

Welcome to HONORS British Literature Class

Our year together begins right now with these summer reading assignments. I have tried to select material that you can read without detailed class instruction. However, these are not “beach books” to be read merely for plot. Put your brain in gear and concentrate as you read. These will be your first grades for your senior year. On the second day of school, you will be supplied with Turnitin.com information so you can upload both of your finished essays that night. If you have burning questions, you can call the school, and someone will reach me at home. Have a relaxing summer! - Mrs. Vetzel



1.) Non-fiction: Alfred Lansing’s *Endurance: Shackleton’s Incredible Voyage*
(the one with photographs!)

Reaction journal – Due the first day of school. As you read the adventure, keep a composition or spiral notebook by your side. Your first entry should be a pre-reading exercise: a list of questions about the book, predicting what will happen, how you feel about being forced to read this book, etc. Stop reading once in a while (maybe a chapter or 2 or 3 – no set amount, and it doesn’t have to be the same amount each time) to record the page number. Then express your thoughts, paying particular attention to Shackleton’s heroic traits / leadership characteristics. If this is a borrowed book, make sure you record examples/anecdotes from the story that illustrate these traits. If it is your book, you may want to highlight these examples. You will be using this journal as background notes for a future essay, so do a thorough job. I expect at least one page of reaction for each stopping point.

If your handwriting is tiny, please consider my old eyes. Make your writing larger than normal, or I will ask you to re-write the whole thing. If you have ginormous “girl” handwriting, please tone it down so it does not all join together into a blob of loopy letters. This assignment is NOT going to be graded for spelling or punctuation or grammar; it is supposed to be rough. I am honestly very interested in your thoughts and reactions!

2.) Choose one Arthurian novel.

Write a formal essay of 800 - 900 words. Topic is whatever you want to discuss! Thrill me with your brilliant thinking; just please, please do not give a book report or review.

Mary Stewart	<i>The Crystal Cave</i>	(Merlin’s point of view – there are 3 other books that go with this series – I recommend you read them!)
Marion Zimmer Bradley	<i>The Mists of Avalon</i>	(the Arthurian ladies’ points of view)
Rosemary Sutcliff	<i>Sword at Sunset</i>	(more historically accurate – Arthur is a warlord, trying to stave off Saxon invasion)

3.) Choose one classic. Write a formal essay of 800 - 900 words. Please choose one of the suggested topics.

George Orwell's *1984*

1. Was Orwell accurate in his vision of the world in 1984? How does our modern society compare to his idea of society? Is there a chance that Orwell's prediction has or will come true?
2. Why do you think Orwell devotes as much time as he does to Winston's dreams? Discuss and analyze the dreams, particularly the dream in which O'Brien claims that they "shall meet in a place where there is no darkness," and the dream that Winston's mother and sister disappear.



Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*

1. Who exactly is the "bad guy"? Who exactly is the "good guy"? IS there a good and bad guy?
2. Is modern man the monster or is modern man Frankenstein? Both? Neither?
3. Which genre should this book be labeled: Gothic horror, science fiction, mystery, socio-political, philosophical (relationship of God and man), or feminist (nature vs. nurture)? A mixture?

Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*

1. Many critics consider *Jane Eyre* to be a narrative about feminism. Include the words and actions of Mr. Brocklehurst, Rochester, and St. John Rivers as you explain how these male characters threaten Jane's quest for gender equality.
2. Jane is described as "plain" or unattractive. How important are her looks to her and to the other characters? What other qualities does she possess? How could Jane's life serve as a model for today's female readers?

Essay FAQs

An essay includes: a creative title, an introductory paragraph with a clearly stated thesis, body paragraphs supporting the thesis, and a concluding, clinching paragraph. Each paragraph should contain a minimum of 5, and probably no more than 11, sentences. Keep in mind that this is not a research paper where you use other sources to back up your thesis. This is all YOUR ideas, YOUR thoughts, YOUR argument, YOUR opinion. I do not expect you to be as brilliant as experts who have devoted years to the subject.

- Plagiarism is a serious matter. I am a staunch supporter and avid user of Turnitin.com. Read the BJSHS Handbook for a definition and consequences. Plagiarism can have an effect on your college admission.
- Essays must be typed, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman. Headings and page numbers should be in MLA format. If you do not remember the correct format, look it up online. I recommend the on-line writing lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl>
- Be sure to save your work on your computer and on your flashdrive (required for my class!).

- I do not like “fluff.” Keep your thoughts pertinent and clear. I value quality over quantity... although I do demand quantity also.
- If you haven’t bothered reading the actual text, don’t bother turning in an essay. I can smell Sparknotes from a mile away. I shouldn’t have to say this to Honors class, but every year I have this problem with a few students.
- Do not procrastinate. As Ben Franklin said, “You may delay, but time will not.”
- Grammar, punctuation, and spelling DO matter.
- “Formal” means you do not use contractions or slang. It also means you do not use 1st (I or me or we) or 2nd person (you) pronouns.
- If you put your name on the paper, your audience knows *you* wrote it, and that it contains *your* opinion. Saying “In my opinion...” or “I am writing this paper because...” is redundant (not that you should be using 1st person pronouns anyway, right?!).
- Dare to be different: use sentence variety, colorful words, interesting thoughts... please keep me awake while I read 150 essays.
- Use examples and quotes from the text for support. You do not have to cite the book on a Works Cited page, but you do need to mention the title and the author in the first paragraph. Warning: do not give so many quotes and examples that it becomes more than 20% someone else’s words.
- **There are many rubrics available on line – here is a sample of basic ideas (with my interpretation of the headings!).**

You should be the Eng 4 teacher	You need a little Vetzels in your life	You need a lotta Vetzels in your life	You are upstream without a paddle and a grizzly thinks you resemble a salmon
Complete and interesting introduction with thesis sentence	Introduction is average; contains vague thesis	Vague introduction; no thesis	No introductory paragraph
Body is complete and connects thesis to book with quotes and examples	Body is mostly complete; has at least some connection for book to thesis; some quotes and examples	Body is incomplete with random or missing connections for the book to the thesis; few (or way too many) quotes or examples	Body is too fragmented to be complete; no quotes or examples (or all quotes)
Conclusion is complete and contains a clincher sentence	Conclusion is a restatement of the introductory paragraph	Conclusion is weak and random	Conclusion is missing
Excellent structure and mechanics	Average structure and mechanics	Structure and mechanics needs a great deal of improvement	So many errors the paper is not readable