

Academy of the Sacred Heart
Summer Reading Assignments 2010-2011
English I
Ms. Guillory

Introduction

English I is an introduction to literature course, and this summer reading assignment is intended to make students think about the role of literature in their lives. Students may choose from one of two books, both of which address the impact literature makes on individuals, and all students will watch a film that deals with the same concept. The year's first unit of study will focus on the theme of literature in our lives, and this summer reading assignment will be the springboard for that exploration.

Directions

During the summer, all students enrolled in English I must read ONE of the books listed below and complete the attached Summer Reading Organizer for that book as well as the attached questions for the book. Students must also watch the required film identified below and answer the attached questions about the film.

Students must bring the completed work and the novel to the first English class.

Once school begins, students will complete a project and write an essay based on the summer assignment.

Grading

The Summer Reading Organizer and questions will be graded for completion. Students who answer all questions and follow all directions will receive full credit.

These assignments will be used in class to facilitate discussion of the summer readings and to prepare for the project and essay about the summer readings.

Book Choices

Choose ONE of the following books to read.

- *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury (fiction; science fiction; for advanced readers)
- *Bad Boy: A Memoir* by Walter Dean Myers (nonfiction; memoir; for all reading levels)

Movie

- *Dead Poets Society*, directed by Peter Weir and starring Robin Williams, Rated PG

Student's Name: _____

Summer Reading Organizer for _____
Title of Book

Students should complete the following organizer for each book required for their English class.

List the physical, intellectual, and emotional qualities of any major character from the book.

Write one quote from the book that illustrates your description.

Write the page number where the quote is found.

Choose a setting from the book and describe it. Use your own words.

Write one quote from the book that illustrates your description.

Write the page number where the quote is found.

Explain a major conflict about reading or literature in the book.

Write one quote from the book that illustrates the conflict.

Write the page number where the quote is found.

Student's Name: _____

Questions for *Bad Boy: A Memoir* by Walter Dean Myers

Short answers: Each question can be answered in 5-7 sentences. No answer should be longer than a single paragraph. Use complete sentences.

Only answer these questions if *Bad Boy* is the book you chose to read.

1. Walter describes many moments in his life when literature has an impact on him. Explain one of those experiences and exactly how literature makes a personal impact on Walter.
2. Walter mentions many writers in this book and how he came to appreciate or maybe *not* appreciate their writing. Select one writer whom Walter discusses and explain the effect the writer's work has on Walter's education, life, choices, understanding of the world, etc. (If you need to do Internet research on the writer, you may.)
3. What impact does Walter's race have on his experiences with literature? Fully explain with details from the story.
4. What impact does Walter's class (the level of society he inhabits because of the amount of money his family has) have on his experiences with literature? Fully explain with details from the story.

Student's Name: _____

Questions for *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury

Short answers: Each question can be answered in 5-7 sentences. No answer should be longer than a single paragraph. Use complete sentences.

Only answer these questions if *Fahrenheit 451* is the book you chose to read.

1. Montag says in "The Hearth and the Salamander" chapter, "There must be something in books, things we can't imagine, to make a woman stay in a burning house; there must be something there." Explain the event that led to this statement, and then describe what you think is "in" books that makes them so important to some people and so threatening to others.

2. In the assigned film for the summer, *Dead Poets Society*, the idea that literature is a challenge to the "norm" is addressed, as the students create a reading club that goes against the traditions of the school. In *Fahrenheit 451*, Beatty explains to Montag that the reason his society burns books is because "We must all be alike." How does reading lead to individuality, and why is this seen as a threat to the society in the novel?

3. While this story is set in a fictional future and greatly exaggerates problems to make its point, there are similarities between the society in the novel and our own society. Identify at least two similarities you notice and fully explain them, both in the context of the book and our modern world.

4. A 2004 study by the National Endowment for the Arts discovered that an increasing number of American adults don't read even one book a year, and only half of Americans aged 18-24 read a book voluntarily. The study concluded that Americans are spending less time reading, reading comprehension skills are eroding, and these declines have serious civic, social, cultural, and economic effects. Based on your reading of *Fahrenheit 451*, what specific dangers might America face if we don't improve our engagement with books? Make connections between the novel and your ideas.

Student's Name: _____

Questions for *Dead Poets Society*

Short answers: Each question can be answered in 3-7 sentences. No answer should be longer than a single paragraph. Use complete sentences.

1. The opening sequence in the film includes initial preparations for a formal ceremony which starts off the school year and provides an occasion to reaffirm the school's vision: Tradition, Honor, Discipline, Excellence. Why do you think the director decided to use this as the opening scene?
2. How does Mr. Keating challenge Tradition, Honor, Discipline, and Excellence in the way he teaches literature?
3. When Neal first questions Mr. Keating about the Dead Poets Society, Keating says, "I doubt that the present administration would look too favorably on that." Why wouldn't a school be in favor of a group of students forming a literary club? What kind of relationship do the boys develop with literature, and what about this challenges the school's traditions and philosophy?
4. Literature is not often viewed as a risky endeavor, but the boys take many risks to pursue their love of literature. Describe some of their risks AND explain how their actions are similar to the actions of the characters in the novel you chose to read this summer (*Fahrenheit 451* or *Bad Boy*).
5. Choose one character, and briefly describe how literature affects his life.