



Center for Advanced Studies Summer Reading Requirement

Topics and Essential Questions for Literary Analysis

In support of Pittsburgh Public Schools’ goals to increase literacy proficiency and prepare all students for success in college, career, and life, summer reading is a required component of the CAS English program. This requirement encourages students to continue engaging with complex texts over the summer, applying the analytical skills developed during the school year. It also offers opportunities to practice 21st-century skills and deepen their understanding of the world around them. The assigned readings are aligned with the thematic essential questions that guide the 9th and 10th grade CAS English courses.

Review the topics and essential questions in the chart below. Then choose one topic of interest and use the pre-selected text provided or choose a reading of your choice to respond to the essential question aligned to the topic.

Table with 2 columns: 9th Grade, English 1 CAS Topics and Essential Questions; 10th Grade, English 2 CAS Topics and Essential Questions. Rows include Survival, Promise and Progress, Crazy, Stupid, Love, Journeys of Transformation, The Things We Make, Outsiders and Outcasts, Inside the Nightmare, Extending Freedom’s Reach, and All that Glitters.

Assignment:

- 1. The student will select a topic of focus from the topics and essential questions listed in the table above. The student will choose reading materials based on the essential question he/she selects, aligned to the reading requirements below.
2. The student will develop interview questions and seek multiple perspectives on the selected topic. The student must interview at least 3 people and incorporate the interview materials in his/her essay and presentation.
3. The student will complete a literary analysis essay (9th grade: 2-3 pages, 10th grade: 3-5 pages) responding to one of the essential questions listed above (rubric attached), using textual evidence from the texts read aligned to the topic: typed, double spaced, 1-inch margins, MLA format, title page, bibliography, 12pt font. The 1st version of the essay will be submitted to the teacher by September 30, 2025. The final version of the essay should be completed by the end of the 1st quarter.
4. The student will create a product, due September 30, 2025 (refer to the Product Planning Guide).:
- Power Point presentations alone, will not satisfy the product component of Summer Reading.
- Students can complete the project in small groups however, each group member is responsible for his/her own essay. There should not be more than 3 people in a small group.
5. The student(s) will present their project during the unit of study throughout the school year. Presentations should be 5-7 minutes long. (Please refer to the Creativity and Innovation Rubric for PBL.)

SAVVAS Realize – Directions to access the pre-selected text aligned to the thematic topics and essential questions. You do not have to read the pre-selected text. You can select a text of your own.

- Students have access to the SAVVAS Realize portal through Clever, using their PPS username and password. Students will enter Realize and click “Digital Library” and scroll down to click “Digital Novels” or “Extra Reads” . Students have free access to books listed by title alphabetically.
• The suggested unit alignment is included in the table below, but students may be able to align the text with another unit topic.



Grade 9 CAS Pre-Selected Texts

Pre-Selected Texts	Author	Topic and Essential Question
<i>Trifles</i>	Susan Glaspell	Journeys of Transformation: How do we learn who we truly are?
<i>Captains Courageous</i>	Rudyard Kipling	Survival: What qualities help us survive?
<i>Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man</i>	James Weldon Johnson	Promise and Progress: How can words inspire change?
<i>Importance of Being Earnest</i>	Oscar Wilde	Crazy, Stupid, Love: What is true love?
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream (adapted version)</i> Can access full text online if wanted instead: http://shakespeare.mit.edu/midsummer/full.html	William Shakespeare	
<i>The Reluctant Dragon</i>	Kenneth Grahame	Journeys of Transformation: How do we learn who we truly are?
<i>The Sleeper Awakes</i>	H. G. Wells	The Things We Make: Which defines us more, nature or technology?

Grade 10 CAS Pre-Selected Texts

Pre-Selected Texts	Author	Topic and Essential Question
<i>Famous Modern Ghost Stories</i>	Dorothy Scarborough	Inside the Nightmare: What is the allure of fear?
<i>The Misanthrope</i>	Moliere	Outsiders and Outcasts: How important is it to belong?
<i>The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i>	Frederick Douglass	Extending Freedom's Reach: What is the relationship between power and freedom?
<i>Arabian Nights</i>	Richard Francis Burton, translator	All that Glitters: What do our possessions reveal about us?
<i>The Island of Dr. Moureau</i>	H. G. Wells	Virtue and Vengeance: What motivates us to forgive?

