

Pinocchio



"A conscience is that still small voice that people won't listen to." - Carlo Collodi

Welcome to Comparative Literature! This guide includes suggestions, comments, and questions to introduce you to the expectations and approach to the coursework. **Even though this may sound relatively easy to some of you, be forewarned-we will not be dealing with fairy tales as you know them or remember them from your childhood.**

There are notable characteristics that distinguish fairy tales from other stories:

- A fairy tale begins with "Once upon a time..."
- Fairy tales happen in the long ago.
- Fairy tales have fantasy and make-believe in them.
- Fairy tales have clearly defined good characters vs. evil characters.
- Royalty is usually present in a fairy tale, a beautiful princess/handsome prince.
- There may be magic with giants, elves, talking animals, witches or fairies.
- Fairy tales have a problem that needs to be solved.
- It often takes three tries to solve the problem.
- Fairy tales have happy endings – "they all lived happily ever after."
- Fairy tales usually teach a lesson or have a theme.



Though the above elements are essential, this course is asking you to look beyond these basic concepts. You will be required to examine and articulate the greater social, psychological, historical, and even political themes hidden within these stories. This might include gender roles, roles of parents, the function of dreams, roles within society and social order, sexuality, character representations, and so on. Ultimately, you will be asked to critically analyze these texts. What does this mean? How does one define the analytical process? Analysis is a creative act all by itself and there are many possible interpretations of a text. The success of your analysis will depend on how well and how carefully you use the text to support your interpretation. However, your interpretation must go beyond that. Your analysis will greatly and most heavily depend on how closely you read and scrutinize the materials. This should not be limited to the tales, but also include critical essays, articles, films, and documentaries.

Today you will be receiving Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio*. Many of you have seen or been exposed to the movie versions of this story, especially from Disney. While it is acceptable to be familiar with this version, it will not fulfill your knowledge of the texts. In other words, you **MUST** read the book and you **MUST** read it **CRITICALLY**. You are expected to consider and examine the greater themes of the tale and what those themes really tell us about Collodi's world and, perhaps more importantly, about ourselves.

To prepare you for our class discussions on "Resurrection, Reanimation and the Creator" it is extremely important that you complete the following assignments thoughtfully.

YOUR TASKS

- **TASK ONE: READ** and **ANALYZE** *Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi. Keep in mind this is the **ORIGINAL** story-this is **NOT** the "Disnified" story most of you are probably familiar with. Take **DETAILED NOTES** as you read!
- **TASK TWO: VIEW CRITICALLY** Walt Disney's *Pinocchio*. Your main goal is to look for **DIFFERENCES** between the novel and the Disney classic.

With this in mind, and after a critical reading/viewing of *Pinocchio*, you should be able to respond to the following questions:

- How does the Disney film differ from the original Collodi fairy tale? What changes did Disney make and why are these changes significant?
- What are the consequences of Pinocchio's decisions and actions, and what do they teach children?
- What "good" lessons does the film teach? Give examples and explain why.



Your responses need not be written down, rather they should aide you in a discussion of the material, promote a more in-depth understanding of *Pinocchio*, however it is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** that you use post-it notes throughout your reading to annotate your interaction with the text. If you don't prefer to use post-it notes, you should **create a graphic organizer** that includes detailed notes about the questions that are listed above.

The analysis that you perform, and the interpretations/responses that you construct for *Pinocchio* will be a major factor in developing your overall comprehension of all course materials. The reading should be fun, but **MUST** also be constructive.

As you prepare to return to school in September, your first essay in Comparative Literature will be based on the summer reading assignment: *Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi and Disney's *Pinocchio*.

This essay will be worth **200 POINTS** in the first marking period, so ensure you dedicate ample time and effort to this assignment before classes resume.

Here is your first essay prompt, so there are no surprises. This is a challenging question, and you will only be able to answer it thoroughly if you approach the assignment carefully and critically. Be sure to take plenty of notes!

> Critically analyze the theme of **TRANSFORMATION** in Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* and Disney's *Pinocchio.* How does each version interpret and portray the journey from **INANIMATE** to **ANIMATE**, and what does this transformation reveal about the characters' struggles with identity, morality, and autonomy?

It cannot be emphasized enough the importance of your summer work. This not only prepares you for the beginning of the school year, but it also aids in your comprehension of the requirements for this course.

See you in September!
Ms. Colangelo and Mrs. Daly