

**Canterbury High School**  
**Grade 12 AP English Literature & Composition**  
**Summer reading journal requirements for AY 2023-2024**  
**Mr. Stephens**

For each of your summer novels – *Pride and Prejudice* and *A Prayer for Owen Meany* – 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](http://www.turnitin.com) in August. If you have questions about this assignment, you can email Mr. Stephens: [jstephens@canterburyschool.org](mailto:jstephens@canterburyschool.org)

Part A: Novel notes. These may be rather wide-ranging and informal – even a bit ‘messy’ – but 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 necessary.)
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 through 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 fuel our early class discussions.

Part B: Mini-essays. To adequately address each of these topics you will need to produce several paragraphs:

1. Modern critics have compared *Pride and Prejudice* to a rom-com or a ‘meet-cute.’ Consider elements – scenes, characterization, plot-points, etc. – that support this reading. Also, however,

consider features, attitudes, cultural mores, and so forth of the period (called 'the Regency,' spanning from about 1795-1825) which are much more foreign to us. How much do they influence what happens in the novel?

2. In contrast to Austen's Regency-set romance, John Irving's novel is firmly grounded in a familiar slice of our modern world, yet it also involves elements that require Samuel Taylor Coleridge coinage, "suspension of disbelief." What are these elements, and what effects do they create in this otherwise very 'normal' world of Irving's characters? Why are these departures from reality necessary to the novel's story or structure? How do you react to these departures?