

Summer Reading Assignments for Incoming Freshmen

Composition and Literature with Mr. Hane, 2022-23

Welcome to the Upper School and to Composition and Literature!

All incoming freshmen are required to read William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and at least one of the nine books listed below. (So that all students will have books with the same page numbers to refer to during class discussions, please use the Antique Books edition of *Lord of the Flies* with the afterword by Lois Lowry. The cost is \$5.99 on Amazon.com. Search for ISBN-10: 0399501487)

Parents: I encourage you to visit www.commonsensemedia.org if you have doubts about which reading options are appropriate for your child.

A Warning About Movies: Please do not watch a movie based on any of the books you choose to read before taking the reading quiz in the first days of school. I want you to do your best to interpret what you have read on your own, free of anyone else's influence. I also don't want you to confuse what happened in the book with what happened in the movie when it's time for you to take the quiz.

How your reading will be evaluated: In the first week of school, I will give you a quiz on each of the books you have read. The quiz will consist of at least twenty references from each book that I think you are likely to remember if you have read carefully. I will expect you to be able to identify at least fifteen of those twenty references to earn a score of 100%. **Optional:** In addition to the quiz on *Lord of the Flies* and the quiz on the other book you choose to read, you may take up to two additional quizzes on any of the books on this list if you would like to try to earn two extra quiz scores of 100%. If you do not score well on these optional quizzes, I will not count the scores. Go for it!

Reading questions on *Lord of the Flies* As you read *Lord of the Flies* use the reading questions attached to this assignment to help you see beyond the surface-level of the text. Don't worry if some of them don't make sense to you. We'll figure those out together when you return. **You are not required to write answers to these questions**, but please read them and think about possible answers. If you want to make notes in response to them, that's fine. The notes will come in handy when we discuss the book in class.

In addition to *Lord of the Flies* read at least one of the following books. Descriptions are taken from the book jackets:

***Akata Witch*, Nnedi Okorafor**

Sunny Nwazue lives in Nigeria, but she was born in New York City. Her features are West African, but she's albino. She's a terrific athlete, but can't go out into the sun to play soccer. There seems to be no place where she fits in. And then she discovers something amazing--she's a "free agent" with latent magical power. And she has a lot of catching up to do. Soon she's part of a quartet of magic students, studying the visible and the invisible, learning to change reality. But just as she's finding her footing, Sunny and her friends are asked by the magical authorities to help track down a career criminal who knows magic too. Will their training be enough to help them against a threat whose powers greatly outnumber theirs? (This is the first volume of a trilogy. The author is a past winner of the World Fantasy Award and the Hugo Award for the year's best science fiction novel.)

***Children of Blood and Bone*, Tomi Adeyemi**

In *Children of Blood and Bone* Tomi Adeyemi conjures a stunning world of dark magic and danger in her West African-inspired fantasy debut.

They killed my mother. They took our magic. They tried to bury us. Now we rise.

Zélie Adebola remembers when the soil of Orïsha hummed with magic. Burners ignited flames, Tiders beckoned waves, and Zélie's Reaper mother summoned forth souls. But everything changed the night magic disappeared. Under the orders of a ruthless king, maji were killed, leaving Zélie without a mother and her people without hope. Now Zélie has one chance to bring back magic and strike against the monarchy. With the help of a rogue princess, Zélie must outwit and outrun the crown prince, who is hell-bent on eradicating magic for good. Danger lurks in Orïsha, where snow leoponaires prowl and vengeful spirits wait in the waters. Yet the greatest danger may be Zélie herself as she struggles to control her powers - and her growing feelings for an enemy. **(CONTENT ADVISORY: There are scenes of violence and passionate kissing.)**

***Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens**

The poor orphan Pip is raised by his short-tempered older sister and her kindhearted husband Joe, a blacksmith. Although Pip works with Joe at the forge, he dreams of moving up in the world. Little does he know how his fortunes will change as a result of a chance encounter with the escaped convict Abel Magwitch. His life is also shaped by his relationships with the beautiful Estella and her eccentric aunt Miss Havisham. In telling Pip's story, Dickens traces a boy's path from hardscrabble rural life to the teeming streets of 19th-century London.