Product Planning Guide

Summer Reading Requirements					
Selected topic and essential question:					
Reading Materials (required central text and 2 additional resources)			Required Student Produced Materials		
	Started	Completed		Started	Completed
Central Novel/Non-Fiction text (required)			Interview questions		
1 supporting poem			Interviews (3)		
2 pieces of media			Literary analysis essay		
2 supporting newspaper/magazine articles			Product/Project		
1 piece of art/graphic			Bibliography		



Students may select a product from this chart but are not limited to these options.

Visual/Artistic	Spoken	Written	Leadership	3D Models/Blueprints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Short film ➤ Advertisement/propaganda exhibit ➤ Photo exhibit ➤ Mural ➤ Sculpture ➤ Political cartoons ➤ Mosaic ➤ Painting ➤ Web page ➤ Museum exhibit ➤ Blueprints ➤ Set design ➤ Musical performance ➤ Documentary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Morning show ➤ Debate ➤ Podcast ➤ Spoken word ➤ Story telling ➤ Newscast ➤ Mock trial ➤ Song ➤ Simulation ➤ Panel discussion ➤ Guided tour ➤ Book Talk ➤ Forum ➤ Town hall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children’s book ➤ Letter to the editor ➤ Newspaper article ➤ Brochure ➤ Poetry ➤ Comic book ➤ Story board ➤ Epic ➤ Family tree ➤ Flow chart ➤ Folktales ➤ Amendments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fundraising ➤ Grants ➤ Organize a campaign ➤ Join or establish an organization ➤ Service-learning project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inventions ➤ Vehicles ➤ Urban renewal ➤ Machine ➤ Robots ➤ Dioramas ➤ Computer program ➤ Scale models ➤ 3D Figures ➤ Analytical graphs ➤ Scientific instruments

*Adapted from Schoolwide Enrichment Model Resources by Joseph Renzulli

Restricted Book List

Students should select materials that are age appropriate and that abide by the [District’s Code of Conduct](#). In addition, students should **not** read the following texts as they are part of their coursework for the upcoming school year.

<i>The Joy Luck Club</i> , Amy Tan	<i>Frankenstein</i> , Mary Shelley	<i>Jane Eyre</i> , Charlotte Bronte
<i>The Hunger Games</i> , Suzanne Collins	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i> , Nathaniel Hawthorne	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> , Emily Bronte
<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> , Harper Lee	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> , Chinua Achebe	<i>Call of the Wild</i> , Jack London
<i>The Fault in Our Stars</i> , John Green	<i>The Great Gatsby</i> , F. Scott Fitzgerald	<i>Gulliver’s Travels</i> , Johnathan Swift
<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> , J.D.Salinger	<i>Hamlet</i> , William Shakespeare	<i>Moby Dick</i> , Herman Melville
<i>Fahrenheit 451</i> , Ray Bradbury	<i>King Lear</i> , William Shakespeare	<i>The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet</i> , William Shakespeare
<i>My Antonia</i> , Willa Cather	<i>Great Expectations</i> , Charles Dickens	<i>The Tempest</i> , William Shakespeare
<i>Lord of the Flies</i> , William Golding	<i>Treasure Island</i> , Charles Sheffield	

Possible Resources

- [Time Magazine](#)
- [National Geographic](#)
- [Discover Magazine](#)
- [Popular Science](#)
- [CNN](#)
- [Money Magazine](#)
- [Time](#) : 100 Best Young Adult Books of All Time
- [The New Pittsburgh Courier](#)
- [Pittsburgh Post- Gazette](#)
- [The Grio](#)
- [Tribune Review](#)
- [The Washington Post](#)
- [Fox News](#)
- [Carnegie Library Summer Reading Lists](#)
- [New York Times](#)

The overall aim of the Gifted and Talented Education at Pittsburgh Public Schools is to provide educational opportunities and experiences to help students extend their learning, develop individual potential, enhance their self-concept and become life-long, independent learners. Pittsburgh Public Schools is committed to providing differentiated activities and opportunities through which students can discover and develop their unique and individual needs, interests, talents and abilities.



