



Westminster Christian Academy

11th Grade Summer Reading

Honors American Literature

Mr. Roff

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This junior level course is an accelerated survey of both classic and modern works of American literature and culture for students who enjoy reading. The American Dream, a belief in the possibility and opportunity presented by life in the United States of America, is a main theme discussed during the beginning of our course. We will analyze and evaluate this dream both historically and in our current culture.

Your summer reading assignments will introduce you to the themes of this class and serve as the basis for our initial discussions and writing.

1. **Read *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald**, the classic novel about the American Dream. (Read the novel, do not simply watch the movie.)

You should read the text carefully, annotating for important details and your own personal observations and conclusions. You will respond to the novel through a reading journal (described on page two of this handout). In addition to keeping a reading journal for the novel, there will be an objective test over the novel sometime within the first two weeks of school. After our class discussion of the novel, you will be assigned a related essay, but you do not need to worry about that now ☺.

**You will be required to keep a Reading Journal for this novel (see instructions on the following page).

2. **Read “What is an American” Letter III of *Letters from an American Farmer* by Michel-Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur.**

This short essay should be found attached in PDF by following this link:

<https://americanclass.org/sources/makingrevolution/independence/text6/crevecoeuramerican.pdf>

As you read, attempt to make connections between the view of America presented in *The Great Gatsby* and this essay. You should annotate carefully as you read this essay.

11th Grade Honors Summer Reading - Keeping a Reading Journal on *The Great Gatsby*

In order to help you successfully complete this year's summer reading assignment, you will be asked to keep a journal as you read. In this journal (can be typed or handwritten), you can record your thoughts as you progress through the story. Below you will find several prompts that you should use to focus your journal entries.

Your reading journal will be your first graded assignment for your junior English class. Additionally, the reading journal will serve as a helpful tool for the first major essay assignment in our class, which will require you to use *The Great Gatsby* as a source.

Instructions:

- Date each entry.
- Fully develop your response with examples and explanations, including cited textual evidence.
- Create THREE different journal entries. The novel is nine chapters, so create your journal entries using three chapters at a time.
 - Entry #1 – Chapters 1 through 3
 - Entry #2 – Chapters 4 through 6
 - Entry #3 – Chapters 7 through 9
- Each entry should be a minimum of ONE page in length.
- You may use personal language such as “I” or “me” since these responses are not formal essays.
- Complete the journal only for *The Great Gatsby* (not the essay “What is an American?”).

Summer Reading Journal Prompts

1. How are characters developing as the story progresses? How do you personally feel about specific characters? Are some characters more dynamic than others (do they change during the story)? How have the events or other characters influenced or motivated the actions of certain characters?
2. What are some of the recurring themes, ideas, images, and/or symbols (we call these “motifs”)? Why do you think the author might be repeating these recurring elements? How do these motifs add to the meaning of the story?
3. What are the major conflicts in the story? Why have these conflicts formed and how are these conflicts developing? Would you categorize these conflicts as external (from outside sources) or internal (within the characters)?
4. Can you relate or make any connections to the characters in this book? How have you been able to empathize with these characters? How do specific parts of the story remind you of your own life?
5. Who is the narrator of the story? How does the narrator of the story influence or affect the manner in which the story is told? Why would the author have selected this particular narrator for the story? How might a different narrator change or alter the story?
6. Write a letter to one of the characters from the book. Attempt to offer this character advice based on their situation or conflict. You should include at least two specific events which this character is a part of during the story. You may also ask questions.
7. Evaluate the writing style of the author. What are the techniques that the author frequently makes use of and how effective are these techniques? You have also looked at how the author develops a tone for their subject through word choice.

8. If you could be or become one of the characters from the story for one day, who would you choose and why? Which character would you most certainly not want to be and why? Include elements of your own personality and interests to help explain your reasoning.
9. What is the overall mood (feeling given to the reader) created by this story? What are some examples of how the author creates this mood or feeling within their audience?
10. Choose one passage from the story that you believe is vital and important in understanding the overall text. Write the passage down (including citation) and then explain the importance of the passage. Include a discussion of any literary elements you notice being used to create meaning.
11. What, in your opinion, is the overall theme or message of the story? How does the author develop this message or theme throughout the text? What are some scenes or events in the story that directly point to this message?
12. What is your overall opinion of the story? In your evaluation or review, consider which elements of the story are effective/enjoyable and which elements from the story you might change or improve. Provide specific examples of the strengths or weaknesses of the book.

Rubric for Summer Reading Journals

5	4	3	2	1
Responses are richly developed with personal reflection and multiple specific examples from the text. Responses display close and careful reading of the text. Accurate citation included.	Responses are developed with some specific references or details from the text. Some personal connections or reflections made. Accurate citation included.	Responses are partially developed with some ideas not fully explained or supported with examples from the text. Some accurate citations included.	Responses are very general and lack specific examples from the text. Responses are underdeveloped.	Responses show little to no evidence of actual reading OR Responses are significantly underdeveloped