***The House on Mango Street*, Sandra Cisneros**

Told in a series of vignettes--sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous--it is the story of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Few other books in our time have touched so many readers.

***Of Mice and Men*, John Steinbeck**

This is the story of two migrant workers in California during the Great Depression. George and his simple-minded friend Lenny dream, as drifters will, of a place to call their own--a couple of acres and a few pigs, chickens, and rabbits back in Hill Country where land is cheap. But after they come to work on a ranch in the fertile Salinas Valley of California, their hopes, like "the best laid schemes o'mice an' men," begin to go awry.

***Pony*, R.J. Palacio**

When Silas Bird wakes in the dead of night, he watches powerlessly as three strangers take his father away. Silas is left shaken, scared and alone, except for the presence of his companion, Mittenwool--who happens to be a ghost. But then a mysterious pony shows up at his door, and Silas knows what he has to do. So begins a perilous journey to find his father--a journey that will connect him with his past, his future, and the unknowable world around him. (This one is highly recommended by Mrs. Cooper!)

***The Princess Bride*, William Goldman**

As Florin and Guilder teeter on the edge of war, the reluctant Princess Buttercup is devastated by the loss of her true love, kidnapped by a mercenary and his henchmen, rescued by a pirate, forced to marry Prince Humperdinck, and rescued once again by the very crew who absconded with her in the first place.

Run with the Horsemen, Ferrol Sams

Porter Osborne, Jr. is a precocious, sensitive, and rambunctious boy trying to make it through adolescence during the depression years. On a red-clay farm in Georgia, he learns all there is to know about cotton chopping, hog killing, watermelon thumping, and mule handling. School provides a quick course in practical joking, schoolboy crushes, athletic glory, and clandestine sex (glossed over, not graphic). But it is Porter's family--his genteel mother, his swarm of cousins, his snuff-dipping grandmother, and, most of all, his beloved but flawed father--who teach Porter the painful truths about growing up strong enough to run with the horsemen. This book boasts some of the funniest and most memorable episodes Mr. Hane has ever read.

The Secret Life of Bees, Sue Monk Kidd

Set in South Carolina in 1964, *The Secret Life of Bees* tells the story of Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed.

When Lily's fierce-hearted "stand-in mother", Rosaleen, insults three of the town's fiercest racists, Lily decides they should both escape to Tiburon, South Carolina--a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. There, they are taken in by an eccentric trio of black beekeeping sisters who introduce Lily to a mesmerizing world of bees, honey, and the Black Madonna who presides over their household.

Lord of the Flies Reading Questions

I'm sure that you could read *Lord of the Flies* without anyone's help and finish the book with a reasonably strong understanding of what has happened. It isn't too difficult to identify the story's main events and the struggles of its characters. However, there's much to detect below the surface-level of plot, and like a fisherman who wears polarized glasses to see beneath the surface glare of the river, you'll need to enhance your own vision with an awareness of symbolism, diction (word choice), irony, tone, and mood.

As you look for answers to these questions, you may discover that there's more to the book than the superficial shimmer that first meets the eye.

Choose one, but I encourage you to mark any part of your book that might help you answer them. We will discuss these questions in class. Any page numbers listed are for the edition of the book with ISBN number 0399501487.

