**Freshman Honors English Summer Reading Assignment 2016:**

***To Kill a Mockingbird***

Congratulations and welcome to the Honors English Program at Columbia High School! I look forward to working with you this year. Freshman Honors English is an accelerated course designed to prepare you for the rigor of Advance Placement courses and collegiate-level work. This year, we will explore the writing process, build strategies for reading comprehension, and develop an understanding of language usage. We will also read a variety of genres, write extensively in multiple modes, and develop research skills.

Below, you will find instructions for the summer homework assignment, which you are responsible for completing prior to the start of the school year. As a reminder, students who do not complete the homework will not be removed from the class, but an incomplete (I) for the summer homework will negatively impact the final semester grade.

One major thematic focus of this course is the idea of coming of age, which we will explore through Harper Lee’s classic novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Your work this summer will prepare you to engage in complex discussions and analysis of this text once class begins in August; the **reading** and **dialectical journal** will be **due** at the **end of the first week** of school, the **close-reading questions** and **reflection** will be **due** at the **end of the second week** of school.

This assignment, as well as other useful links and information, can be found on our class website at <kingofela.weebly.com>. Please do not hesitate to contact me at <fjones@nsd131.org> should you have any questions about the summer homework or the course.

Happy summer!

Ms. Fran Jones

**Summer Reading Assignment Purpose**- To engage students in content and introduce expectations students will experience in the Freshman Honors 2016-2017 course.

**Summer Reading Objective**: To read and annotate for literary elements. To respond thoughtfully to questions in preparation for high school quality work.

**Required Activities:**

1. **The Reading**- You will read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.
2. **Dialectical Journal**- You will keep a journal of your thoughts and connections to the text while you read. This journal will model your engagement as a reader.
3. **Close-reading Questions**- Answer the questions using the RACE strategy.
4. **Reflection**- After reading and annotating, you will type a written response about the prompt.

Please see each of the following activity explanation pages for further details.

**Activity 1: The Reading DUE: END OF FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL**

The most obvious task is to read the novel for a thorough understanding of plot. Additionally, you will create a dialectical journal, paying careful attention to setting, characters, key events, significant quotations, themes, etc. You are required to turn in your journal; it will be graded.

You are encouraged to purchase your own copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird* so you can annotate and take notes directly in the book while reading. There are many used book stores in the area where you will more than likely find it. If you cannot purchase your own copy, you should check out a copy of the book from the public library.

**Activity 2: The Dialectical Journal DUE: END OF FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL**

While reading, you will be dialoguing (or talking) to the text. You will be looking for certain narrative elements, as well as keeping track of your own responses to the text. You will need to do a Dialectical Journal for only **5 chapters**, with *at least* **7 entries per chapter**. For a detailed FAQ sheet, what to look for chart, and example Dialectical Journal, see pages 4 and 5.

**Activity 3: Close Reading Questions DUE: END OF SECOND WEEK OF SCHOOL**

**Use the guide on page 6 to help. Each question should have 2-3 sentences to answer. Responses should be typed with proper MLA formatting.**

**Part 1**

1. Based on what you have read so far, how would you describe Atticus? Be sure to use the best details from the novel in your answer.
2. Why does Scout stand up for Walter?
3. Atticus says, “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view … until you climb into his skin and walk around in it” (39). How is this advice taken or ignored in this chapter?” Use the strongest evidence from the novel in your answer.
4. Scout, as the narrator, ends the chapter by saying: “It was not until many years later that I realized he (Atticus) wanted me to hear every word he said” (117). Why might Atticus want her to hear every word? What makes you think as you do?
5. Atticus says, “Remember it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird.” Put this statement in your own words. What does Atticus really mean? Use the strongest evidence from the novel in your answer. How do you think it relates to the title? How does Miss Maudie help this explanation?

**Part 2**

1. On page 218, Scout learns that her father was appointed to defend Tom Robinson. She observes, “The court appointed Atticus to defend him. Atticus aimed to defend him. That’s what they didn’t like about it. It was confusing.” What does the reader understand about why the townspeople are upset that Scout doesn’t? Use the strongest evidence from the novel in your answer.
2. Why do you think Atticus speaks so formally to Mayella during her testimony? What is your impression of Atticus based on Lee’s descriptions during Mayella’s testimony? Use the strongest evidence from the novel to explain your answer.
3. “This case is as simple as black and white.” How is this case literally about black and white? Irony: words that express something different from and often opposite to their literal meaning. Describe the irony of Atticus’s statement. How is this case *black and white*, figuratively speaking and literally?
4. Atticus says, “Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win” (Chapter 9, page 101). Now that you have read the whole text, what do you think? Does it make sense for Atticus to take a stand to defend Tom Robinson? Give evidence from the text to support your thinking, and be sure to take into account what people who disagree might say.
5. What does Scout mean when she says, “Atticus was right. One time he said you never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them. Just standing on the Radley porch was enough”? Use the strongest details from the novel to support your answer.

