AP textbook)

All of these titles have appeared on the AP list. In addition, these works are standard in many high schools across the nation as well as in college and university programs.

### PLACES TO FIND BOOKS

You are required to provide your novels for independent reading. You have many options for obtaining them. You can utilize the Coronado HS or public library. Please keep tabs on the due date and renew your novel accordingly to avoid fines. You may purchase books at the local bookstore. (I would encourage you to inquire about inexpensive paperback copies. These books are classics and are constantly in print.) Finally, there are two websites, which offer classic titles at reasonable prices:

#### **DOVER LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE CATALOG**

**[www.doverpublications.com](http://www.doverpublications.com)**

#### **PRESTWICK HOUSE, INC.**

**[www.prestwickhouse.com](http://www.prestwickhouse.com)**

**Your reading journal will represent your own personal dialogue with the novel. It is intended to provide the foundation for original literary analysis. Think of it as a conversation that you are having with the novel as you are reading it. You want to continually be relating to and thinking about the text. Keep your reading log in a spiral bound notebook with three holes in your AP English notebook under the Independent Reading tab. Always bring it to class!**

On the first page of your spiral bound notebook write the following information:

AP English Lit  
Reading Journal  
Quarter (1, 2, 3, or 4)  
Name  
Due Date  
Period  
Title of Novel or Play (Underline It!)  
First and Last Name of Author  
Publisher  
City of Publication  
Copyright Date  
Total Number of Pages

1. Divide your paper in half vertically.
2. Label the left column "Evidence." (These are exact passages or quotations from the text.) **You must write exact quotes from the text in the left-hand column in the sequential order as they appear in the novel. If the sentence is especially long just write the key words and use an ellipsis (...). You should be keeping your journal as you are reading the novel, so this format should not be difficult. Your quotes should be evenly distributed throughout the book. They cannot all be from only a few chapters in the book, but should demonstrate that you did indeed read the entire novel. Quotes do not have to be only dialogue. They can include descriptive passages as well.**
3. Label the right column "Commentary." These are your thoughts or reactions to the Evidence from the text.
4. Number your entries.
5. As you read, quote important ideas from the text in the left column using quotation marks and putting the page number at the end in parentheses. Note the page numbers and the proper way to document your quotes below. Novels should include the page number in parenthesis after EACH piece of Evidence (quote) (143). If you are reading a play please use (Act, Scene, line) (I, iii, 45).
6. In the Commentary column note your reaction or response to each quotation in COMPLETE SENTENCES. Do not restate the Evidence. Do not write "John said this," and expect it to count as personal commentary. Do not use unidentified pronouns!
7. **Do not merely summarize or paraphrase the quote in your Commentary.** You must respond or react to it!
8. **Reading logs must be handwritten.**
9. **EVALUATION**—The evaluation of this assignment will be divided into two parts, each worth 50% of the grade—Entries and Quality. First, you will be given a grade based on the number of entries (must have Evidence and Commentary to count as one entry).

The following scale will apply for the **first and second quarter** novels.

75 entries—100%  
68 entries—90%  
60 entries—80%  
53 entries—70%  
45 entries—60%

The **third and fourth quarter** independent reading selections are plays. The following scale will apply.

50 entries—100%  
45 entries—90%  
40 entries—80%  
35 entries—70%  
30 entries—60%

The second part of your grade will be based on the quality of your commentary. What defines quality commentary? Quality commentary includes observations and thoughts about the text which show that you are focusing on details and are thinking about them thoroughly and insightfully. See the attached examples.

Once you have read your text and completed your journal you will already have a great set of notes on which to draw when you write your essay. You also should have gained a great deal of insight about your particular text.

## EXAMPLE: READING JOURNAL

Study the evidence in the chart below. For each quotation, you must have thorough and well thought out commentary.

EVIDENCE	COMMENTARY
5. "Jose Arcadio Buendia, trying to surprise Divine Providence in the midst of the cataclysm, was the one who least understood it." (60)	It is the middle of this quote that I find interesting. Divine Providence is the same thing as fate. How can you surprise fate? I don't think that you can. Just another side of how misguided Jose Arcadio Buendia is at times.
6. Linda: "Well, you'll just have to take a Rest, Willy, you can't continue this way." Willy: "I just got back from Florida." Linda: "But you didn't rest your mind. Your mind is overactive, and the mind is what counts, dear." (I, iii, 3)	Nowadays, it seems that vacations can sometimes contribute more to one's stress than if one were not to take a vacation. If one is overburdened by work, being away from that buildup of work only exacerbates his or her worry. Willy does not understand this concept; he expects too much out of himself because he expects that a vacation should naturally relax him. Linda is correct in stating the mind is what counts because an "overly active mind" can contribute to physical fatigue. However, the problem lies deeper than Willy's mind; his problem is the job that feeds this overly active mind.