C R E A T I V I T Y & I N N O V A T I O N R U B R I C f o r P B L

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PROCESS

<i>Creativity & Innovation Opportunity at Phases of a Project</i>	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Above Standard ✓
<i>Launching the Project</i> Define the Creative Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may just “follow directions” without understanding the purpose for innovation or considering the needs and interests of the target audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understands the basic purpose for innovation but does not thoroughly consider the needs and interests of the target audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understands the purpose driving the process of innovation (Who needs this? Why?) • develops insight about the particular needs and interests of the target audience 	
<i>Building Knowledge, Understanding, and Skills</i> Identify Sources of Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses only typical sources of information (website, book, article) • does not offer new ideas during discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finds one or two sources of information that are not typical • offers new ideas during discussions, but stays within narrow perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in addition to typical sources, finds unusual ways or places to get information (adult expert, community member, business or organization, literature) • promotes divergent and creative perspectives during discussions 	
<i>Developing and Revising Ideas and Products</i> Generate and Select Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stays within existing frameworks; does not use idea-generating techniques to develop new ideas for product(s) • selects one idea without evaluating the quality of ideas • does not ask new questions or elaborate on the selected idea • reproduces existing ideas; does not imagine new ones • does not consider or use feedback and critique to revise product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develops some original ideas for product(s), but could develop more with better use of idea-generating techniques • evaluates ideas, but not thoroughly before selecting one • asks a few new questions but may make only minor changes to the selected idea • shows some imagination when shaping ideas into a product, but may stay within conventional boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses idea-generating techniques to develop several original ideas for product(s) • carefully evaluates the quality of ideas and selects the best one to shape into a product • asks new questions, takes different perspectives to elaborate and improve on the selected idea • uses ingenuity and imagination, going outside conventional boundaries, when shaping ideas into a product • seeks out and uses feedback and critique 	



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> considers and may use some feedback and critique to revise a product, but does not seek it out 	to revise product to better meet the needs of the intended audience	
<i>Presenting Products and Answers to Driving Question</i> Present Work to Users/Target Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presents ideas and products in typical ways (text-heavy PowerPoint slides, recitation of notes, no interactive features) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adds some interesting touches to presentation media attempts to include elements in presentation that make it more lively and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> creates visually exciting presentation media includes elements in presentation that are especially fun, lively, engaging, or powerful to the particular audience 	
PR O D U C T				
	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Above
Originality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relies on existing models, ideas, or directions; it is not new or unique follows rules and conventions; uses materials and ideas in typical ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has some new ideas or improvements, but some ideas are predictable or conventional may show a tentative attempt to step outside rules and conventions, or find new uses for common materials or ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is new, unique, surprising; shows a personal touch may successfully break rules and conventions, or use common materials or ideas in new, clever and surprising ways 	
Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is not useful or valuable to the intended audience/user would not work in the real world; impractical or unfeasible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is useful and valuable to some extent; it may not solve certain aspects of the defined problem or exactly meet the identified need unclear if product would be practical or feasible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is seen as useful and valuable; it solves the defined problem or meets the identified need is practical, feasible 	
Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is safe, ordinary, made in a conventional style has several elements that do not fit together; it is a mish-mash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has some interesting touches, but lacks a distinct style has some elements that may be excessive or do not fit together well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is well-crafted, striking, designed with a distinct style but still appropriate for the purpose combines different elements into a coherent whole 	



