

Poudre High School
INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM

Notes on Summer Reading – 12th grade

The books you read this summer form the basis for an External Assessment you will write during your senior year and which will comprise 25% of your composite score for Language A. The first step to being successful on this EA: read the books for complete understanding (central ideas and concepts, characters, motifs, author’s style and technique, etc.) and be ready for intensive study of all three throughout the fall semester.

Please resist the urge to consult summaries and analyses of these novels (e.g. SparkNotes, CliffsNotes, etc.). IB is most interested in unique and personal insights, not repetition of the highly accepted and frequently reproduced interpretations that permeate the bulk of the popular discussion of these well-known works. If you are unaware of these analyses to begin with, you are much better off, even if you *think* you can separate your own ideas from others’. You *are*, however, encouraged to conduct basic research on the *authors* and/or their historical and cultural contexts. Should you choose to do this (and keep in mind this is entirely optional), please use reputable and varied (i.e. online and print) sources and cross-reference claims. If you wish to read criticism on the novels, searching for academic articles through an online database such as the Literary Reference Center – available through EBSCO from Poudre’s Media Center website – is the best route for this kind of additional research.

Beware of the temptation to read the texts as too autobiographical; use any contextual knowledge you gather to complement your reading rather than to guide it, and consider the theory that texts have literary merit outside the bounds of historical and cultural constructs. We suggest that you *not* delve too deeply into absurdist philosophy or existentialism; these are complex concepts which *will* be discussed in class and are best explored after first establishing a solid understanding of the novels without this additional lens or mode of thinking.

If you have any questions about these guidelines (and yes, we recognize that there are some exceptions to these “rules”), please contact Ms Hunt at thunt@psdschools.org or Mr. Hlawaty at shlawaty@psdschools.org. (We will check email periodically throughout the summer and will get back to you as promptly as possible.)

TEXTS

<i>Crime and Punishment</i>	Fyodor Dostoevsky	ISBN 0-553-21175-7
<i>Chronicle of a Death Foretold</i>	Gabriel-Garcia-Marquez	ISBN 978-1-4000-3471-0
<i>The Stranger</i>	Albert Camus	ISBN 978-0-679-72020-1

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING TEXTS:

- **EACH BOOK REQUIRED FOR YOU TO PURCHASE *MUST* HAVE THE *EXACT* ISBN LISTED ABOVE.** Other versions of these books (e.g. other translations, same translation with different ISBN, one you pulled off a bookshelf at home, etc.) are not acceptable. ***NO EXCEPTIONS!*** Bear in mind that older copies sometimes have the same ISBN but different pagination; if you find an older copy, compare it to a new copy (e.g. those at a local bookstore) to confirm they are truly identical.
- **Even if you do not plan to underline, highlight, or tab your book as you read this summer, you will likely find one or more of these practices necessary during our detailed study of each novel throughout the fall. You will also need continuous and frequent access to these novels even into second semester. For these and other reasons, you *must* own a copy of each novel—no library loaners or sharing copies with peers.**
- **Borrowing a copy from someone who has already taken notes—however minimal or copious, cursory or insightful—in the book itself is more likely to hinder than to help your reading. Use only a clean copy and rely on yourself to form interpretations; you may be surprised by how insightful *you* can be.**

Summer Reading Assignment

This assignment is due at the *beginning* of class on the first day of school and must be typed or word processed. No exceptions. Save your work in multiple places (i.e. hard drive *and* jump drive in case of computer crashes) and print assignments far enough ahead of time to circumvent printer catastrophes. (If typing or word processing will pose a problem, contact the instructor prior to August 14th.)

In addition to each part of the required assignment (below), we recommend recording your own summaries of each major section of each book (each part, for example, in *Crime and Punishment* or each chapter in the other novels) and making character lists to keep details straight.

