**9 Honors Summer Reading**

*Our Town* – Thornton Wilder

*Of Mice and Men* – John Steinbeck

As you read each text, take notes on your thoughts, questions, and observations. (See questions below.) These notes will help you write your in-class graded essay on the summer reading upon your return. Be sure to cite page numbers if you plan to use quotes in your essay.

**Guiding Questions**

Consider and take notes on the following as you read:

**Setting:**

What is the setting? How does it impact the plot and characters? How does it further the themes?

**Characters/Character Traits:**

Identify the character traits for each of the main characters. What do you like or dislike about the characters? Are they dynamic or static? What are the characters’ motivations?

**Conflicts:**

What are the central conflicts in each novel? Consider both internal and external conflicts. Are they resolved?

**Important/Interesting Quotes:**

Identify and explain the context and significance of quotes that you feel are important or interesting. Cite page numbers.

**Literary Style and Technique:**

What do you notice about the author’s style and/or use of literary elements? (Foreshadowing, irony, imagery, symbolism, metaphor, etc.) Provide examples and explain how they add to the meaning of the text.

**Themes (**As opposed to a **topic/subject**, a **theme** is a universal truth that is being expressed *about* that topic**):**

What themes can you identify? What was the author’s purpose in writing the book?

**Questions:**

What questions do you have as you read?

**English 10H**

Required reading:

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury

Animal Farm by George Orwell

**These texts can be signed out in Ms. McMane’s room (414).**

Before reading each text, read the background information below. As you read each work, take notes on your thoughts, questions, and observations. Then answer the questions below. **The questions and notes will count as two homework grades, and** **they will help you write your graded essay on the summer reading.** Be sure to cite page numbers if you plan to use quotes in your essay.

**Guiding Questions**

Take notes on the following as you read:

* **Characters/Character Traits**

Identify the character traits for each of the main characters.

What do you like or dislike about the characters? Are they dynamic or static?

* **Conflicts**

What are the central conflicts in each novel? Consider both internal and external conflicts. Are they resolved?

* **Important/Interesting quotes**

Identify quotes that you feel are important or interesting. Cite page numbers.

* **Literary Style and Technique**

What do you notice about the author’s style and/or use of literary elements? (Foreshadowing, irony, imagery, symbolism, metaphor, etc.)

How do they add to the meaning of the text?

* **Themes**

What themes can you identify? What was the author’s purpose in writing the book?

* **Questions**

Answer the questions for each text as listed below.

What questions do *you* have as you read?

**ANIMAL FARM by George Orwell**

**GEORGE ORWELL (1903-1950)**

In the years since the publication of *Animal Farm* and *1984,* both of which conjure visions of modern government’s dangerous power, critics have studied and analyzed George Orwell’s personal life. Orwell was a man who had a reputation for standing apart and even making a virtue of his detachment. This “outsider” position often led him to oppose the crowd.

Orwell began life as Eric Arthur Blair (George Orwell was a pen name he adopted later for its “manly, English, country-sounding ring.”) He spent his early years in India as a lonely boy who liked to make up stories and talk with imaginary companions. He began to “write” before he even knew how, dictating poems to his mother, and perhaps saw this outlet as an alternative to the human relationships he found so difficult. Refuge in words and ideas became increasingly important when Orwell’s parents sent him, at age eight, to boarding school in England.

Later, instead of going on to university, he decided to take a job in Burma with the Indian Imperial Police. Orwell wrote about this experience in *Burmese Days* (1934) and in the essay “Shooting an Elephant.” At odds with British colonial rule, Orwell said he “theoretically—and secretly, of course . . . was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British.”

Returning to England to recover from a bout of the chronic lung illness that plagued him all his life, Orwell began his writing career in earnest. Over the next two decades, he wrote newspaper columns, novels, essays, and radio broadcasts, most of which grew out of his own personal experience.

Orwell’s beliefs about politics were affected by his experiences fighting in the Spanish Civil War. He viewed socialists, communists, and fascists as repressive and self-serving. Orwell patriotically supported England during World War II, but remained skeptical of governments and their willingness to forsake ideals in favor of power.