**Activity 4: The Reflection DUE: END OF SECOND WEEK OF SCHOOL**

In the book, *Scout, Atticus, and Boo: A Celebration of To Kill a Mockingbird*, author Mary McDonagh Murphy writes:

“Reading To Kill a Mockingbird is something millions of us have in common, yet there is nothing in common about the experience. It is usually an extraordinary one. To Kill a Mockingbird leaves a mark. And somehow, it is hermetically sealed in our brains—the memory of it fresh and clear no matter how many decades have passed. If you ask, people will tell you exactly where they were and what was happening to them when they read Harper Lee’s first and only novel. It may be the first ‘adult’ book we read, assigned in eighth or ninth grade. Often it is the first time a young reader is completely kidnapped by a novel, taken on an enthralling ride until the very end. After half a century, To Kill a Mockingbird’s staying power is remarkable: still a best seller, always at the top of lists of readers’ favorites, far and away the most widely read book in high school” (McDonagh Murphy 3).

**Now that you have experienced *To Kill a Mockingbird*, what are you overall reflections, reactions, responses, etc. to the novel? What have you learned from *To Kill a Mockingbird*? Do you think the book deserves the acclaim it has received? What questions about the novel are lingering in your mind?**

Your response should be two to three pages in length, typed in MLA format (1” margins, 12 point Times New Roman, double spaced [if you have format questions, check out the [OWL at Purdue](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/)]). Draw on evidence from the text to support your response. **HINT: Take a look at your Dialectical Journal entries.**

**Dialectical Journal FAQ**

**What is a dialectical journal?**

Simply put, “dialectical” means “the art or practice of arriving at the truth by the exchange of logical arguments” (dictionary.com). A dialectical journal is a way to have a conversation with the text. It also helps show you, the reader, what you are thinking while you read.

**How many quotations should I have?**

You should strive for 7 entries per chapter, keeping in mind that you should be looking for a variety of things, not just focusing on one element.

**How many chapters do I need to journal?**

You do not need to journal the whole book; however, the **5 chapters** you do journal need to be spread throughout the novel (not consecutive—like choosing Chapters 2, 7, 11, 23, 30).

**What exactly constitutes a quotation?**

A quotation can be narration OR dialogue. You are NOT limited just to what the characters say.

**What kinds of quotations should I choose and what should I write about?**

Find passages that you think help us better understand the author’s subject matter, characterizations, attitude, and especially THEMES (messages/”big ideas”). If you find yourself simply repeating what the quotation says, you might want to select a different quotation or reevaluate how you are approaching the response.

**What format should I use?**

Use the left side of the double column notes to copy a significant quote or line from the story with its page number. Use the second column to react to that line, interpret it, ask a question about it, or complete any of the other activities described in the “What to Look For” chart.

**Should I write or type these?**

You can neatly handwrite these in pen or type them – just make sure they are legible (pen isn’t bleeding through, responses aren’t running together, writing can be easily read) and organized. While writing is more portable, some students type much faster and choose to use this method. I suggest using sticky notes to mark quotations and make brief comments while reading if you select this method.

**How long should my responses be?**

While I am more concerned with the depth of your thought, you need to stretch yourself and write a couple sentences about each.

**Elements to Look for Chart**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **WHAT TO LOOK FOR** | **WHAT TO NOTE IN THE JOURNAL** |
| Point of View: how the narration affects the story | How is Scout’s age apparent; why does it matter? |
| Characters: names as they are introduced, key details, appearance, behavior, speech, attitudes and opinions, relationships | What can you infer about the character? E.g., “Dill – big imagination”; “Cal – strict, mother figure”; “Atticus” – settles kids’ arguments” |
| Setting: clues, information, allusions | What do these clues tell you? E.g., “ancestor settled in Alabama”; “small town, everyone knows everyone”; “1933 speech by President Roosevelt” |
| Key events: exposition (background information) | Summarize in a few words per paragraph or section and why that might be important. E.g., “Jem breaks his arm,” Simon Finch held slaves,” “Scout and Jem meet Dill” |
| Significant quotations and passages | Connect to themes, motifs, or characters; comment on tone; agree or disagree |
| Evidence of themes, motifs, and symbols | Note theme or motif and explain connection if possible  E.g., “Simon Finch was a hypocrite,” “Dill wants Jem to empathize with the turtle” |
| Anything that surprises, offends, delights, disturbs, or puzzles you | Say why it is surprising, offensive, delightful, disturbing, or puzzling – or write a “!” or a “?” |
| Questions about plot, character, word choice, etc. | Who, what, when, where, why, how? “Why this word?”, “How does she know?”, “So what?”, etc. |
| Connection—text to self, other text, or world | How does this connect to the world around you? |
| Words and terms you don’t know | Brief definition or explanation |

