

Trousdale County High School

English III - Summer Reading List

Assignment – Due 1st Week of School

Students are to read one book from the list provided and write a literary critique using the structured outline below.

Paragraph I: Summary

Provide a brief synopsis of the book to better acquaint your reader with the work. Brief is the key word! If your summary comprises half of the essay, your response will feel unbalanced. It is important to provide an adequate amount of information without giving too much away. Begin your critique with a great quote from the book or some interesting fact. Also include the book's title, author, publication date, and any other information that might be helpful to the reader.

Paragraph II: Identify

Identify the main theme of the work. What is the book about? What is the central idea or message the author is trying to convey? What is the major lesson to be learned? Once you have identified the major theme/s of the work, consider whether or not you believe it was conveyed effectively. Was this story a good vehicle to transfer this theme to you as the reader? Why or why not? Use specific evidence from the text to support your argument.

Paragraph III: Criticism

Be the critic. Beyond the theme, was this a good story? What did you like about it? Consider the general plot, characters, writer's style and voice, narration, subject matter, etc. What was the author able to do effectively? What did you dislike about it? How did the author fall short of your hopes and expectations? What did they do poorly? How might the book be better improved?

Paragraph IV: Consideration

How has this book changed your opinion of the world around you? Consider how this work has altered your perceptions of the topic discussed in the book. Did your opinion on the subject change at all from start to finish? How would you have felt about it before reading the novel? How do you feel now? What specific details from the work compelled this change? If there has been no change, explain what the author could or should have done to better do so.

Paragraph V: Recommendation

What is your recommendation regarding this work? Would you encourage a friend or classmate to read it? Would you tell them to avoid it at all cost? Provide some closure to your response with final thoughts on the work. Restate the title, author, and major theme/s of the work, as well as appropriate (to your overall opinion) description of the work. Provide your recommendation, for or against the work. Restate the work's ability, or lack thereof, to compel the reader and creatively find some way to end your critique.

Example of Paragraph V:

Of Mice and Men, by John Steinbeck is a gripping work that beautifully depicts the importance of dreams and friendship in society. I would highly recommend this work to any reader looking to explore such topics. Through its simple style and structure it is able to encompass themes much larger than its size and has changed my view on the necessity for true friendship. As George says to Lenny, "Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don't belong no place. . . . With us it ain't like that. We got a future."

List of Books

An Invisible Thread Laura Schroff (Nonfiction)

She was a successful ad sales rep in Manhattan. He was a homeless, eleven-year-old panhandler on the street. He asked for spare change; she kept walking. But then something stopped her in her tracks, and she went back. And she continued to go back, again and again. They met up nearly every week for years and built an unexpected, life-changing friendship that has today spanned almost three decades.

Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith Deborah Heiligman (Nonfiction)

Challenges about teaching the theory of evolution in schools occur annually all over the country. This same debate raged within Darwin himself, and played an important part in his marriage: his wife, Emma, was quite religious, and her faith gave Charles a lot to think about as he worked on a theory that continues to spark intense debates.

**Columbine* Dave Cullens (Nonfiction)

In this account of the massacre at Columbine High School, Cullens delves deeply into the minds of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, asking – and answering – the question: “Why?”

The Jungle Book Rudyard Kipling (Fiction)

The Jungle Book key characters are Mowgli, a boy raised by wolves and Sher Khan, biggest tiger in India. As Baloo the sleepy brown bear, Bagheera the cunning black panther, Kaa the python, and his other animal friends teach their beloved “man-cub” the ways of the jungle, Mowgli gains the strength and wisdom he needs for his frightful fight with Shere Khan, the tiger who robbed him of his human family. But there are also the tales of Rikki-tikki-tavi the mongoose and his “great war” against the vicious cobras Nag and Nagaina; of Toomai, who watches the elephants dance; and of Kotick the white seal, who swims in the Bering Sea.

**Friday Night Lights* HG Bissinger (Nonfiction)

When journalist HG Bissinger spent a year in Odessa, Texas, he observed more than just the daily lives of the Permian Panther football team players, coaches, and fans. Indeed, he tried “to capture the other aspects of the town . . . the values about race and education and politics and the economy.” Though “Odessa is the setting of this book, . . . it could be anyplace in this vast land where, on a Friday night, a set of spindly stadium lights rises to the heavens to so powerfully, and so briefly, ignite the darkness.”

Gulliver's Travels Jonathan Swift (Fiction)

Gulliver's Travels describes the four voyages of Lemuel Gulliver, a ship's surgeon. In Lilliput he discovers a world in miniature; towering over the people and their city, he is able to view their society from the viewpoint of a god. However, in Brobdingnag, a land of giants, tiny Gulliver himself comes under observation, exhibited as a curiosity at markets and fairs. In Laputa, a flying island, he encounters a society of speculators and projectors who have lost all grip on everyday reality; while they plan and calculate, their country lies in ruins. Gulliver's final voyage takes him to the land of the Houyhnhnms, gentle horses whom he quickly comes to admire - in contrast to the Yahoos, filthy bestial creatures who bear a disturbing resemblance to humans.

In these girls, Hope is a Muscle Madeleine Blais (Nonfiction)

They were a talented team with a near-perfect record but a reputation for choking in the crunch of the state playoffs. Finally, after five straight years of disappointments, the Amherst Lady Hurricanes found they just might have what it took to go all the way.

The Call of the Wild Jack London (Fiction)

Based on London's experiences as a gold prospector in the Canadian wilderness and his ideas about nature and the struggle for existence, *The Call of the Wild* is a tale about unbreakable spirit and the fight for survival in the frozen Alaskan Klondike.

***Some of the novels have mature themes and language. Be sure to evaluate each novel before making a selection**