

IB Language & Literature SL  
Summer Assignment: [THE HANDMAID'S TALE](#), Margaret Atwood  
Grade 11, 2020-2021

Dear Diploma Program Language and Literature Students:

What follows is a short quote from the IB Lang and Lit Guide.

**“All DP language programme subject groups promote a vision of learning in which the development of language skills and conceptual understandings of language are complementary to each other, so that the total learning experience of the student is as robust as possible.**

**As a result, DP students become more accomplished communicators in the languages they study when their abilities to read, write and speak about course content are reinforced and extended by an understanding of why and how people use language to communicate.”**  
(Language and Literature guide, first examinations 2021)

As you enter your first year of the language and literature program, my goal is to provide you with a meaningful and “robust” experience of study.

Your summer assignment comes in 3 parts:

1. You will read [The Handmaid's Tale](#), by Margaret Atwood.
2. During or after reading, complete the following notes chart. Do not hesitate to annotate your own texts.
3. Choose ONE global issue (see list at bottom) and write a 300-500 word reflection on *Handmaid's Tale* and how your global issue relates to the novel. (Reflections may be informal in style, first person point of view, YOUR opinion.) Charts and reflection writings may be on one document.

The chart and writing is due the first week of class, August 10th. Please be prepared to share these with me at our SECOND meeting.

I look forward to working with each of you! - Kristin Doherty

Part 2: Chart

Aspect	<i>Handmaid's Tale</i>
<p><b>Author's Context &amp; Background (context of production)</b></p>	
<p><b>Context of the work itself, Historical Events and Relevance (events/movements/place of publication)</b></p>	
<p><b>Religion</b></p> <p><b>Find &amp; explain a specific link between context and a quote/fact in the novel. (This quote/fact evidences this contextual background) What are the background ideas that are being illustrated in the novel?</b></p>	
<p><b>Gender/ Women's Rights</b></p> <p><b>Find &amp; explain a specific link between context and a quote/fact in the novel. (This quote/fact evidences this contextual background) What are the background ideas that are being illustrated in the novel?</b></p>	
<p><b>Sexuality</b></p> <p><b>Find &amp; explain a specific link between context and a quote/fact in the novel.</b></p>	

<p><b>State/Government/Power Structures</b></p> <p><b>Find &amp; explain a specific link between context and a quote/fact in the novel. (This quote/fact evidences this contextual background) What are the background ideas that are being illustrated in the novel?</b></p>	
<p><b>Power of Language</b></p> <p><b>Find &amp; explain a specific link between context and a quote/fact in the novel. (This quote/fact evidences this contextual background) What are the background ideas that are being illustrated in the novel?</b></p>	
<p><b>Critical Reception of the novel</b></p> <p><b>Was it well accepted? Was it criticized? Why?</b></p>	
<p><b>Social Criticism of the novel</b></p> <p><b>What contextual events/ideas is the author critiquing within the novel? What textual evidence is there to illustrate this?</b></p>	
<p><b>Setting (within the novel)</b> <b>Importance of setting?</b></p>	
<p><b>Genre</b></p>	
<p><b>More Interesting Themes</b></p>	
<p><b>Universality/Timelessness of the work</b></p>	

<b>Why is this novel relevant to readers 20 years ago, in 2020, and possibly 20 years in the future?</b>	
<b>Social Groups</b> <b>Are these reflections of the author's context? What do they reflect exactly?</b>	
<b>Narrative Structure</b> <b>What is unique about point of view?</b> <b>Perspectives</b>	
<b>Narrative Perspective / Voice</b> <b>(What is stream of consciousness?)</b>	
<b>Characterization</b> <b>Note all important characters and relationships</b>	
<b>Style &amp; Technique</b> <b>Poetic Language</b>	
<b>Satire</b>	
<b>Intertextuality</b>	
<b>Symbols &amp; Motifs</b>	
<b>Significant Quotations (at least 4)</b> <b>Why are they significant? (discuss for each one)</b>	

Part 3: What is a global issue? This is something we will revisit throughout the year.

According to the IB Lang and Lit gurus, a global issue incorporates the following three properties:

- It has significance on a wide/large scale.
- It is transnational.
- Its impact is felt in everyday local contexts.

NOTE: For global issues, some concepts OVERLAP.

Choose ONE of the following Global Issues and write a 300-500 word reflection on how this global issue relates to the novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*.

This writing may be informal in style and you may include your own opinion statements.

- The point is to get familiar with the 5 Global issues (below).
- The next point is to be able to share **your honest and thoughtful opinion** with me about the novel.

1. Culture, identity and community

Students might focus on the way in which texts explore aspects of family, class, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender and sexuality, and the way these impact on individuals and societies. They might also focus on issues concerning migration, colonialism and nationalism.

2. Beliefs, values and education

Students might focus on the way in which texts explore the beliefs and values nurtured in particular societies and the ways they shape individuals, communities and educational systems. They might also explore the tensions that arise when there are conflicts of beliefs and values, and ethics.

3. Politics, power and justice

Students might focus on the ways in which texts explore aspects of rights and responsibilities, the workings and structures of governments and institutions. They might also investigate hierarchies of power, the distribution of wealth and resources, the limits of justice and the law, equality and inequality, human rights and peace and conflict.

4. Art, creativity and the imagination

Students might focus on the ways in which texts explore aspects of aesthetic inspiration, creation, craft, and beauty. They might also focus on the shaping and challenging of perceptions through art, and the function, value and effects of art in society.

5. Science, technology and the environment

Students might focus on the ways in which texts explore the relationship between humans and the environment and the implications of technology and media for society. They might also consider the idea of scientific development and progress.