In presenting the assignment for submission, please compile and staple materials for each novel separately. Include a heading in the upper right hand corner of the first page of each with your name, the date due (first day of class), and your period. Print sections in order (Part One: Character, Key Concept, then Commentary, followed by Part Two); attach the photocopied passage (see directions, below, for the commentary) at the very back for each novel. Include word counts for each section. The assignments may be single-spaced; you can print one or both sides of the paper (your choice).

Part One

Make note of seemingly significant passages as you read, with special attention to character development, exploration of key concepts or ideas, and particularly artistic or rich sections of narration or dialogue. Upon completing the novel, select one passage for each of the following categories and examine each as best as you can, based on what you can glean from having completed your first read of the novel.

1. **Character** (150-200 words)

Identify a passage in which the author introduces or develops a character of interest in the novel. Label the paragraph with the character's name and indicate where the passage begins and ends. Begin writing by briefly identifying the content of the passage and situating it in its context, and then explore:

- What do we learn about the character in this passage?
- How does the author employ particular tactics or techniques to enrich our understanding of, or insight into, this character? (Read the text closely, with sensitivity to literary devices.)
- How is this passage significant in terms of this character's overall function or significance in the novel? (Here, you might consider character parallels and foils – how this character compares to others in the novel – as well as what relationship this character has to key ideas in the novel and whether s/he evolves. You don't have to address everything suggested here: stick to what is relevant.)

2. **Key concept/thematic idea** (150-200 words)

Identify a passage in which the author develops, explores, or somehow comments on a key idea or thematic concept in the novel. Label the paragraph with a phrase identifying the idea/concept (in your own words) and indicate where the passage begins and ends. Begin writing by briefly identifying the content of the passage and situating it in its context, and then explore:

- What key concept or thematic idea is being developed here, and how do you know?
- How does the author employ particular tactics or techniques to enrich our understanding of, or insight into, this concept in this particular passage? (Again, be mindful of any relevant literary devices.)
- What is the function and/or significance of this passage in terms of establishing, developing, clarifying, or complicating this key concept in the novel as a whole?

3. **Commentary** (300-500 words)

Select a passage of interest in the novel (30-60 lines in length) that stood out to you for its artistry or complexity. Photocopy the passage (this will be attached at the back of your materials for each novel), noting your chosen start and end points on the passage. Number every five lines in the right-hand margin and use lines numbers when referencing the text in the commentary. Write a commentary on the passage, taking care to:

- Situate the passage
- Identify the dramatic situation and/or context of the passage
- Offer a central assertion about the passage which is developed and supported through a detailed analysis of relevant literary features

Part Two

Once you finish each novel, record responses to each of the following questions (150-200 words each):

1. What question(s) does the author raise (about philosophy, society, the human condition, etc.) through this novel, or what issue(s) does the novel address?
2. What aspects of the novel's craft are particularly noticeable or significant? (Consider any and all literary or narrative devices, techniques, conventions.)

You may find it useful to write Part Two before addressing the third bullet (function, significance) regarding character and key concept. Consider multiple responses to both questions in Part Two.

Don't take our word for it . . .

*Words of Advice on Summer Reading
(from those who have gone before you, a.k.a. the class of 2012)*

If you stop complaining and actually try to do your work, you will do well in this class. You may not want to read the books, but you should because they are very good and also because that is the only way to actually understand and appreciate them, which is how you succeed. Those of you who are tempted to use Cliff Notes, don't. Even if you just talk to a friend who read the book, you will probably get better and more insightful analysis than you would from those sources.

Be as thorough as you can with the summer reading assignment. Tab instances of recurring motifs and images, and try to be as organized as possible. Don't be afraid to write in the books either. If you do a good job with the summer assignment, it makes the entire year SO much easier.

Do your summer reading, young padawan, or fail the EAs, you will.

As not fun as it seems in the moment the summer reading work is really important and really useful, it makes all your work first semester much easier to do (and actually more meaningful/enjoyable). It allows you to be able to have a starting point for your essays and that is really valuable.

Read stuff. Your teachers know what they are talking about, listen to them.

Take the first reads seriously.

Read the works. Enjoy what you write about.

