

**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 Academy, and I firmly believe that it helps students to prepare for the challenges of the academic year ahead. In addition to the close reading of the summer reading text, students are required to complete a written assignment whose purpose is to guide student thinking in the absence of a teacher. The assignment is due the first day of class.

World Literature students are required to read one (1) book this summer: the title must be chosen from the list below.

Required Texts (Choose ONE)

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

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

The White Tiger -- Aravind Adiga, Indian (2008)

Assignment

Although they will not be graded, students should 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 notes, or in a notebook. Note-taking ideas and suggestions are on the reverse. Be sure to bring notes and summer reading text to 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 details drawn from the text to support their position.

NB: It is expected that all Academy students will take an active role in their high school educations. This includes being responsible for the completion of the Summer Reading Assignment.

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

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Response Journal**

RATIONALE Assigned readings will be the basis of daily class discussion and activities; thus, students who choose not to do reading will be at a severe disadvantage. To keep students focused and organized as they read, they should plan to take notes on the following elements each night reading is assigned.

ASSIGNMENT Respond in writing to each of the prompts below. Students may also want to add their own original ideas/responses. Try to comment on each prompt for each night's reading assignment.

- **SYNOPSIS:** In 1-2 sentences, summarize the action of each chapter.
- **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.
- **MAKE 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?
- **ASK 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.