### PLEASE NOTE:

Reading Journals must be handwritten in a spiral bound notebook. Please remember, if I cannot read it, I cannot grade it. Take your time and write neatly and thoughtfully.

You may use both the front and back of the paper, and you may write on every line. You may use any color of pen or pencil as long as it is legible. Get used to reading and responding to the text. An immediate response is imperative. Knowing the ending of a story influences your emotional response as you read and may alter your commentary in a significant way. It is imperative that you write your commentary AS YOU NOTE YOUR EVIDENCE. Failure to do so may result in a loss of points.



## HOW should I choose the evidence (quotes) for my reading journal?

- Find a line or passage that offers a powerful statement. You are allowed to define the power in any way you wish. Sometimes a passage is particularly persuasive, emotional, descriptive, or meaningful—but there are all kinds of other things that set one line apart from the rest. Decide for yourself.
- Consider the assignment you will be completing on this novel and use your literature log as a tool. Will you be writing an essay on a hero, the theme, or the conflict in the novel? Use your log to trace that idea and you will already have textual support for your essay!
- Find a line or passage that confuses you. You find yourself wondering if you might understand the whole text better if you could make sense of this part.
- Find a line or passage that helps you understand the text or that reminds you of another text that you have read. (How is this similar to or different from the other, and how can that comparison or contrast contribute to our understanding of the text?)
- Find a line or passage that demonstrates a noteworthy way of connecting with and persuading the reader.
- Find a line or passage which made a strong impression on YOU. It could be something you seriously disagree with; if so, go ahead and counter the argument in your Commentary. On the other hand, if it's something you like, is this something you want to remember and/or live up to in your own life? Would your life be any different if you do?

### Spelling and Grammar / Opinions

You can use informal style as long as you write in a way that does not undermine your credibility as a commentator. (Significant grammar problems will affect your readability and your credibility.) Please be certain to use school appropriate language and refrain from the use of profanity. Certainly your personal opinions will be evident in your Commentary section, but remember this is not a place simply to VENT! (I like this book. I hate this book.) **Every sentence that you write in the Commentary section must be tied to the Evidence provided.** The Commentary section is to be used to help you understand and **relate to the text.**

## Commentary Starters

Commentary is your connection with the novel you are reading. How do you relate to the text? Writing commentary forces you to pay close attention to the details and critically think about the text. Here are some guidelines to help you think speculatively about your reading. You'll find they can be applied to whatever you happen to be reading—whether it is for English class, physics, math, psychology, or just for pleasure.

1. First impressions—Take some time to write down anything that comes to you in relations to the text—your initial reactions / responses. Don't try to puzzle them out—just freewrite. If the reading bores you write that down and try to pinpoint why. If you're intrigued by certain statements, if you're attracted to characters or issues or problems, write that down and try to pinpoint why you feel that way. Just write! Try to take 2 or 3 minutes to write something whenever you've finished an assignment, or when you've put your book down for a break.
2. Make connections with your own experiences. What in your experience does the reading make you think of? What does it remind you of? Have you ever been in a similar situation or place? Has a family member or friend ever dealt with a similar problem? What emotions have you felt as you've read?
3. Make connections with other texts or concepts or events. Do you see any similarities between this material and other works you've read? Does it bring to mind other issues or contexts that are somehow related?
4. Ask yourself questions about the text: What perplexes you about some passage or some point that the writer is making? Try beginning, "I wonder why..." or "I'm having trouble understanding how..." or "It perplexes me that...."
5. Try agreeing with the writer or character. Think of all the things you can say or that you have experienced that would support his or her ideas.
6. Try arguing with the writer or character. On what points or about what issues do you disagree?
7. Jot down ideas, images, details that strike you. WHY are they memorable?
8. Locate / identify the author's point of view, his / her attitude toward what he / she is saying. Ask yourself how this perspective or attitude shapes the way the writer presents the material and develops his or her thesis.
9. Discuss the relationship between two characters. The comments can be directed toward family relationships, romantic relationships, subject / sovereign relationships, political relationships, or friendships.
10. Comment on a character's choices. Do they seem to be leading to an inevitable end?
11. Note the author's use of symbolism, imagery, or other literary devices. How does it affect your reactions to the text?