

Welcome to 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 your finished essay that night. If you have burning questions, you can call the school, and someone will reach me at home. Have a relaxing summer! - Mrs. Vetzal



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) – 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 and write a formal essay of 700-750 words. Please choose one of the suggested topics.

George Orwell's 1984

1. References to *1984*'s themes, concepts, and plot frequently appear in rock music (among others for you to check out are: Todd Rundgren, Nine Inch Nails, and Pink Floyd). Discuss lyrics. Why does it figure prominently with rockers?
2. Is Big Brother watching? 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?

Diane Setterfield's *The Thirteenth Tale*

1. How are the two estates (Angelfield and Miss Winter's) reflections of their inhabitants?
2. Look up the major features of gothic fiction. In what ways is this novel a classic gothic novel?

James Herriot's *All Creatures Great and Small*

1. What is tone? Discuss the tone as set by Herriot's love of the countryside, respect and affection for its independent inhabitants, and appreciation of the comedy and pathos of everyday life.
2. Discuss the pastoral/country setting of the Yorkshire Dales as opposed to small town life of Thrisk. Watch youtube.com: Tribute to James Herriot Parts 1 and 2, James Herriot's Yorkshire (Highlight) and The Yorkshire Dales. How do the characters and their animals differ because of their setting? You may (or may not) want to deal with the 1930's setting.
3. How do the conflicts between Herriot and his boss (and boss's brother) define their characters?

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* / "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" / "The Red-Headed League"

Yes, that means you have to read all 3 stories. This is not a book – it is a novella and two short stories. You should be able to find them in a collection, but check through the table of contents – do not just assume these are all in the same book ! There are also free online texts :

<http://www.geocities.com/fa1931/british/conandoy/>

http://www.4literature.net/Arthur_Conan_Doyle/

1. Is *The Hound of the Baskervilles* a Sherlock Holmes novel or a Dr. Watson novel? Compare with other short stories.
2. Tension is used by authors to pull their readers in and keep their interest as they approach the climax of a story. Discuss the different events in each of the 3 stories that lead up to Holmes solving the case.

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. Read the Handbook for a definition and consequences. I am a staunch supporter and avid user of Turnitin.com. Plagiarism can affect your admission into the college of your choice.

- Essay 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.

- Every year there are students who refuse to read the books I assign. Be warned that your grade for the first quarter relies heavily on these assignments.
- 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 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 teacher	You need a little Vetzel in your life	You need a lotta Vetzel 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 too many) quotes or examples	Body is too fragmented to be complete; no quotes or examples; way too many 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