

Senior British Literature Summer Reading

A warm welcome to British Literature. In this course, we'll work our way through a chronological survey of the literature of the British Isles from Chaucer to Shakespeare to the Romantics and beyond. Our first assignment, due the second day of school, is to read a nineteenth-century novel that is considered a landmark work in the history of British literature. As you read, you'll be completing a journal recording details and responses. This journal will count as the first major grade of the year. We'll also dedicate our first two weeks of class to discussion of the novel reading and it'll appear on the first exam.

Guidelines and Suggestions:

- Give yourself ample time to complete the readings and assignments. Do not wait until the last minute to try to complete this assignment.
- Try mapping out your plan of action in a planner, calendar, or any source you can easily refer back to.
- Decide when and how you will read: On the subway as you go to meet friends? At the beach when you're relaxing? On a flight? With your morning cup of coffee? Each night before bed? At the park on a beautiful day? Having a strategy will help you get through the texts.
- On the calendar count the days when you know you will have anywhere between 20-40 minutes to read.
- Calculate how many pages (or chapters) you will need to read per day. 10 to 50 pages is doable. More than that can be overly ambitious
- Don't forget to include days when you will dedicate time to writing your assignment. You may complete the assignment as you are reading the book or after you have finished it in its entirety.

Summer Reading Text:

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde

Writing Assignment: This assignment can be handwritten or you can use Canva to keep a digital notebook (don't pay for any features, just use the free templates). If you choose to handwrite your work keep one small, organized journal (no five subject notebooks necessary) where you will hand write and record your responses. Be sure to clearly label each response.

- **Author Biography:** Do some research. Gather background information on Oscar Wilde, and identify his purpose in writing the novel. Please do not use Wikipedia or Biography.com as sources. Acceptable websites include <http://www.wilde-online.info/oscar-wilde-biography.htm> and <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poemsand-poets/poets/detail/oscar-wilde>

- **Characterization** - In each section you will write a thorough description of each character and that character's role within the novel. Describe the character's appearance (if given), actions, and thoughts. List the conflicts and challenges each character faces. Characters you must discuss: **Lord Henry Wotton, Basil Hallward, Sybil Vane, James Vane, Dorian Gray, Alan Campbell**

- **Significant Passage:** Choose ONE passage from the book that strikes you as particularly important. Explain why the passage is significant to the work, relating it to a major theme, a character's development, or a significant plot element (rising action, climax, etc.). Also explain WHY you consider the passage to be significant. Be sure to provide the page number the passage appears on, and quote the passage (or the first few lines – feel free to type the passage and paste it in your journal)

- **Themes:** In your reading and research of the work, you should also discover the major themes of the book. After identifying at least TWO themes, briefly explain how each is developed throughout the course of the work. Give specific support (at least three quotes) from the work.

- **Time Period and Setting:**

- The novel takes place during the late Victorian era. Why is that important to the novel? What are some of the major historical events going on during that time? Look up Aestheticism and Gothic Horror/Fiction –what are these movements and why are they important to the novel? Do they have specific instances of influence in the novel?

- Write a full account of the setting. Time, place, images and places of interest were used as the background for the story.?

- **Questions:** Write five questions on the novel. The questions could be for the author or for a specific character. Explain your reasoning for each question.

- **Personal Reaction/Review:** Write a three to five paragraph personal reaction to each story/essay. What have you learned from the character's experiences? Would you recommend this book to a friend? What surprised you about the novel? What did you enjoy? What did you dislike? Too many questions? Sorry. Be sure to explain your reasoning and be specific.

Due Date: Your journal is due the second day of school.

If you have any questions regarding the assignment, you can email me over the summer at specland.j@stsviour.org . Have a lovely summer and I looking forward to having you in class next year.