



2020 Summer Reading English Grade 9 - Honors

ENGLISH 9 (ENG 102)

Welcome! All incoming ninth graders are required to read three books in preparation for the school year. We will refer back to these texts throughout the year; moreover, summer reading is the first assessment of the semester. Below is an overview of each assigned text and the corresponding written assignment which is due the first day of class.

When we gather in the fall to begin our ninth-grade English work, we will discuss and write about each novel. Any margin notes or underlining that you want to add to your text of *Cleopatra's Daughter*, and *Waiting for Odysseus* will help you when we begin our discussions. These novels also become part of our curriculum during the year as we study mythology and classical literature. *Children of Blood and Bone* will introduce the focus of the second semester: the power and importance of personal narratives.

An Overview of Texts

- *Cleopatra's Daughter* by Michelle Moran is historical fiction based on fact. The twin children of Marc Antony and Queen Cleopatra VII of Egypt, Selene and Alexander, are taken to Rome after the deaths of their parents. Raised in the imperial household of Octavia, sister to Emperor Augustus, Selene and Alexander are educated as Romans and trained in the ways of Rome according to their elevated status in the imperial family. This historical fiction acquaints readers with customs, habits, and expectations of Romans of all classes during Augustus' rule. **Reading the "Historical Note" on p. 417 first would be helpful to understanding the events of the story. Also, pay attention to the timeline and the maps at the beginning of the novel. There is also a list of characters so that you will not be confused by the names. At the very end of the selection is a glossary to help with some unfamiliar terms.**
- *Waiting for Odysseus* by Clemence McLaren immerses the reader in the ancient world of the Trojan War. Odysseus' journey back to Ithaca is an epic tale that McLaren reimagines through the eyes of the four extraordinary and influential women in Odysseus' life: Penelope, Circe, Athena, and Eurycleia. This novel will prepare you for our study of *The Odyssey* by Homer.
- *Children of Blood and Bone* by Tomi Adeyemi is a YA (young-adult) fantasy novel about two young women from very different circumstances, Zelié, whose family has suffered greatly

under a corrupt and oppressive king, and Amari, the princess who flees after she witnesses her father's cruelty firsthand. The two characters meet and eventually unite to fight against injustice. This inspiring tale of an unlikely friendship has everything: magic, courage, mystery, action, and even romance.

The following tips will help you with summer reading.

1. Do not panic about summer reading! It doesn't matter if you love reading, or if you find reading challenging, you can complete this assignment. It is OK if you do not understand everything in these texts. Sit back and enjoy the process of entering into a different perspective or exploring a new world. This is what makes reading fun! And remember, if you find yourself grumbling about summer reading, remember that you are a student at Villa Duchesne, a challenging, college-preparatory school. You are preparing for college work even during the summer before your first year in high school. This is an opportunity to embody the qualities of a Villa graduate.
2. Many libraries offer free audio versions of texts, so if you are an auditory reader, you may find listening along while reading might improve your comprehension. Audible is also a good resource for audiobooks, but this service costs additional money. Whether you listen or read, ***you will need to procure a physical copy of the text*** so you can fill out the reading log, with page numbers.
3. Annotation is not required for summer reading. You may annotate your summer reading texts, but only if you want to. But you must complete the reading log. This assignment will be collected the first day of class.
4. The reading log is a requirement, and ***must be completed before the first day of school***. This is an individual assignment, and should not be completed collaboratively with other incoming ninth grade students. While I encourage discussing these texts with friends, select the passages for your reading log and analyze them *independently*.
5. The use of online resources should be strictly reserved for helping with comprehension, not analysis. Refrain from turning to the internet to complete summer reading.

I hope you enjoy these texts as much as I have, and I look forward to meeting you in August.

Sincerely,

Ms. Pamela Harris-Marcus

The Reading Log: A reading log is an effective way to keep a record of your reading responses (positive or negative, sure or unsure). It offers a chance to respond personally, to ask questions, to wonder, to predict, or to reflect on the characters, people, events, literary elements, writing techniques, or language of a text. Do not summarize! Instead, record your observations.

Assignment: Complete a separate Reading Log (4 entries each) for each text: *Cleopatra's Daughter*, *Waiting for Odysseus*, and *Children of Blood and Bone*. Response Logs are worth 10 points each, for a total of 30 points; this is a completion grade (easy points!). These logs will serve as the foundation for your summer reading in-class essay, so the more detailed your entries are, the better.

Focus: The central focus for summer reading is *characterization*. **Characterization** is the author's way of revealing a character's personality through the following qualities: what the character thinks, how the character acts, what the character does, how others perceive the character, how the character treats others, how the character reacts to challenges, and the character's physical characteristics.

Guiding Questions for *Cleopatra's Daughter*: Who is Selene? How does she change during the course of the story? What do her actions suggest about her personality? What adjectives would you use to describe her? Why? Write 4 entries on Selene.

Guiding Questions for *Waiting for Odysseus*: Who are each of these women? What does each narrative reveal about their individual personalities? What type of relationship does each woman have with Odysseus? Write 1 entry for each woman: Penelope, Circe, Athena, and Eurycleia. (*Waiting for Odysseus* is a collection of four narratives, each told by one of the four amazing women in Odysseus' life. As you read, focus on the characterization of each woman and her relationship with Odysseus. Write 1 entry on each woman.)

Guiding Questions for *Children of Blood and Bone*: (Please select ONE character: Zelié or Amani). Who is this character? How does she change during the course of the story? What do her actions suggest about her personality? What adjectives would you use to describe her? Why? Write 4 entries on either Zelié or Amani.

Expectations for Reading Logs:

1. Generally each entry should be 3-5 sentences and should focus on characterization.
2. You must include a total of **4 entries per work** that range from the beginning to the end. Show me that you have read the entire text by responding to the book from the first to the last page.
3. Make sure that you include the page number for the quotes in the left-hand column. Your response log will be used to determine your understanding of the text. Be sure that your responses are thorough.

******I do not expect you to be an expert at analyzing literature, so don't panic! Do your best.***

As with every class assignment, all summer reading work should be original. Do not wait until the last minute to begin your work. I am interested in your original thoughts and ideas, so leave yourself enough time to carefully and thoughtfully complete this assignment.

Sample Reading Log Example:

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

Quotations from Text	Commentary/Responses to Text
"Behind him walked his opposite, a huge man shapeless of face, and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws . . . [Lennie] dropped his blankets and flung himself down and drank from the surface of the green pool; drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse . . . Lennie dabbed his big paw in the water and wiggled his fingers so the water arose in like splashes" (2-3).	In the first chapter, Lennie is repeatedly compared to different animals, including a bear and a horse, to suggest that he is similar to an animal. For example, his hands are described as paws to show his size and his strength; bears are strong and powerful animals that can be threatening if provoked. By contrast, Lennie seems to have a soft side, as he gently dabs his "big paw" into the pool, to create rings in the water. Without hesitation or a second thought, Lennie throws his body down and begins drinking the water, the way a dog or a horse does; in fact, George scolds him for not exercising caution, in case the water was contaminated and thus dangerous. Here, Lennie acts on instinct, like an animal, to satisfy his thirst.