Honors English III (Grade 11)

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The 11th grade curriculum features a study of American Literature.

Reading Assignment #1: *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Set in the mid-17th century in New England, *The Scarlet Letter* follows married Hester Prynne after she conceives a daughter through an affair. Societal standards of puritan New England force her to wear a scarlet "A" on her clothes as a constant reminder to her and everyone else of her past infidelity. Through the life of Hester and of her child, they both struggle through the overwhelming stigma behind Hester's adultery, and despite the mounting pressure, she refuses to name the father of her child. Hawthorne paints an eye-opening story of acceptance, shame, guilt, and fierce social ostracism surrounding one woman and the burden she bears in her life.

Read *The Scarlet Letter* and be prepared for a 50-point test on its gossipy plot upon your return to school. As you read, take notes, write questions, keep character lists, major plot points, draw conclusions...draw pictures! Do what you must to actively engage in the text and you will understand the story much better.

Reading Assignment #2: *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan

For decades, a quartet of Chinese women who have emigrated to San Francisco gather to eat dim sum, play mahjong, and talk—they call themselves the Joy Luck Club. Over the years, their stories have informed the lives of four daughters who feel the weight of family and world history on their shoulders. With wit and sensitivity, this novel explores the deep, complicated, and sometimes painful connections between mothers and daughters. Amy Tan entices listeners to immerse themselves into the complex lives of these women.

Writing Assignment: Literary Analysis Essay

1. Take a stance on one of the book's central issues or themes (Some examples include mother/daughter relationships, intergenerational conflict or cultural conflict).

2. Think about three examples from one of the stories that support your stance on your selected issue or theme.

3. Develop a defensible thesis. (A reasonable person could argue against this.) Your thesis statement will appear near the end of the first paragraph of your essay.

4. Write a literary analysis essay based upon this defensible thesis statement and using MLA style. Your paper should include a mix of supporting paraphrases and quotes. It should only

include a very brief summary to introduce a concept. Your MLA style essay should be three pages long.

4. Make sure to support all claims you make with support from the text. Please be sure to also include your own commentary on the textual evidence and show how it supports your claim.

You will write your essay in the five-paragraph essay format, developing a strong introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs with supporting details and quotes from the text, and a conclusion paragraph to solidify your argument. The paper must be 2-3 pages, double spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman font, and must be printed and turned in on the first day of school. You must include at least three textual examples to support your line of reasoning, and each should be cited according to MLA format. Please consult OWL at Purdue for further MLA guidelines.

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