

**EHS Gifted & Talented Academy
Foundations of World Literature
Summer Reading Assignment**

OVERVIEW

Summer reading is an integral part of the English curriculum of the EHS Gifted & Talented Academy. Its purpose is to help students prepare for the challenges of the academic year ahead. World Literature students are required to read one book chosen from the list below.

In addition to the close reading of the summer reading text, students are encouraged, but not required, to annotate the text fully and to take notes on what they've read. Annotations and note-taking are intended to move students deeper into the text, shifting the focus away from mere summary, and into analysis.

REQUIRED TEXTS (CHOOSE ONE)

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress -- Dai Sijie (2000)

Set during China's infamous Cultural Revolution, this is the story of two hapless city boys exiled to a remote mountain village for re-education. There the two friends meet the daughter of the local tailor and discover a hidden stash of Western classic novels in Chinese translation. As they flirt with the seamstress and secretly devour these banned works, the two friends find refuge from their grim surroundings in worlds they never imagined.

The Housekeeper and the Professor -- Yoko Ogawa (2009)

The professor, a brilliant mathematician, suffered a traumatic head injury and now lives with only eighty minutes of short-term memory. The housekeeper, a single mother with a ten-year-old son, is hired to care for the professor. Though he cannot hold memories for long, the professor's mind is still alive with elegant equations from the past which reveal an as yet unknown world to both the housekeeper and her son. The professor is capable of discovering connections between the simplest of quantities -- like the housekeeper's shoe size -- and the universe at large, drawing their lives ever closer and more profoundly together, even as his memory slips away.

The White Tiger -- Aravind Adiga (2008)

This novel follows a darkly comic Bangalore driver through the poverty and corruption of modern India's caste society. The white tiger of this novel is Balram Halwai, a poor Indian villager whose great ambition leads him to the zenith of Indian business culture, the world of the Bangalore entrepreneur. On the occasion of the president of China's impending trip to Bangalore, Balram writes a letter to him describing his transformation and his experience as driver and servant to a wealthy Indian family, which he thinks exemplifies the contradictions and complications of Indian society.

ASSESSMENT

Students are expected to annotate and take notes on their reading. This may be done in one of several ways: in the margins of the text itself (if students own the book), on Post-It (sticky) notes, or in a separate notebook. Guidelines for one method of note-taking follow. Students should plan to bring their annotations, notes, and a copy of the summer reading text to our first class meeting.

In the fall, students will work in small groups to discuss and reflect on the book they've read. After discussion (approximately one week into the semester), students will write a formal argumentative essay. The essay prompt will require students to take a position on a topic related to the text, and to use specific evidence drawn from the text to support their claim/position.

Please address questions or concerns to the instructor at lisasmith@u-46.org.

**EHS Gifted & Talented Academy
Foundations of World Literature
Note-Taking/Reading Response Journal**

RATIONALE

Academy students are expected to take an active role in their high school education. This includes being responsible for the completion of the Summer Reading Assignment. Throughout the year, assigned readings will be the basis of daily class discussion and activities. Thus, students who choose not to do the reading and take notes on what they've read will be at a severe disadvantage.

ASSIGNMENT

Respond in writing to each of the prompts below. Students are encouraged to add their own original ideas/responses. Try to comment on each prompt for each chapter, section, or night's reading.

- **SYNOPSIS:** In 1-2 sentences, summarize the action of each chapter/section.
- **REACTIONS:** Write down your reaction to the night's reading. If you're intrigued by certain statements or situations or attracted to particular characters or issues, include in your statement a description of why you feel this way.
- **CONNECTIONS:** What does the reading make you think of? Does it remind you of anything or anyone? Make connections with other texts, concepts, or historic events. What similarities do you see?
- **QUESTIONS:** What confuses you about a particular passage? Try beginning, "I wonder why..." or "I'm having trouble understanding how..." or "It perplexes me that..." or "I was surprised when"
- **AGREE / DISAGREE:** On what action (or inaction), or about what issues do you agree or disagree? Support your ideas with references to the text. Try arguing with the author. Think of your journal as a place to carry on a dialogue with the author.
- **QUOTES:** Write down striking words, images, phrases, or details. Speculate about them. Why did the author choose them? What do they add to the work? Why did you notice them?