With each book or essay, Orwell solidified his role as the outsider willing to question any group’s ideology. Orwell spoke his mind with *Animal Farm*, in which he criticized the Soviet Union despite its role as a World War II ally of Great Britain. At first, no one would publish the novel, but when *Animal Farm* finally appeared in 1945 it was a success. It was later adapted both as an animated film and as a play.

In explaining how he came to write *Animal Farm*, Orwell says he once saw a little boy whipping a horse:

*It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength we should have no*

*power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit*

*the* [worker].

Orwell said it was the first book in which he consciously tried to blend artistic and political goals. Orwell’s final novel, *1984*, continued that effort with a grim portrayal of a world totally under government control.

Orwell pursued his writing career faithfully, although it was not always easy. In his final days he made the statement, “Writing . . . is a horrible, exhausting struggle . . . One would never undertake such a thing if one were not driven . . .”

**THE NOVEL**

Animal Farm *is written on many levels. It is already a children’s story in its own right. . . .*

[It] *is also a lament for the fate of revolutions and the hopes contained in them. It is a moving*

*comment on man’s constant compromise with the truth.*

—John Atkins

On the publication of *Animal Farm* in 1945, George Orwell discovered with horror that booksellers were placing his novel on children’s shelves. According to his housekeeper, he began traveling from bookstore to bookstore requesting that the book be shelved with adult works. This dual identity—as children’s story and adult satire—has stayed with Orwell’s novel for more than fifty years.

*Animal Farm* tells the story of Farmer Jones’s animals who rise up in rebellion and take over the farm. Tired of being exploited solely for human gain, the animals—who have human characteristics such as the power of speech—vow to create a new and more just society.

Though the novel reads like a fairy story, and Orwell subtitles it as just that, it is also a satire containing a message about world politics and especially the former Soviet Union in particular. Since the Bolshevik revolutions of the early 1900s, the former Soviet Union had captured the attention of the world with its socialist experiment. Stalin’s form of government had some supporters in Britain and the United States, but Orwell was against this system.

Animal Farm is both a satire and an allegory. In a **satire,** the writer attacks a serious issue by presenting it in a ridiculous light or otherwise poking fun at it. Orwell uses satire to expose what he saw as the myth of Soviet socialism. Thus, the novel tells a story that people of all ages can understand, but it also tells us a second story— that of the real-life Russian Revolution. For this reason, it can also be considered an **allegory.** An allegoryis a narrative that can be read on more than one level. Critics often consider *Animal*

*Farm* to be an allegory of the Russian Revolution because the characters can be matched to real life historical figures.

**THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION**

In the early 1900s, Russia’s Czar Nicholas II faced an increasingly discontented populace. Freed from feudal serfdom in 1861, many Russian peasants were struggling to survive under an oppressive government. By 1917, amidst the tremendous suffering of World War I, a revolution began. In two major battles, the Czar’s government was overthrown and replaced by the Bolshevik leadership of Vladmir Lenin. When Lenin died in 1924, his former colleagues Leon Trotsky, hero of the early Revolution, and Joseph Stalin, head of the Communist Party, struggled for power. Stalin won the battle, and he deported Trotsky into permanent exile.

Once in power, Stalin began, with despotic urgency and exalted nationalism, to move the Soviet Union into the modern industrial age. His government seized land in order to create collective farms. Stalin’s Five Year Plan was an attempt to modernize Soviet industry. To counter resistance (many peasants refused to give up their land), Stalin used vicious military tactics. Rigged trials led to executions of an estimated 20 million government officials and ordinary citizens. The government controlled the flow and content of information to the people, and all but outlawed churches.

Many critics have matched the characters in *Animal Farm* to the historical figures of The Russian Revolution ––for example, linking the power struggle between Napoleon and Snowball to the historical feuding between Joseph Stalin and Leon Trostky for control of the Soviet Union. Critics also believe that Old Major represents Karl Marx, who dies before realizing his dream. Other comparisons include Moses as the Russian Orthodox church, Boxer and Clover as workers, the sheep as the general public, Squealer as Stalin’s government news agency, the dogs as Stalin’s military police, and Farmer Jones as Czar Nicholas II. The farm’s neighbors, Pilkington and Frederick, are said to represent Great Britain and Germany, while Mollie suggests the old Russian aristocracy, which resists change.

Clearly, *Animal Farm* is more than a fairy story. It is a commentary on the relevance of independent thought, truth, and justice.

