**SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT**

**IB LITERATURE-HL, Year 1**

**Assigned Readings:**

**Novels:**

***The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini**

*Recommended edition: ISBN: 978-1-59463-193-1*

***Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe**

*Recommended edition: ISBN: 0-385-47454-7*

**Textbook**

***How to Read Literature like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster**

*Recommended edition: ISBN: 978-0-06-232652-2*

**Assignments: All responses should be typed, in proper MLA format. Be sure to include proper in-text citations when quoting and paraphrasing and include a properly formatted Works Cited page.**

Discussion Questions (Answer 2 in paragraph form): *The Kite Runner*

1. The novel begins with Amir’s memory of peering down an alley, looking for Hassan who is kite running for him. As Amir peers into the alley, he witnesses a tragedy. The novel ends with Amir kite running for Hassan’s son, Sohrab, as he begins a new life with Amir in America. Why do you think the author chooses to frame the novel with these scenes? Refer to the following passage: “Afghans like to say: Life goes on, unmindful of beginning, end…crisis or catharsis, moving forward like a slow, dusty caravan of kochis [nomads].” How is this significant to the framing of the novel?
2. The strong underlying force of this novel is the relationship between Amir and Hassan. Discuss their friendship. Why is Amir afraid to be Hassan’s true friend? Why does Amir constantly test Hassan’s loyalty? Why does he resent Hassan? After the kite running tournament, why does Amir no longer want to be Hassan’s friend?
3. We begin to understand early in the novel that Amir is constantly vying for Baba’s attention and often feels like an outsider in his father’s life, as seen in the following passage: “He’d close the door, leave me to wonder why it was always grown-ups time with him. I’d sit by the door, knees drawn to my chest. Sometimes I sat there for an hour, sometimes two, listening to their laughter, their chatter.” Discuss Amir’s relationship with Baba.
4. Why is Baba disappointed by Amir’s decision to become a writer? During their argument about his career path, Amir thinks to himself: “I would stand my ground, I decided. I didn’t want to sacrifice for Baba anymore. The last time I had done that, I had damned myself.” What has Amir sacrificed for Baba? How has Amir “damned himself”?
5. Compare and contrast the relationships of Soraya and Amir and their fathers. How have their upbringings contributed to these relationships?

Discussion Questions (Answer One in Paragraph Form): *Things Fall Apart*

1. Characterize in separate paragraphs the difference between leading, bullying, and coercing. Contrast the methods of Okonkwo, village elders, the District Commissioner, Mr. Brown, Obierika, Chielo, Ezinma, Uchendu, Mr. Kiaga, James Smith, and Ekwefi.
2. Consider how the novel would alter if told from the point of view of Ezinma, Ikemefuna, Nwoye, James Smith, the interpreter, Chielo, or Uncle Uchendu. List facts that would drop from importance or rise in value, such as a bad agricultural year or a priestess’ curse.
3. Refer to the attached handout on Aristole’s Tragedy and the Tragic Hero. How does Okonkwo’s downfall compare to that of Aristole’s tragic hero?

Discussion Questions (Answer Two in Paragraph Form): *How to Read Literature like a Professor*

1. Foster writes, “There’s no such thing as a wholly original work of literature” (p. 24) and “there’s only one story” (p. 27). Describe what Foster means by these statements. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements? Provide textual evidence from chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 to support your claims.
2. Explain how rain and snow are often paradoxical symbols (see pages 71-73). Explore some of the different atmospherics and mood that are created by rain and snow, and explain how they often have contradictory effects.
3. Foster says, “I hate political writing” (p. 116) and then also says, “I love political writing” (p. 117). Explain this love-hate relationship. What are the differences between the political writing he hates and the political writing he loves? Can you think of contemporary examples for each? He also says that, “nearly all writing is political on some level” (p. 118). To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain.
4. What is intertextuality? Foster introduces this idea early on (see pp. 29-30, 38) and clarifies it in the Interlude (p. 196-199). Identify and explain some examples of “this dialogue between old texts and new” (p. 29). What is an archetype? (see pp.198-200) Explain how intertextuality and archetype support the statement: “There’s only one story.”

Use of study aides (Spark Notes, e-Notes, Schmoop, Book Rags, Cliff’s Notes, etc.) cannot replace careful reading of the works. Study guides can provide a scope that is too broad for our reading of these texts.

**DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE END OF THE SUMMER TO COMPLETE THESE ASSIGNMENTS. YOU ARE A JUNIOR IN AN IB CLASS. BE SURE YOUR WORK ETHIC REFLECTS YOUR STATUS.**

**Recommended Editions of Works for In-Class Study**

We will study the following works in class to prepare for your IB Internal Evaluations (the Individual Oral Presentation or IOP, and the Works in Translation Essay or WIT). Works noted with an \* are available to borrow from Beaumont, but you may wish to purchase your own copy so that you can annotate in the book. Books not marked with an asterisk must be purchased for your use.

\*William Shakespeare, *Othello* ISBN: 0-671-72281-6

\*George Orwell, *Animal Farm* ISBN-13: 9780451526342

\*Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* ISBN-13: 978-0140431872

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* ISBN-13: 9781400034710

Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll’s House* ISBN: 978-1503213807

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale* ISBN-13: 9780385490818

Additional texts you should have readily available at request:

*Vocabulary Workshop: Level G*

*How to Read Literature like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster

**Key Terms:**

**Tragedy:** a serious drama featuring a noble, dignified main character who strives to achieve something and is ultimately defeated; the defeat of the hero may appear to be brought on by forces beyond his/her control, and the outcome, or fate, seems almost predetermined; but often the main character’s downfall is brought about by his or her own character flaw

**Aristotle’s Tragedy**

1) Noble hero

2) Tragic flaw or error in judgment

3) Fall due to tragic flaw or error in judgment AND fate

4) Punishment exceeds crime

5) Knowledge gained too late

6) Catharsis

**Tragic Flaw:** a hero’s character flaw or weakness that leads to his or her downfall; hamartia; hubris: excessive arrogance

**Tragic Hero:** a virtuous character in a dramatic tragedy who is destined for downfall, suffering, or defeat because of some error in judgment or weakness