

2012-2013 PRE-REQUISITE READING A.P. ENGLISH III

DUE FIRST DAY OF ENGLISH CLASS

PART ONE

The first part of the assignment is simple: read *The Lightning Thief* from the *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series by Rick Riordan. You may use local libraries to borrow this title, or you can find the novel in bookstores in the area, including used bookstores. This book was very popular so many are available second hand. This book is also available as an eBook. Ordering from sites such as *amazon.com*, *booksense.com* and other online bookstores is a possibility.

As you read, pay attention to the information about the Greek gods and the many stories associated with them. One of the hardest things about understanding classical literature is not knowing the allusions authors make – many of which refer to Greek mythology. This book should be a fun way to catch up, review, or introduce you to the major Greek myths, heroes and gods.

On the first day of class, be prepared to take a test on the text and the Greek mythology discussed in the novel. By the way – don't try to watch the movie of this as an alternative – it is not a good movie and it will probably not help you take the test since they changed so much of the story.

PART TWO

In addition to reading *The Lightning Thief*, you should choose one novel from the list below. You may use local libraries to borrow these titles, if they are available, or you may be able to find these novels in bookstores in the area, including used bookstores. They are also available as eBooks. Ordering them from sites such as *amazon.com*, *booksense.com*, and other online bookstores is a possibility. Online booksellers usually have a brief description of the novels, so you might browse through them to get an idea of which of the titles you might enjoy.

Since our class will focus on writing and reading nonfiction, these titles are all nonfiction. The author deftly ties in many sources to tell the story of some amazing times in our history. His use of source material and the engaging storytelling makes these much better than your typical “history” book.

All Books are by Erik Larson.

In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin

Thunderstruck

The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America

PLEASE NOTE!

Some of these novels may contain adult language and situations you find uncomfortable. Please preview with reviews and publisher summaries. If the language or situations offend you, stop reading and select another title. No specific title is required for everyone to read!

(continued on back)

ASSIGNMENT: You will keep a dialectical journal on this book as you read – I repeat, **AS YOU READ**. The purpose of a dialectical journal is to identify significant pieces of text and explain its significance. It should be used to think about, digest, summarize, question, clarify, critique, and remember what is read. It is a way to take notes on what is read, using the actual text without writing on the actual text, so that when you are asked to write an essay, take a test on, or participate in a seminar, you do not have to reread the entire piece (or cheat). Instead, you can search your notes for direct quotes to use as supporting evidence for your opinions.

The key guideline to remember is that the purpose of keeping a dialectical journal is to develop critical reading (close reading) skills, not to document your personal responses. Close reading is an essential part of developing and articulating a legitimate reading of a text. You become satisfied with your abilities as a reader by working through the process of developing an interpretation that often begins in puzzlement, then passes through approximations of interpretations and misreadings, to developing a clear understanding of what are (and what are not) valid and legitimate readings of a particular text.

To create a dialectical journal, fold a sheet of paper in half. On the left side of the page, title the column “Quotation.” On the right side of the page, title the column “Response/Discussion.” If you have a Kindle or other type of eReader that allows you to make notes in text after highlighting, you may use this to create your journal. You can bring your eReader on day one and we will connect it to the computer to print your clippings.

The left side is where you will write the text you have selected. If the passage is more than three sentences, you may abbreviate using ellipses (three dots indicating that there is missing text). Below the text, write the page number the text is from.

The following are ideas to help you get started making entries on the left side of the page. Be creative in your use of the journal. I realize that initially you want to know what your teacher wants you to do and whether you are approaching the task correctly. However, once you become comfortable with journaling, you will have your own ideas and guidelines.

- Note places in the text when your reading changes
 - You see something you didn't before
 - You begin to recognize a pattern (images overlap, words or ideas recur, details seem associated with each other)
 - The story seems to be about something other than what it seemed to be before
 - You discover your own misreadings
 - You discover a new context or perspective
- Note when you are puzzled or surprised
 - It is a sign of intelligence to recognize your lack of understanding, particularly in an initial reading.
- Note when something just doesn't fit with your understanding of the text
- Note when things do not make sense: be specific about what confuses you
- Note details that seem important and worth another look
- Note ways in which the text teaches you about life or makes a connection to another work of art or even another academic discipline
- Note rhetorical devices: how are they used, and how they contribute to the meaning

The right side is where you will respond to the text you have chosen. You will have your discussion with the text searching for meaning. In this column you should follow a three-step process. First comment on how you are developing an understanding of the text. Second, reflect on why you chose this piece of text. Third, discuss your emerging sense of how this text works and what it means. This could take up an entire page or more – depending on your writing.

This is a sample entry for the novel *The Great Gatsby*. Notice the response is longer than the quote!!

<u>Quotation</u>	<u>Response/Discussion</u>
<p>"He didn't say any more but we've always been unusually communicative in a reserved way and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that. In consequence I'm inclined to reserve all judgments, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores." (p. 1)</p>	<p>This is the start of the novel, so I am trying to get a feel of what it will be like – the tone and the style of the author. It's in first-person, which makes you wonder how much you can trust the narrator, but this quote caught my eye. It is great because I totally understand the kind of relationship he is describing – my dad is like that. But more than that – I wonder if the author is introducing the idea that the narrator is going to be impartial in the telling of this story. Otherwise it is a very profound statement to make on the first page. I suppose Gatsby is going to be one of those "curious natures" he says few get to know because of their judgmental behavior. Are we going to have to understand what is being told – the way the narrator is with his father? It's like the author is telling us up front that we are going to have to focus and pay attention if we are going to see the "great deal more" in this text.</p>

You should have 16 entries in your dialectical journal and you should represent the entire text – be careful you don't have all of them in the beginning or leave out large sections of the text.

PART THREE

Finally, the last part of your assignment is to introduce you to the idea of style. For this, you will read *The Bad Beginning* from *A Series of Unfortunate Events* by Lemony Snicket. You must have a copy of this book during at least the first week of this class. It is easily found at used book stores and is not expensive in its paperback form. It is available as an eBook. If you borrow this book or use a library copy, be sure you have access to it at the start of school.

This novel will be found in the children's section of a bookstore, but that is one of the reasons we will be able to easily focus on the style with which it is written rather than having to struggle to comprehend the text as well. This series of novels was written, much as the great Disney films were made, with two audiences in mind – the child and the adult with the child. Therefore, the novel will, hopefully, be amusing to even a teenager.

BTW - The movie combines the first three novels of this series and is not a substitute! When the author was asked who he would hate to see playing Count Olaf in a movie of his novels – he said Jim Carrey...Guess who Hollywood put in the part!

On the first day of class, be prepared to take a test on the text and have 5 sections (record first words and last words of the section and page numbers for quick reference or use post it notes in the text) which you think show great "style" from the writer. Find sections you think are good examples of how he writes – we will use these for study in class as we introduce the elements of style. They should be at least 3-4 sentences in length (a paragraph), but not more than a printed page.