

SUMMER READING HONORS American Literature

WELCOME To Honors American Literature



Below are three literary works for your summer reading assignment. Directions for your paper in response to these novels follow the brief descriptions of each work.

- The Great Gatsby....F. Scott Fitzgerald
- The Catcher in the Rye....J.D. Salinger
- The Age of Miracles...Karen Thompson Walker

These three works capture dominant themes in American literature: a search for self and a search for home combined with major conflicts that entail combating antagonistic forces that derive from internal and external origins.

Two are based in New York City while another could be any town or city in America.

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The Catcher in the Rye : Since his debut in 1951 as “the catcher in the rye”, Holden Caulfield, the novel’s alienated, mourning and cynical protagonist, narrates a few days in his sixteen-year-old life, following his expulsion from prep school. Holden is furious with somewhat normal teenage anger; however, the loss of his younger brother, Allie, to leukemia, has emotionally paralyzed him. This novel, which has survived many rounds of being banned, remains as one of the most significant and popular books with American youth. In addition, films and other books have been inspired by Salinger’s novel, including the now popular *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. It is also a penetrating example of a very common theme: innocence to experience

The Great Gatsby : This classic, set in the 1920s, explores the misconception that money can buy devotion, can guarantee eternal youth, can purchase an ideal. The “ideal” is found in Daisy Buchanan, a beautiful, selfish, rich Southern belle to whom Gatsby

devotes his life. As narrated by Nick Caraway, Daisy's cousin who is spending summer in New York City to work, the novel reveals Gatsby's devotion is pure; however, Gatsby is blind to Daisy's emptiness. He truly pursues a religious quest, using money to 'purchase' the object of his devotion. This has become known as **non-material materialism**.

The Age of Miracles: Told from the point of view of the protagonist, Julia, who is on the verge of turning 12, this is another novel focused on the movement from innocence to experience. However, the framework is very different.

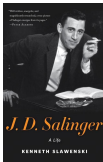
In this novel, the rotation of the Earth has begun to slow causing days and nights to grow longer and longer. All normal life has come to a halt. As days and nights become longer, people begin to grow sick and to act abnormally. Crops begin to fail, oceans rise, flooding homes; soon food and water are hoarded, just like when a major storm is coming. There is talk about the end of the world and even the possibility of moving to another planet. Julia is a quiet, observant girl with a major crush on a boy, Seth. As the ‘**the slowing**’ begins, Julia says she remembers feeling, “not fear but a thrill”...”a sudden sparkle amid the ordinary, the shimmer of the unexpected thing.” As the “**slowing**” continues, Julia realizes it is not temporary. Rather it is species-threatening as the changes to Earth’s gravity make people sick. Soon the widespread use of sunlamps and artificial heating during the longer and colder nights will create energy shortages and periodic blackouts. While the drastic change to life On the outside narrates a large part of the novel, Julia’s transition towards adulthood is as eventful as the earth’s gravity shifting. “Light unhooked from *day*, darkness unchained from *night*” could also describe the turmoil occurring within Julia. (some wording taken from Kaukutani, *The New York Times Book Review*) The disruption of normal life depicted in this work will echo the disruption of normal life in March of 2020, when COVID first invaded our lives.

Below are important details related to writing this paper. **Read them over carefully before you begin your paper and use them as a checklist when you finish. I know there is much to go over, but it is all vital in helping you receive a strong grade on your first paper. For both parts, the biography and the prompt, you must provide some direct quotations from outside sources.**

****Remember, even if the information/details you provide from a source are not directly quoted, they still must be cited or you are committing plagiarism.**

- **Your response must be composed on a google doc, which includes/reflects the version history.**

PART I Brief biography(20 pts)



Select ONE of the three authors and write a two paragraph informative and interesting portrait of them.

- Look for sophisticated information. Make it interesting.
Do not begin with: “ _____ was born on”
- Do not give me the author’s resume (dates, who they married, etc. unless it connects to the novel). No use of author’s first **name alone****
- If possible, use some primary sources and recent information (letters, interviews) Use of **good sources**...shows effort and “digging/exploring”; evaluate the sources you use.
- This brief biography should not read like a Wikipedia or encyclopedia entry, filled with dates, etc.
There are many good sources to use from Beaumont’s database.
- Make sure you include in text citation for your sources continuously.
Any information other than birth/ death dates must be cited.
- If choosing Fitzgerald or Salinger, do not end with, “Though this author is dead, his works will live on forever.

***<https://helpfulprofessor.com/primary-source-examples/>**

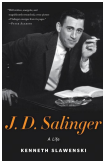
***See last page for guide to research databases.**

SUMMER READING HONORS **American Literature**

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Part II PROMPTS: (60 pts) You MUST respond to the prompt that is assigned to the letter of your last name.

A-M

PROMPT 1: Using either *The Age of Miracles* OR *The Catcher in the Rye*, examine how the protagonists are displaced by forces beyond their control.

** Whichever novel you choose to write about, use one of the below as your FIRST SENTENCE, which is basically your thesis:

In *The Age of Miracles*, the protagonist attempts to hold on to the present, pushing away the threat of the future.

OR

In *The Catcher in the Rye*, the protagonist remains affixed to the past, struggling to avoid moving forward into adulthood.