*Adapted from: "*Animal Farm *Study Guide." Glencoe/McGraw-Hill. Web. 21 May 2012.Available at:*

*<http://www.glencoe.com/sec/literature/litlibrary/pdf/animal\_farm.pdf>.*

**Questions**

Consider the following as you read. Answer the following questions in your notes:

1. How do the various characters in the novel symbolize their counterparts in the Russian Revolution?
2. What is Orwell's perspective on socialism? How do you know?
3. A dystopia is a repressive society characterized by misery, often disguised as a utopia (perfect society). How does the farm in *Animal Farm* represent a dystopia?

**FAHRENHEIT 451 by Ray Bradbury**

**RAY BRADBURY** (1920– )

Ray Bradbury began writing when he was seven years old. He was born in Waukegan, Illinois, and lived, he says, immersed in a world of fantasy and illusion— the world of the comic strip characters Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon. In high school, he founded and edited a magazine called *Futuria Fantasia,* which he ran off on a mimeograph. After graduating from high school, Bradbury wrote stories that didn’t sell and supported himself by selling newspapers in downtown Los Angeles. At the age of twenty-three, he became a fulltime writer.

Bradbury explains that his hatred of thought investigation and thought control of any kind arises from the fact that his ancestor, Mary Bradbury, was tried as a witch in Salem, Massachusetts, during the seventeenth century. According to Bradbury, “Science fiction is a wonderful hammer; I intend to use it when and if necessary to bark a few shins or knock a few heads, in order to make people leave people alone.”

*Adapted from: "Independent Reading: A Guide to* Fahrenheit 451*." Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. Web. 21 May 2012.*

*<http://eolit.hrw.com/hlla/novelguides/hs/Mini-Guide.Bradbury.pdf>.*

**THE NOVEL**

The story of fireman Guy Montag first appeared in "The Fireman", a short story by Ray Bradbury published in Galaxy Science Fiction in 1951. Montag's story was expanded two years later, in 1953, and was published as *Fahrenheit 451*. While the novel is most often classified as a work of science fiction, it is first and foremost a social criticism warning against the danger of censorship. *Fahrenheit 451* uses the genre of **science fiction**, which enjoyed immense popularity at the time of the book's publication, as a vehicle for his message that unchecked oppressive government irreparably damages society by limiting the creativity and freedom of its people. In particular, the "dystopia" motif popular in science fiction - a futuristic technocratic and totalitarian society that demands order and harmony at the expense of individual rights - serves the novel well.

Developed in the years following World War II, *Fahrenheit 451* condemns not only the anti-intellectualism of the defeated Nazi party in Germany, but more immediately the intellectually oppressive political climate of the early 1950's - the heyday of McCarthyism. That such influential fictional social criticisms such as Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *1984* and Skinner's *Walden Two* were published just a few short years prior to *Fahrenheit 451* is not coincidental. These works reveal a very real apprehension of the danger of the US evolving into an oppressive, authoritarian society in the post-WWII period.

On a more personal level, Bradbury used *Fahrenheit 451* as a vehicle through which to protest what he believed to be the invasiveness of editors who, through their strict control of the books they printed, impair writers' originality and creativity. Ironically*, Fahrenheit 451*, itself a vehicle of protest against censorship, has often been edited for foul language.

*Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury's most popular novel, has been reprinted scores of times since initially published in 1953. The lessons of this American classic, the dangers of censorship and government control, have become increasingly important and the novel is as relevant today as it was when first written.

*"*Fahrenheit 451 *Background." Study Guides & Essay Editing. Web. 21 May 2012. Available at: <http://www.gradesaver.com/fahrenheit-451/study-guide/about/>.*

**Questions**

Consider the following as you read. Answer the following questions in your notes:

1. What is the significance of each of the major characters in the novel? Characterize Guy Montag, Millie, Clarisse, Faber, and Beatty. What purpose does each character serve in the novel?
2. **Science fiction** is literature that explores technological and societal change. Science fiction is often based on scientific principles and technology. It may make predictions about life in the future or comment on important issues in society. What elements make *Fahrenheit 451* a science fiction novel?
3. A dystopia is a repressive society characterized by misery, often disguised as a utopia (perfect society). How does the society in *Fahrenheit 451* represent a dystopia?