Read the novels well. Don't skim. It may seem like a lot, but it really is helpful to have a solid understanding of the events in the book so that you can focus your second read on the nuances of the message inside of the novels. A thorough first read and an in depth assignment (meaning actually spend time on your assignment) will give you a solid basic understanding of the novels and possible topics for the EA. The ideas you come up with in your summer reading assignment can provide good essay topics, providing you do a thorough job first!

The two shorter books go quickly but PLEASE annotate them. You will have the chance to add to it in class but have your own insights to share when Fall starts so you don't look like a loser. You will know before the first day of classes if you are going to look like one, trust me. Also Crime and Punishment seems impossible but it becomes awesome in class, just wait for it and push through the reading over the break. Good luck!

The summer assignment is a gift. It can be really, really helpful in writing all of the Lit. Assignments. Read thoroughly the first time and record all insights.

Be sure to fully read each novel over the summer and have them done by the beginning of August so you have plenty of time to complete the summer assignment thoroughly.

You may believe that you can get by without reading the book or without studying it closely. I have read the essays that result from that. They are really bad. Also, remember that analysis should focus on coming to a coherent conclusion.

Read the books analytically, but also enjoy them because they actually are good books and you're going to want to like them because they're not going away until January.

I think it's important to read *Crime and Punishment* first, especially since you end up reading it first again in class. Having a list of characters, mostly for *Crime and Punishment*, is VERY helpful, since everyone is named and there are several names for many characters, as well as many names that are fairly similar to each other.

ACTUALLY DO IT! Reading all the books is really going to set you up for success because the entire first semester revolves around them. Besides, enjoy reading them the first time because it is good literature, before you have to tear the books to shreds through a semester of analyzing. Also, summer reading entries will only be helpful if you put effort into them, otherwise you're going to have to do all the work during the school year.

Do a good job on the summer reading assignment because it will be very useful later in the course.

Be ready to read and understand the books in a whole new way. Yes, it is not fun to read *Crime and Punishment* more than once, but it really does help you better understand your knowledge of the book in order to write the papers. Also, it is important that you read the summer reading books like you are looking for ideas to write for your paper. Don't just read them to get it done, make sure you understand some of the outstanding themes in the novels.

When you read through the first time, don't worry too much about annotating everything, but if you pick up on some themes or recurring ideas, mark them. It's handy to have a few main concepts and ideas you want to look for specifically in your second read, so you already have plenty of evidence and an idea of a topic when you start writing an essay.

DO NOT LOOK AT GUIDES/SPARKNOTES! In order to gain genuine insights into the novels, it is best to thoroughly read everything and come to your own conclusion rather than try to IBS it. Read crime and punishment first! Your summer will turn out a lot better if you do.

Get *Crime and Punishment* done early, it feels really good to have it done, and then you have the rest of the summer to read the short, easy books. You might not like *Crime and Punishment* at first, but eventually you will discover that it really has the most to offer in terms of analysis. Also, it's okay if you don't know what the greater purpose of all of the literary devices are after the first read, it's really okay just to speculate in your journals. It is helpful to pick up on them, but you have plenty of time to sort out what they mean in class.

Actually read the novels over the summer. Use this read to investigate what you think is interesting in them. This can/will lend itself to a more involved essay because you'll actually care about what you're writing about.

Even if it's stressful, force yourself to find something in the text you like. Even if it's the fact that the author spells words funny or some underlying idea, or laughing at crazy people, or giggling at unintended innuendos. Even if you hate the texts, read them anyway. I thought skimming them at first would do it, but there isn't really a way to fake good analysis.

Allow yourself to enjoy the books/plays you read. Do look at them with an analytical eye, but, especially on first reads, not to the extent that it makes reading a chore. Insights will come much more easily if you take in the content with a positive mind as well.

I would tell them to do the work they are assigned since it is assigned for a purpose and will help alot! Also, to enjoy the works studied, they are not that bad!! And this way it can be easier to come up with insights and better understand the works.
