

Spring 2018

**To: Parents of Gifted and Talented Academy Seniors**  
**Re: Summer Reading Program**

I look forward to working with the students and embarking on our study of humanities. The course seeks to draw together from many different times and places the universal themes and experiences that remain relevant today. The course will continue preparation to receive college credit through Advanced Placement testing. As in past years, the coursework is substantial, rarely allowing class time for “reading.” The curriculum will focus on several major pieces of literature with shorter pieces and corresponding selections of other areas of the arts to complete the unit study. Each unit will feature an independent exploration by the student into further related material.

The summer reading program asks the student to read certain major works in advance, at a more leisurely pace, to be prepared for discussion in class at the beginning of school. The selections below introduce important themes and periods, along with a taste of many different cultures. Two selected titles will be read by everyone and accompanied by discussion questions (see attached); the third text is a technical guide to the study of literature.

The selected novels are Ahrundati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, which will be discussed during the first two weeks of school. If students have read *Heart of Darkness*, they **must** reread the novel. The responses to discussion questions for these novels **must be typed** and will be due **the FIRST day of class in August**.

The technical guide students must read is *The Art of Fiction*, by David Lodge. Students will utilize this text to assist in analysis and reading of the two novels. A corresponding assignment is attached and is **due the first day** of school. This **must be typed**.

Copies of these books may be found in local libraries or purchased. Barnes and Noble has copies of the novels readily available, inquire about student discounts. There may also be discount copies available on Amazon.com, Powells.com, BarnesandNoble.com, Alibris.com and many other bookselling websites. Sometimes used copies are sold for as little as two or three dollars on these sites.

Questions about the program or the year’s curriculum are welcome; you can reach me through email. Summer assignments will be available on the Academy website at [www.ehsgiftedacademy.weebly.com](http://www.ehsgiftedacademy.weebly.com) should you need a replacement copy over the summer.

Cordially,

Cristina Cabrera  
English Teacher  
[cristinacabrera@u-46.org](mailto:cristinacabrera@u-46.org)

*The Art of Fiction*

Summer Reading Assignment

Students are to read the following chapters in *The Art of Fiction*:

Chapter 6 - Point of View

Chapter 8-10 - Names, Stream of Consciousness, Interior Monologue

Chapters 12-19 - Sense of Place, Lists, Introducing Character, Surprise, Time Shift, Reader in the text, Weather, Repetition

Chapter 21 and 24 - Intertextuality and Magical Realism

Chapters 26-28 - Showing and Telling, and A Sense of the Past

Chapters 30-34 - Symbolism, Allegory, Epiphany, Coincidence, The Unreliable Narrator

Chapters 38-44 - Surrealism, Irony, Motivation, Duration, Implication, The Title, Ideas

Chapter 46 - Metafiction

Chapters 48-50 - Narrative Structure, Aporia, The Ending

The text was originally written as short newspaper articles regarding literature and has been compiled into book form. As a result of this format, the chapters are short, easily digestible and breakdown literature in a way that is approachable while still providing a window into the art of literary criticism that is central to our study of literature senior year.

See the assignment example on the back of this page for clarification.

Students are to analyze the texts of *Heart of Darkness* and *The God of Small Things* in light of the information provided in Lodge's articles. You are to turn in a document that mimics the chart below and demonstrates your depth of thought. Your assignment **MUST be typed in 12 point Times New Roman**. No exceptions. **If your assignment is not typed, it will not be graded.**

Idea presented in <i>The Art of Fiction</i>	Moment from <i>Heart of Darkness</i>	Moment from <i>The God of Small Things</i>	My Discussion of the point.
Jane Austen's opening is classical: lucid, measured, objective, with ironic implication concealed beneath the elegant velvet glove of the style (Lodge 5).	The <i>Nellie</i> , a cruising yawl, swung to her anchor without a flutter of sails, and was at rest. The flood had made, the wind was nearly calm, but being bound down the river, the only thing for it was to come to and wait for the turn of the tide (Conrad 3).	May in Ayemenem is a hot, brooding month. The days are long and humid. the river shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still, dustgreen trees. Red bananas ripen. Jackfruits burst. dissolute bluebottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. then they stun themselves against clear windowpanes and die, fatly baffled in the sun (Roy 3).	The beginning of HOD is broad, focused on the natural world and the push and pull of water that will pervade the rest of the text. There is a level of uncertainty bound in the language of a flood and coming to rest that alludes to the unrest inherent in the story.  The opening of GOST is tangibly heavy with humidity and weighs both on the reader and the page. The environment of the story makes itself felt from the first page and sets up the discomfort felt within the natural world and the tensions being stored for later release.

NB: consider the type of comment in this example; it demonstrates a depth of thought and engagement with the text. If your annotations do not do something similar, there is no way to receive full credit for this assignment.

**ALSO: You will be required to submit this assignment and the responses to the questions for *Heart of Darkness* and *The God of Small Things* to Turnitin.com once our class account has been established. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.**

*Heart of Darkness*  
*The God of Small Things*  
Reading Journal

1. Pay attention to issues of power, consequences of one's actions, confinement and freedom, ownership, and social structure. Discuss the development of these ideas and their respective effect on the novels.
2. Characterize Marlow and Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*. Do the same with Rahel, Estha, Ammu and all the main characters in *The God of Small Things*. Test your reading of them by reviewing the details of their actions and words.
3. What is Kurtz's attitude about the natives? About his responsibility to them? What is Ammu's attitude about her children? About her responsibility to them? What is their attitude about Ammu?
4. Pay attention to how time passes in each story. How do you as a reader understand the structure of time in each story? What effect does this nonlinear format have on the stories?
5. How does the outside(foreign) world come to bear on the place in which the stories occur?
6. Keep track of repetition in both stories. What can you make of these repetitions? What may be the importance or the purpose of the repetitions? Do those things that get repeated change or balloon in importance or meaning?
7. Consider the water imagery. How is it used? What is its importance? Does its appearance affect the mood or tone of the story?
8. How are the contrasts of light and dark used in each story? Do they follow or invert your expectations? How? To what effect?
9. The natural world undisturbed by the institutions of men can instill fear and awe. Other times, nature is seen as a paradise. Explore how the idea of "paradise" is used in each story, organically and as a human construct.
10. Explore the role of history in each story. Explore the role of memory. What import do these ideas have? How do they guide or corrupt the lives of the characters?
11. Consider the larger social mechanisms at play in both stories. What is the outcome of society's influence? How does man influence, corrupt, or save man?
12. What is the "heart of darkness" in each story? What are some of the myriad ways to interpret this idea?

13. “Anything can happen to anyone.” and “It’s best to be prepared.” Explain the significance of these statements to both stories.
  
14. “The horror, the horror.” To what is this referring? Why is it important? How does this resonate in both texts?

Note: some of the items listed are statements, not questions. You must still respond to each item listed. The ideas are meant to spark your contemplation and consideration of the novels and propel you to respond to the ideas presented. Your responses must be complete sentences, **Typed, 12 point Times New Roman and in MLA format to potentially receive full credit.**