

Summer Reading: ENG 101 & ENG 102 (Grade 9)

Ninth grade students will be reading a total of THREE books in preparation for the academic year: two assigned readings (see below) and one book of choice. Students will also be annotating and keeping a reading log for the assigned readings (see directions and an example below).

The book of choice is just that – you choose a book you want to read that you have never read before. I want to know what interests you and how you choose to indulge yourself. Maybe it will be historical fiction, or a graphic novel, or fantasy, or romance, or a collection of short stories, or poetry...there is no wrong choice. Be you! We will get to know each other when we meet in August through our sharing of choices.

The two assigned books that students entering 9th grade will be reading this summer – and enjoying, I hope – are quite different from each other.

Cleopatra's Daughter by Michelle Moran is historical fiction that is based in fact. The twin children of Marc Antony and Queen Cleopatra VII of Egypt, Selene and Alexander, are taken to Rome after the deaths of their parents. Raised in the imperial household of Octavia, sister to Emperor Augustus, Selene and Alexander are educated as Romans and trained in the ways of Rome according to their elevated status in the imperial family. This historical fiction acquaints readers with customs, habits, and expectations of Romans of all classes during Augustus' rule. Perhaps reading the "Historical Note" on p. 417 first would be helpful to understanding the events of the story. Pay attention to the Timeline and the maps at the beginning of the novel. There is also a list of characters so that you will not be confused by the names. At the very end of the selection is a glossary to help with some unfamiliar terms.

Waiting for Odysseus by Clemence McLaren immerses the reader in the ancient world of the Trojan War. The love story of Penelope and Odysseus is world renown and McLaren brings to life the extraordinary women in Odysseus' life. This novel has it all: love and romance, adventure, uncertainty, danger, and wisdom.

When we gather in the fall to begin our ninth grade English work, we will be discussing and writing about each novel. Any margin notes or underlining that you want to add to your text of *Cleopatra's Daughter*, and *Waiting for Odysseus* will help you when we begin our discussions. These novels also become part of our curriculum during the year as we study mythology, the Trojan War, and Roman literature. The notes you take while you read will help you throughout the school year.

In addition to reading and annotating these two assigned texts, you should also complete a response log for each book. Refer to the Response Log instructions as a guide. Response Logs will be collected and count for your first grade in the course. **ADVICE:** If you find yourself grumbling about summer reading, remember that you are a student at Villa Duchesne, a challenging, college-preparatory school. You are preparing for college work even during the summer before your first year in high school. You are preparing for your future through a wide range of reading selections. You are going to be a wonderful student!

The Response Log: A response log is an effective way to keep a record of your reading responses (positive or negative, sure or unsure). It offers a chance to respond personally, to ask questions, to wonder, to predict, or to reflect on the characters, people, events, literary elements, writing techniques, or language of a text. Do not summarize! Instead, record your textual observations.

Assignment: Complete a Response Log (4 entries each) for *Cleopatra's Daughter*, AND for *Waiting for Odysseus*— for a total of 2 Response Logs (4 entries total). (20 points each totaling 40 points). Follow the directions below.

Cleopatra's Daughter is a coming of age story about a young girl whose life completely changes, forcing her to adapt to a new environment. As you read, focus on characterization.

Characterization is the author's way of revealing a character's personality through the following qualities: what the character thinks, how the character acts, what the character does, how others perceive the character, how the character treats others, how the character reacts to challenges, and the character's physical characteristics.

Guiding Questions for *Cleopatra's Daughter*: Who is Selene? How does she change during the course of the story? What do her actions suggest about her personality? What adjectives would you use to describe her? Why? Write 4 entries on Selene.

Waiting for Odysseus is a collection of four narratives, each told by one of the four amazing women in Odysseus' life. As you read, focus on the characterization of each woman and her relationship with Odysseus, as well as how their descriptions characterize Odysseus.

Guiding Questions for *Waiting for Odysseus*: Who are each of these women? What does each narrative reveal about their individual personalities? What type of relationship does each woman have with Odysseus? Write 1 entry for each woman: Penelope, Circe, Athena, and Eurycleia

Expectations for Response Logs:

1. Generally each entry should be 3-5 sentences and should include your analysis of the literary and rhetorical techniques present in the quotations, the author's attitude, purpose or tone, and relation to personal experience.
2. You must include a total of **4 entries per work** that range from the beginning to the end. Show me that you have read the entire text by responding to the book from the first to the last page. This means you will need to have paper and pen with you as you read or mark your quotations and complete the log after completing the novel.
3. Make sure that you note the page number for the quotes in the left-hand column. Your response log will be used to determine your comprehension of the text. Be sure that your responses are thorough. Please remember that these logs are not meant to be personal diaries. They are meant to be read by others and should be related only to the assigned material. You will be sharing your logs in class, so keep this in mind as you write. When sharing you will have the opportunity to confirm, clarify, and modify your responses through discussion. You will also find that your response logs can be helpful in writing about the texts.

***I do not expect you to be an expert at analyzing literature, so don't panic! Do your best and use the analytical techniques you learned in your previous English classes to help you

As with every class assignment, all summer reading work should be original. Do not wait until the last minute to begin your work. I am interested in your original thoughts and ideas, so leave yourself enough time to carefully and thoughtfully complete this assignment.

Sample Response Log:

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

Quotations from Text

“Behind him walked his opposite, a huge man shapeless of face, and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws . . . [Lennie] dropped his blankets and flung himself down and drank from the surface of the green pool; drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse . . . Lennie dabbed his big paw in the water and wiggled his fingers so the water arose in like splashes” (2-3).

Commentary/Responses to Text

In the first chapter, Lennie is repeatedly compared to different animals, including a bear and a horse, to suggest that he is similar to an animal. For example, his hands are described as paws to show his size and his strength; bears are strong and powerful animals that can be threatening if provoked. By contrast, Lennie seems to have a soft side, as he gently dabs his “big paw” into the pool, to create rings in the water. Without hesitation or a second thought, Lennie throws his body down and begins drinking the water, the way a dog or a horse does; in fact, George scolds him for not exercising caution, in case the water was contaminated and thus dangerous. Here, Lennie acts on instinct, like an animal, to satisfy his thirst.