

Summer Reading

Students will work independently over the summer to read two books (see below). Due on the first day of classes in September will be a dialectical journal and a five paragraph essay examining the literary elements the two books had in common. Textual evidence is required in your essay.

Required Book:

How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster

One Choice Book:

Great Expectations Charles Dickens

Their Eyes Were Watching God Zora Neal Hurston

Wuthering Heights Emily Bronte

THE DIALECTICAL JOURNAL

A dialectical journal is a conversation between you and what you are reading. You simply write down passages that make you think or interest you and write about your thoughts. This process is an important way to understand a piece of literature. By writing about literature, you make your own meaning of the work in order to truly understand it. When you do this yourself, then the text belongs to you--you have made it yours. The passages are there for everyone to read; however, the connections and interpretations are uniquely yours. You are neither right nor wrong in your response. So be willing to take risks and be honest.

WRITE ABOUT: what you like, what you dislike, what seems confusing, what seems unusual, what you think something means, what personal connections you make, what predictions you can pose. Possible sentence lead-ins might begin like:

- * I really don't understand this because. . .
- * I really like/dislike this idea because. . .
- * This idea/event seems to be important because. . .
- * I think the author is trying to say that . . .
- * This passage reminds me of a time in my life when . . .
- * If I were (name of character), at this point I would . . .
- * This part doesn't make sense because . . .
- * This character reminds me of (name of person) because . . .

SET UP: You will make two columns in your notebooks. At the top of each new page, list the title of the literature you are reading. In the left column, copy the passages from the literature on which you wish to comment. Be sure to include page numbers when quoting from books. In the right column, write your detailed comments about the passages in the left column. Identify and comment on 10 passages from the text.

FOR EXAMPLE

Consider the English translation of the Roman poet Horace's "Ode 2, Book 3" that follows:

Let the sturdy boy learn through hard military service
to suffer pinching poverty as a friend
and let him harass the ferocious Parthians,
a horseman to be feared for his spear,
and let him spend his life under the open sky
and in dangerous circumstances. Let the wife of the warring tyrant, looking at him from enemy walls,
and (with her) let her grown-up daughter sigh –
ah!-- lest her royal betrothed, inexperienced in battle,
should provoke that lion dangerous to touch
whom bloodthirsty rage drives through the middle of the carnage.
Desirable and glorious is a death for one's country:
death follows even after the man who runs away
and does not spare the knees and timid back of a spiritless youth.
Virtue, knowing no disgrace in defeat at the polls,
shines with untarnishable honors
and does not take up or put down the axes (of office)
at the whim of popular favor;
virtue that opens up heaven to those undeserving to die
explores a route along a path (usually) denied,
and disdains the vulgar mobs and the damp earth with escaping wing.
There is also a sure reward for reliable silence:
I shall not allow the man who has published the rite of secret Ceres
to be under the same roof-beams or to cast loose a frail boat in my company;
often the Sky-Father, when ignored, has coupled an innocent with a guilty man;
seldom has Vengeance abandoned a wicked man
through lameness of foot though he has got a start on her.

Horace's "Ode 2, Book 3"

The Text	My Thoughts
1. "Desirable and glorious is a death for one's country"	This reminds me of those WW2 propaganda posters. For instance, the Uncle Sam posters that said I WANT YOU seem similar to this line.
2. "seldom has Vengeance abandoned a wicked man"	I love this line. Vengeance is personified as a person coming for the wicked! The wicked rarely escape her.
3.	