

AC English 2 Summer Reading Assignment

Mother Night by Kurt Vonnegut (ISBN: 978-0385334143)

Reading *Mother Night*

This year in AC English 2 we're going to explore major themes of American Literature. One of our primary guiding questions will be what do the terms "America" and "American" mean in various literary contexts? *Mother Night* gets to the heart of this question.

- Make sure to read the "Introduction," "Editor's Note," and the novel's dedications. Consider these a part of the novel.
- Read and annotate your book. Don't summarize or simply underline. Interact with the text. Make connections. Here's a [sample annotation](#).
- Pay special attention to anything Campbell (the narrator) takes the time to define, be it a foreign word, a person from history, or a character he encounters.

Assessment of Summer Reading

1) You will have a summer reading quiz on the second day of classes. This quiz will be composed of approximately 20-30 advanced reading comprehension questions and 2-3 short answer questions (¶ length).

2) On the third day of class you will write an argumentative, thesis-driven essay in class. The essay must have at least an effective, arguable thesis statement and two complete body paragraphs. You may use your notes and annotations as part of this writing exercise. This essay is your chance to show your analytical writing skills from English 1 and your understanding of this particular text. After the first few weeks of discussing the novel, we will expand this short essay into the semester's first major writing assignment. The prompts for the essay (areas in which you should pay close attention) will likely come from the questions listed below. Read with these in mind.

- What makes someone American (according to the novel)? Their acts? Their place of birth?
- What is real? What is truth? How do subjectivity and objectivity define reality?
- What is history's impact on the present? Is humanity progressing or stagnating?
- What is the role of ethics/morality? What is good/evil?
- What is the novel's understanding of the human condition?
- What is the role of relationships in the novel?
- What is the role of honesty & dishonesty? How does performance and performativity affect one's relationship with the world?