



CANTERBURY HIGH SCHOOL

Grade 12 AP English Literature & Composition Summer Reading Journal Requirements for 2021-22

For each of your summer novels – *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Road* – you will create a typed journal in which you record your thoughts. Submission of these notes will generate your first grades for the course, and the notes can be used for the writing you will do early in the first quarter. The elements outlined below must be included in the notes on each novel. Aside from that, you may record anything you deem significant as you read, annotate, and study the novels.

The language that you use in your journal can be informal, but it needs to be coherent. You will be graded on the depth and thoughtfulness of your journal.

Typed responses are required. You may hand-write your answers as you read, but be prepared to transfer your writing to an electronic document for submission to www.turnitin.com in August. If you have questions about this assignment, you can email Mr. Stephens: jstephens@canterburyschool.org

Each novel's notes should include:

1. A list of characters and their traits, interactions, motivations, etc.
2. A consideration of who is narrating the story, for what purpose, in what manner...
3. Themes and motifs, echoes that reverberate throughout the work.
4. Key or recurring symbols. These contain several layers of meaning, often concealed at first sight, and are representative of several other aspects, concepts or traits than are visible in the literal meaning alone.
5. Scenes that are instrumental to moving the plot forward, that foreshadow action to come, that reveal character. (Be sure to record page numbers so that you can return when writing an essay or in class discussion.)
6. Figurative language, including metaphor, simile, personification, and so on.
7. Tone and variations: irony (verbal/situational/dramatic), to give a single example. Tone can be identified though DIDLS: diction, images, details, language, and syntax.
8. Significant quotations that illuminate for you key ideas, concepts, or themes in the work overall. (Again, be sure to record page numbers.)
9. Questions that occur to you about what you are reading and what it means. This is very important: always ask yourself why the author makes a given choice; if the answer is elusive (including cases in which you cannot answer your own question), write the question out and consider why it is an important one to address. These questions will help to fuel our early class discussions.

Both Margaret Atwood in *The Handmaid's Tale* and Cormac McCarthy in *The Road* present what Neil Gaiman, writing of Ray Bradbury's seminal science-fiction novel *Fahrenheit 451*, calls "speculative fiction." Atwood and McCarthy take "an element of life today, something clear and obvious and normally something troubling, and asks what would happen if that thing, that one thing, became bigger, became all-pervasive, changed the way we thought and behaved." Where does the speculation of these authors' take us? What conclusions do you draw from their musings on the familiar yet different worlds they create?