These guidelines are adapted from a handout from the Bard College Language and Thinking Program.

**EHS Gifted & Talented Academy
Gifted Scientific Inquiries (GSI)
Summer Reading Assignment**

OVERVIEW

Summer reading is an integral part of the Science curriculum of the EHS Gifted & Talented Academy. Its purpose is to help students prepare for the challenges of the academic year ahead. GSI students are required to read one book chosen from the list below.

In addition to the close reading of the summer reading text, students are encouraged, but not required, to annotate the text fully and to take notes on what they've read. Annotations and note-taking are intended to move students deeper into the text, shifting the focus away from mere summary, and into analysis. Guidelines for note-taking are outlined on page two.

REQUIRED TEXTS (CHOOSE ONE)

The Hot Zone -- Richard Preston (1994)

Richard Preston is a writer for the New Yorker and has published many journalistic books. All of his writing shows extensive research. The Hot Zone describes the emergence of the Ebola virus and its spread around the globe. It is nonfiction.

The Demon in the Freezer -- Richard Preston (2002)

Another book by Preston, this time about smallpox. Preston takes the reader inside the government's most secure laboratory and chronicles the history of the eradication of smallpox. If you read the Hot Zone, you will recognize many of the same people back working on this case. It is nonfiction.

The Disappearing Spoon -- Sam Kean (2010)

This book describes science history through the Periodic Table of the Elements. It makes chemistry fun.

ASSESSMENT

Students are expected to annotate and take notes on their reading. This may be done in one of several ways: in the margins of the text itself (if students own the book), on Post-It (sticky) notes, or in a separate notebook. Note-taking guidelines are on the following page. Students should plan to bring their annotations, notes, and a copy of the summer reading text to our first class meeting.

In the fall, students will work in small groups to discuss and reflect on the book they've read. After discussion (approximately one week into the semester), students will write a formal argumentative essay. The essay prompt will require students to take a position on a topic related to the text, and to use specific evidence drawn from the text to support their claim/position.

Please address questions or concerns to the instructor at marigathman@u-46.org.

**EHS Gifted & Talented Academy
Note-Taking/Reading Response Journal
Gifted Scientific Inquiries**

RATIONALE

Academy students are expected to take an active role in their high school education. This includes being responsible for the completion of the Summer Reading Assignment. Throughout the year, assigned readings will be the basis of daily class discussion and activities. Thus, students who choose not to do the reading and take notes on what they've read will be at a severe disadvantage.

ASSIGNMENT

Respond in writing to each of the prompts below. Students are encouraged to add their own original ideas/responses. Try to comment on each prompt for each chapter, section, or night's reading.

- **SYNOPSIS:** In 1-2 sentences, summarize the action of each chapter/section.
- **REACTIONS:** Write down your reaction to the day's reading. If you're intrigued by certain statements or situations or attracted to particular persons or issues, include in your statement a description of why you feel this way.
- **CONNECTIONS:** What does the reading make you think of? How does it relate to science as you understand it? Does it remind you of anything or anyone? Make connections with science processes, concepts, or historic events. What similarities do you see?
- **QUESTIONS:** What confuses you about a particular passage? Try beginning, "I wonder why..." or "I'm having trouble understanding how..." or "It perplexes me that..." or "I was surprised when"
- **AGREE / DISAGREE:** On what action (or inaction), or about what issues do you agree or disagree? Support your ideas with references to the text. Try arguing with the author. Think of your journal as a place to carry on a dialogue with the author.
- **QUOTES:** Write down striking words, images, phrases, or details. Speculate about them. Why did the author choose them? What do they add to the work? Why did you notice them?

These guidelines are adapted from a handout from the Bard College Language and Thinking Program.