**Dialectical Journal Example**

**Here is my example for the beginning of Chapter 1.** **My notes to you are in boldface for each section. Your journal will not have these.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Quotation** | **Response** |
| “When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow” (3).  **(My Note: Include the page number in parenthesis at the end of the quote. This is called a parenthetical citation, which we will talk about more once school starts.)** | I remember breaking my foot before a choir concert. I was not feeling well and had to leave the risers before a concert. When I was hopping down from the third riser, I landed on the side of my foot and broke it. All I cared about when I was recovering was being able to walk without crutches or a walking cast again. This seems to be how Jem kind of feels. (Text to Self) |
| Atticus, the lawyer, “knew his people, they knew him, and because of Simon Finch’s industry, Atticus was related by blood or marriage to nearly every family in the town” (6).  **(My Note: Instead of quoting the part about**  **Atticus and his job immediately before this, I put it as a side note at the front before the quotation.)** | Atticus seems to be a well-respected person in Maycomb, and since he is a lawyer, he also must be fairly intelligent. Maycomb must be a relatively small town where everyone knows everyone if Atticus is indeed related to most of the people. I think Atticus most likely will play an important role in this book because of his position. (Character) |
| “There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go…nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County. But it was a time of vague optimism for some of the people: Maycomb County had recently been told that it had nothing to fear but fear itself” (6).  **(My Note: Because I omitted some text, I used ellipsis […] to show there is more to the quote.)** | Apparently Maycomb is also a very slow, sleepy town that is pretty isolated from everything else. This seems to be especially true since they only have a “vague” notion of FDR’s speech (an allusion to the Great Depression of the 1930s – must be the era in which the story takes place) and there is “nothing” outside of Maycomb County. I wonder why they see the world this way – maybe people don’t travel because of the Depression or because that’s just not what people did. (Question) |
| “The Radleys, welcome anywhere in town, kept to  themselves, a predilection unforgivable in  Maycomb” (11).  **(My Note: In my response, I touched on one of the themes of the novel—prejudice—which is appearing in an atypical way.)** | It seems that the town is a little closed minded in viewing the Radleys since they don’t go to church or do other things common in Maycomb. This seems to be a prejudice against their lifestyle since it seems that the town might not really know them and has become pretty superstitious about them. People often get suspicious about what they don’t understand or what seems strange to them. (Theme) |

**Writing a GREAT Short Answer Response Using Evidence**

**This section will help you get ready for writing in high school. This part will be very important.**

Why use this: Using the RACE Method will help you to focus your response in a clear and concise manner. It is not enough to simply answer the question.

Readers and graders are looking for:

o evidence that you understand

o analysis (thinking)

o support for your answer with evidence from the readings

o clarity

1. **R**estate the question asked.

Reread and restate the question in your topic sentence. For example, what’s your favorite color? My favorite color is…

2. **A**nswer (main idea)

Answer the question that is being asked and that ALL the questions are being answered. Use your answer to write your topic sentence.

3. **C**ite evidence from the text

**C**ite evidence from the text means to return to the reading and find at least one quote, direct or indirect, which supports your answer. Direct quotes are often better and having both is best! All quotes need to start with a quote starter. **For example**: The author stated, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ explained, According to \_\_\_\_\_\_,

***Direct Quote***- A direct quote is a quote in which you copy an author's words directly - word for word. Direct quotes will be surrounded by quotation marks.

Example: The author stated that "I couldn't laugh; I couldn't applaud; it filled me with bitterness to have others do it and to have people make a hero of Hicks and the people around him" (659).

***Indirect Quote*** - An indirect quote is a quote in which you paraphrase - put into your own words - what the author is saying.

Example: Twain was unable to laugh or applaud, because he was so angry that Hicks could be mesmerized and he could not (659).

4. **E**xplain and Elaborate on your answer and the evidence. Explain how the evidence from the text supports your answer. A good response will carefully analyze the text, offer textual evidence from the piece or pieces that will directly support your answer and will explain how this evidence supports your answer. Do not just say something is true, prove it. Show how the evidence supports the answer; supply reasons your answer is correct. In many cases, the difference between an A and a B as a grade is due to the effective use of supporting evidence.

For example, you may use the sentence starter “These quotes show that…” or “This supports the statement…” or “In other words,”.