Literary Analysis Rubric

Student Name: _____ Teacher Name: _____

Grade: _____ Class / Content: _____ Date: _____ English Teacher: _____

	4 (Advanced)	3 (Proficient)	2 (Basic)	1 (Below Basic)	Score
Focus	<p>___ Topic sentence/thesis statement clearly states a judgment, uses key words from the assignment, and addresses task and audience deliberately and specifically.</p> <p>___ Response supports the topic/thesis consistently throughout.</p> <p>___ Conclusion draws the reader back to the topic/ thesis in a unique and/or interesting way.</p>	<p>___ Topic sentence/thesis statement states a judgment, uses key words from the assignment, and addresses task and audience appropriately.</p> <p>___ Response adequately supports the topic/thesis. Any wandering from the topic/thesis does not interfere with reading.</p> <p>___ Conclusion draws the reader back to the topic/thesis.</p>	<p>___ Topic sentence is attempted but not clearly stated or easily identified; little recognition of task and audience.</p> <p>___ Response is not consistent or drifts off topic at times.</p> <p>___ Conclusion attempted; does not draw reader back to the topic/thesis.</p>	<p>___ Topic sentence is missing; recognition of task and audience is not evident.</p> <p>___ Response has no apparent focus and/or contains repeated shifts in topic.</p> <p>___ No conclusion or conclusion is disconnected from the topic/thesis.</p>	
Content	<p>___ Evaluates the text through extensive analysis of literary elements, devices, structures, and/or author's craft/style.</p> <p>___ Judgment is supported with elaborate examples, explanations and/or evidence from the text (cited when appropriate).</p> <p>___ All text-based examples are accurate and reveal a thorough understanding.</p>	<p>___ Evaluates the text through analysis of literary elements, devices, structures, and/or author's craft/style.</p> <p>___ Judgment is supported with adequate examples, explanations and/or evidence from the text (cited when appropriate).</p> <p>___ All text-based examples are accurate and reveal an adequate understanding.</p>	<p>___ Attempts to evaluate the text, but does not adequately analyze the literary elements, devices, structures, and/or author's craft/style; the literary analysis reads like a summary.</p> <p>___ Judgment needs additional support through examples, explanations and/or evidence from the text.</p> <p>___ Text based examples are minimally accurate and reveal a basic understanding.</p>	<p>___ Response does not evaluate the text.</p> <p>___ Judgment is unclear or inadequately supported with textual evidence.</p> <p>___ Text based examples, if present, are inaccurate and reveal very little understanding.</p>	
Organization	<p>___ Paper has a clear introduction, body, and conclusion which are deliberately and effectively organized into paragraphs. (When appropriate for assigned task)</p> <p>___ Ideas/key points are presented in a logical and highly effective order.</p> <p>___ Direct and subtle transitions are used within and between paragraphs to logically and effectively move the piece.</p>	<p>___ Appropriate planner/graphic organizer</p> <p>___ Paper has a clear introduction, body, and conclusion which is organized into paragraphs. (When appropriate for assigned task)</p> <p>___ Ideas/key points are presented in a logical order.</p> <p>___ Appropriate transitions move the piece</p>	<p>___ Planner/graphic organizer is incomplete.</p> <p>___ Introduction, body, and conclusion are attempted, but not clearly defined.</p> <p>___ Ideas/key points are not consistently presented in a logical order; the order of paragraphs are interchangeable</p> <p>___ Some transitions, but may be overly simplistic or minimal for the task and audience.</p>	<p>___ No planner/graphic organizer</p> <p>___ Introduction, body, and conclusion are not evident.</p> <p>___ Ideas/key points, if present, are not presented in a logical order.</p> <p>___ Lacks appropriate or logical transitions</p>	



	4 (Advanced)	3 (Proficient)	2 (Basic)	1 (Below Basic)	Score
Style	<p>___ Sophisticated, engaging, and precise word choice</p> <p>___ Formal and informal language is used effectively (conversational, technical, etc.).</p> <p>___ Smooth, varied, and flowing sentences give the piece a polished feel.</p>	<p>___ Appropriate word choice for task and audience</p> <p>___ Formal and informal language is consistent and appropriate for task and audience.</p> <p>___ Sufficient variety in sentence structure and in the way sentences begin</p>	<p>___ Simplistic word choice</p> <p>___ Formal and informal language is inconsistent and/or inappropriate for task and audience.</p> <p>___ Mostly simple sentences or sentences that begin the same way</p>	<p>___ Inappropriate or unnecessarily repeated words and phrases</p> <p>___ Several inappropriate shifts between formal and informal language and/or the use of slang makes paper difficult to read.</p> <p>___ Many fragments and/or run-on sentences; several short, choppy sentences</p>	
Conventions	<p>___ Very few errors, if any, in grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization and other punctuation; enhances reading</p> <p>___ Strong control of sentence formation; no interruption in flow</p> <p>___ Precise format is used for assigned task (letters, paragraphs, headings, etc.).</p>	<p>___ Some errors in grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization and other punctuation; does not interfere with reading</p> <p>___ Sufficient control of sentence formation; few, if any, fragments and run-ons</p> <p>___ Appropriate format is used for assigned task.</p>	<p>___ Many errors in grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; sometimes interferes with reading</p> <p>___ Limited and/or inconsistent control of sentence formation; fragments and run-ons often interfere with flow.</p> <p>___ Format is partially followed for assigned task.</p>	<p>___ Filled with errors in grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; extremely difficult to read</p> <p>___ Lacks control of sentence formation; many fragments and run-ons repeatedly interfere with flow.</p> <p>___ Format is inappropriate for assigned task.</p>	
Total Score					

Essay Formatting	Points
Title Page	/
Typed Essay	/
Formatting (1-inch margins, 12 font, double-spaced)	/
Bibliography	/
MLA Citation	/
Total Points	/
Total Essay Points	/

Essay	Points
Literary Analysis	/
Organization	/
Total Essay Points	/

Product/Project	Points
Process	/
Product	/
Total Points	/