

Honors English II
Summer assignment 2019

The purpose of the summer reading assignment is for you to work through the reading independently, exercise your critical thinking skills, and ultimately prepare you for what is next. The expectation, if you elect to take this course, is that you are functioning at an advanced level and that you are capable of working through these assignments without the help of an instructor. Read each work carefully and please be prepared.

The following assignments are due on the second day of class, Wednesday, September 4th. In addition, you will also have an objective test over both reading selections on Wednesday, September 4th. The test will cover items such as characterization, plot, theme, and setting. Read carefully and please be prepared.

SPECIAL NOTE: The completion of summer assignment is a requirement for this course. Failure to complete all or part of the summer assignment will result in removal from the course. **NO EXCEPTIONS**

TEXTS:

A Lesson Before Dying by Ernest Gaines
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave
by Frederick Douglass

1. Complete the 'AP English: Literature and Composition Major Works Data Sheet' for Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass. This data sheet must be handwritten. It will help you actively read and highlight the most significant aspects of this work.
2. When you return from break, you will write a 3 page paper on these works. In preparation for this paper, you must begin to analyze and compare how education, employment, and housing impacted the lives of the people in the works. On the notes sheets you must have specific points of comparison around which you will build a thesis. This means I will be expecting to see active reading **AS WELL AS** handwritten notes on those specific points from both works. **Page numbers must be included with each note.**

3. Complete the reader response questions for *A Lesson Before Dying*. Be sure that these questions are **your own work**. I am asking you to think critically on these responses. Be sure that they are thorough. They should not be answered quickly or briefly. Be detailed and refer to specific parts of the novel during your responses.

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

- The summer assignment is due on Wednesday, September 4th.
- I expect you to actively read at all times. Completing the Data Sheet for the work will help you with this process. Good readers actively engage with the text; it is a time tested strategy to use when you are studying a literary work.
- I am looking for quality work--be thorough and complete with your data sheet, responses, and notes.
- The assignments are due on the the 4th.
- Please be aware that additional assignments (tests, essays, presentations) may occur after the school year begins as we discuss these works in class.

****Remember to bring the summer reading selections with you to school in August because we will be working with them for the first several weeks of school.**

Be sure that all of the work is YOUR OWN. Do not consult the internet, another student, or an adult. If you need clarification on an assignment, please contact me. Cheating of any kind will result in a zero.

Rubric:

A Lesson Before Dying reader response questions - 50 points

Major Works Data Sheet for The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass - 40 points

Detailed notes on impact of education, employment, and housing **for both works** - 40 points

Active reading of LBD - 30 points

TOTAL - 160 points

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact me if you have questions.

Mrs. Higley

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Name _____

Major Works Data Sheet
Summer Reading

Title: _____

Author: _____

Date of Publication: _____

Genre: _____

Biographical information about the **author**:

Historical information on time period of publication:

Describe the author's style:

Provide an example that demonstrates the style:

Name _____

Summer Reading Notes

A Lesson Before Dying
(include page numbers for each note)

education:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

employment:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

housing:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
(include page numbers for each note)

education:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

employment:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

housing:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Name _____

1. All the characters in **A Lesson Before Dying** are motivated by a single word: "hog." Jefferson's attorney has compared him to a hog; Miss Emma wants Grant to prove that her godson is not a hog; and Jefferson at first eats the food she has sent him on his knees, because "that's how a old hog eat." How are words used both to humiliate and to redeem the characters in this novel?

2. At various points in the book *Gaines* draws analogies between Jefferson and Jesus. One of the first questions Jefferson asks his tutor concerns the significance of Christmas: "That's when He was born, or that's when he died?" Jefferson is executed eight days after Easter. In what other ways is this parallel developed? In particular, discuss the scriptural connotations of the word "lesson."

3. For all the book's religious symbolism, the central character is a man without faith. *Grant's* refusal to attend church has deeply hurt his aunt and antagonized Reverend Ambrose, whose religion *Grant* at first dismisses as a sham. Yet at the book's climax he admits that Ambrose "is braver than I," and he has his pupils pray in the hours before Jefferson's death. What kind of faith does *Grant* acquire in the course of this book? Why does the Reverend emerge as the stronger of the two men?

4. Grant believes that black men in Louisiana have only three choices: to die violently, to be "brought down to the level of beasts," or "to run and run." How does the way in which Gaines articulates these grim choices--and suggests an alternative to them--make **A Lesson Before Dying** applicable not only to Louisiana in 1948 but to the United States in the 1990s?

5. **A Lesson Before Dying** is concerned with obligation and commitment. Discuss this theme as it emerges in the exchanges between Emma Glenn and the Pichots, Grant and Vivian, and Grant and the Reverend Ambrose. What are the debts these people owe each other? In what ways do they variously try to honor, evade, or exploit them?

6. From the manslaughter that begins this novel to the judicial murder at its close, death is a constant presence in **A Lesson Before Dying**. We are repeatedly reminded of all the untimely, violent deaths that have preceded Jefferson's and, in all likelihood, will follow it. Why then is Jefferson's death so disturbing to this book's black characters, and even to some of its white ones? What does Jefferson's death accomplish that his life could not?