**Required Reading and Assignments for English 11H**

***The Awakening*** by Kate Chopin

***The Catcher in the Rye*** by J.D. Salinger

**\* These texts can be signed out in Ms. Sorrese Lefkow’s room (418).**

            Over the summer months, please prepare for our initial meetings by reading the two pieces listed above. As you read each text, you should take notes using the format described below. **The notes will be collected on Friday, September 13, 2013**. There will be a quiz and an essay given on the two texts during the first few weeks of school.  Your notes will help to prepare you for these assessments as well as our in-class discussions.

A copy of The Awakening is available at the above location. You may keep this copy, and you are encouraged to annotate it. (These annotations are in addition to the notes you must hand in to your teacher.) A copy of The Catcher in the Rye, which you must return, is also available to borrow. Purchasing your own copy of this text, however, will enable you to annotate it.

**General Format:**

Divide each piece into four parts as follows:

The Awakening: Chapters 1-10 The Catcher in the Rye: Chapters 1-7

Chapters 11-20 Chapters 8-14

Chapters 21-30 Chapters 15-20

Chapters 31-39 Chapters 21-26

For each of the four sections, respond to all of the questions below. Please do not wait until you’ve finished the book. **Label** each entry with the chapters. Include quotes from each text for support and explain how these lines contribute to your understanding.

1.  Discuss the development of the main **character** in each section. Include characterization, motivation, and

conflict in your discussion.

2.   Discuss the **setting**. What is the setting of each section, and how does it impact the character’s development?

3. Discuss **symbolism**. Which symbols appear in each section, and how are they significant? Do any of them recur as motifs?

4.     Discuss the **themes** of the text. What messages does the author raise throughout each section? What are the final messages of the text?

**After reading both texts:**

Compare and contrast the characters, settings, and themes of the two novels. Be sure to include specific details pertaining to each.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Required Reading and Assignments for Grade 12 Honors**

***The Elizabethan World Picture* by E.M.W. Tillyard**

**\* This text can be ordered from amazon.com or purchased from your local**

**bookstore.**

While reading, make connections to your prior experiences with Shakespeare. In a one-page, double-spaced essay, apply your understanding of the Great Chain of Being to any Shakespearean play that you have studied in high school. Which characters display social mobility? Noting three distinct points in the play, show how your character's level of power increases or decreases.

***Essays That Worked for College Applications: 50 Essays that Helped Students Get into the Nation's Top Colleges,* editedby Boykin Curry, Emily Angel Baer, and Brian Kasbar**

Select five essays of varying styles and approaches.  For each, comment on the author’s structure, style, tone, voice, topic selection, and meaning.

Questions to consider:

-How does the author engage the reader (beginning, middle, end)?

-Is the topic appropriate and/or engaging for a college essay?

-What makes this essay stand out from other college essays?

-What would a college admissions officer learn about this candidate through his/her essay?

-How does the author’s style complement the content of the essay?

**Required Reading and Assignments for Students Entering AP English Literature**

1. **Drama:**

*An Enemy of the People* by Henrik Ibsen

1. **Fiction:**

*All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy

*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen

**\* These texts can be signed out in Mr. Stanford’s room (413).**

**ACCOMPANYING ASSIGNMENT:**

All summer work is to be completed on the AP English wiki. There are different pages for each text. To join the wiki, go to mstanford.wikispaces.com. You must also send an email to Mr. Stanford (mstanford@socsd.org) that includes your name and the screen name you use for the wiki. Once that is received, you will be added to the wiki.

A minimum of ten posts are to be made to the appropriate wiki page for each text. A post can consist of creating a new post with a specific quote from the text and an explanation of its significance (*i.e.,* its relevance to setting, characterization, motivation, conflict, and/or theme), or it can consist of a detailed comment/response to another post on that page.

What we are looking for is the same type of sophisticated analysis and commentary you provide in class discussions or quote journals. Mr. Stanford will also create new posts on occasion and comment on existing posts. Be brave! Contemplate, comment, suggest, hypothesize, critique, question, applaud…When putting a quote up for discussion, please include the page number in the post’s title so that your peers can find it easily.

You are welcome to begin posting after July 1st, but all posts must be completed before the first day of school.