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N-Z

PROMPT 2: Selecting either *The Great Gatsby* or *The Catcher in the Rye*, discuss how each protagonist's conflict is amplified or enlarged by distinct settings

***USE the following as the FIRST SENTENCE for the prompt; it will serve as your thesis. Remember to choose just one novel.**

- In *The Great Gatsby* the settings of the West and East Egg and the Valley of Ashes reflect the characters and capture the conflicts which arise.
- or
- In *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden's conflicts are amplified through settings that travel throughout the novel.

* Use **two settings** from the list below to support the above thesis.

- Pency Prep
- The Museum of Natural History
- Phoebe's school
- Central Park

For everyone:

- If you select **Catcher**, you **MUST** work from the fact that Holden's trauma is rooted in Allie's death.
- If you select **Gatsby**, you **MUST** work from the premise that his love for Daisy is not normal and that Daisy's emptiness cannot understand Gatsby's devotion.

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Required:

- Literary critical sources.
- Text support
- Examining the symbols/motifs that heighten the novels.
('motif' is a symbol used more than once, like the ducks in *The Catcher in the Rye*).
- Do not use Spark notes, e notes, LitChart, Cliff Notes, Shmoop, Biography.com Personal blogs, etc.

Other:

- Do not tell the plot of your chosen novel. However, you must provide some context (writing this as if I have not read the novel). For example: "Holden finds support from his sister, Phoebe". Phoebe is the context. Usually, it should be short.
 - Do not use sweeping statements like "Everyone in the world suffers loss". Just stick to the protagonists and other characters.
 - Do not use " the reader"
 - Do not use psychology sources; stick with literary critics.
 - Must be composed on a Google doc.
 - Use in text citation () after quotations. Remember the period comes after the (). These are grammatically referred to as in text or parenthetical citations.
 - Any quotation beyond 4 lines..must be separated Do Not use quotation marks for these. USE ONLY ONE SEPARATED QUOTATION in your prompt response.
- Long, separated quotations should always be kept to a minimum. You are not required to use any long or separated quotations.

- The literary present is a term that addresses why we write about most genres of literature in the present tense. The novels you have read still exist in a sort of ‘ongoing’ present. Every time you open up *Catcher*, for example, Holden is still asking about the ducks. Thus, Holden **feels** lost, not Holden **felt** lost.
- Most of your verbs, therefore, should be in present tense for the prompt part of the paper. Again, the biography should mostly be in past tense.
- If a referred to action takes place in the past, then you can use past tense. For example, “Holden remembers how he **felt** the day he **left** Pencey Prep.
- Avoid conditional tense (would, could).
- ***Italicize titles of novels and magazines, newspapers. Essays, short stories, poems, and any written piece that is short, require quotation marks.***
- Do not use any contractions.
- Avoid overuse of ‘and’ as a conjunction between complete sentences.
- Try to use strong, specific words, including verbs. Replace weak verbs like ‘is’, ‘has’, ‘does’ with stronger verbs when you revise.
- Do not use “I think” “To me”, “In my opinion”, etc. No first person.
- No slang. No exclamation points.. !!
- No need to define any literary terms (like symbolism). I know them pretty well. 😊

- **FORMAT and other requirements:**

- 1.5 spacing
- 11 pt font
- Use Times New Roman for your font; use black for your text color
- Skip three spaces between Biography section and Prompt section
- Paragraph progression should be logical. Do not start with the ending of the novel you select

- Prompt length: 3 paragraphs (no shorter or longer). No paragraph should be shorter than about 8-10 sentences.
- Works Cited Page: Use the following link if you are unsure of how to set up your Works Cited page. Do not forget to include the novel you have chosen to write about.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html

- **Paper Setup: Again, Must use a google doc that includes the versions history.**

Cover page with your name, date, block and Summer Reading Paper centered in the middle.

For all other pages: First and last name and page number. Do not repeat headings which consume too much space. Page 1 should begin with your first body paragraph.

***Turnitin and other information will be forthcoming.**

This is due: August 21 or August 22, depending on when your class meets.

Keep all of the novels. We will be spending significant time discussing them, and there will be more assignments connected to them.

RUBRIC:

Content (Biography and Prompt response): 80 pts

Grammar, usage, and organization, proofing, etc. 20 pts.

Overall effort. following directions (10)

110 total points

I hope you enjoy a relaxing and wonderful summer!



I look forward to discussing these outstanding works of literature with you as well as the many brilliant writers who contribute to American Literature.

If you have any questions at all once you begin your paper, do not hesitate to contact me by email or come to see me before school ends.

Below is a guide to finding literary criticism:



Research databases for literary criticism:

Refseek and Google Scholar are two good research engines for literary sources.

JSTOR is also excellent; you must register and are allowed 100 free articles to download ..this might have changed..

Also, always search NPR and PBS, and newspapers like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*

To access Beaumont infobase: (Beaumont School/Student Life/ Database page)...**User: beaumont**
Pass: bluestreaks

Go to page that lists all resources. For literature, besides the biography database, **Gale in Context:**



HighSchool is very good.

many critical essays on The Catcher in the Rye. excellent .

Blooms (at very bottom of database page) is

I saw