Chapter One: The Sound of the Shell

1. The book opens with a scene of great confusion. Because the characters are confused, the reader often shares their confusion. After reading the first few pages of the book, ask yourself who these boys are, where they are, how they arrived there, and where they have come from. You're going to have to piece together what's going on, just as the boys are having to piece it together. Ralph is often described as the "fair boy" in the first chapter. Don't turn to the Internet for someone else's explanation of what's happening! You can figure it out!
2. How many definitions can you find of the word *fair*? How do you think we should interpret the word *fair* in this context, and what secondary meanings of the word should we consider?
3. Read the passage that begins with "He jumped down..." and ends with "...and the water." Consider the imagery of the green shadows sliding, the skull-like coconuts, the fact that Ralph is not clothed, and the comparison of his belt to a snake." I think this imagery is meant to remind us of another famous story that involves nakedness, a snake, and a beautiful paradise. What do all these images make you think of, and why? (10)
4. Why do you think Ralph suddenly becomes "conscious of the weight of clothes?" and why is it strangely pleasing for him to be able to put on a grey shirt once again? Defend your answer with evidence from the text. (10)
5. How might it be ironic that blowing the conch is Piggy's idea? What kind of irony is this? Dramatic? Situational? Verbal? (Look up definitions of these terms if you need to.) How is this irony significant?
6. What is the symbolic significance of the twins' having hair like tow? What else about the narrator's description of them might be significant? What does the description suggest about their character, or how might the description be symbolic? (19)
7. Read carefully the passage beginning "Within the diamond haze of the beach. . ." and ending with "Out of this face stared two light blue eyes, frustrated now, and turning, or ready to turn to anger." Pay close attention to language, especially words that construct images and metaphors. What mood does this language produce? What do you think the author wants to show here? (19)

8. Read carefully the paragraph beginning with “The three boys walked briskly on the sand.” What mood does the language in this paragraph construct? What words contribute to it? What words in particular contribute to this mood? (25)
9. What does it mean that the boys “savored the right of domination?” According to Joseph Campbell, most mythologies and religions recognize three basic human impulses as the forces that drive much of our behavior: the impulse to eat, the impulse to reproduce, and the impulse to dominate our environment and other people. Which of these impulses is at work here?
10. What differences do you notice in the behavior of the three boys who discover the candle buds? How does each one regard the plant? What does their behavior suggest about their character? Read closely and be specific. (30)

Chapter Two: Fire on the Mountain

11. What symbolic value does the conch assume? Consider how the boys use it, and what this might represent. Explain.
12. How do Jack and Ralph react differently to the little boy’s fear of the “snake-thing” or “beastie”? What do their different reactions tell us about their character? Stretch your thinking: The psychiatrist Carl Jung believed the sea could be a symbol of the unconscious mind. What might this idea suggest about the origins or identity of the beastie?
13. What sort of mood is established by the sentence beginning “Once more, amid the breeze...” on p. 39. Why do you think the author describes for the second time the “glamour” of the island?
14. What does the fire-starting episode reveal about the character of Piggy, Ralph, Simon, and Jack? Support your answer with evidence (quotations) from the text.
15. Consider how the boys start the fire. What is Piggy’s role? Does any person or thing in this passage take on symbolic importance? Explain, citing evidence from the text.
16. At the end of chapter two, the imagery and symbolism of fire and snakes become intertwined. Quote the passage (page on 46 in some editions) where this happens. What might this symbolism reveal to the reader? Consider both the origin of snakes and fire on the island, as well as the fear of the “beastie.” Where did the snakes and fire come from? (Look back at page 10 for a hint). What about the beastie?

Chapter Three: Huts on the Beach

17. Look up these words and any others you don’t know: festooned, pendant, oppressive, gaudy, vicissitudes. Write down the definitions that are appropriate for the context of sentences in which they appear.
18. In the first two pages of this chapter, how do the descriptions of Jack suggest some sort of transformation of his character? What sort of transformation is it, and what words in particular create images that suggest this transformation?
19. What are the goals or top priorities of Ralph and Jack, and why do you think they are so different? How are these differences important? What frustrates each boy, and how are these frustrations important? Cite textual evidence to support your answer.

20. When Jack brings up the fear of the littluns and when he talks about the feeling he gets while he is hunting, what do you think he is trying to express? What is the source of all this fear? Do you think there is something threatening on the island that the boys should be afraid of?
21. How do Ralph and Simon react to Jack's concerns, and what does this reveal about the way in which they differ from Jack?
22. What is Jack beginning to forget? What might this forgetting symbolize, and why does it frustrate Ralph?
23. When Simon wanders off without explanation, where has he gone? When he enters the forest with "an air of purpose," what do you think his purpose is? How does his behavior suggest what that purpose is?
24. When he encounters the littluns in the forest, what does Simon do before he wanders off alone? Keep this image in mind throughout the book as you consider the symbolic value of Simon's character.
25. Read attentively from the line "Simon turned away from them. . ." to the end of the chapter. Pay close attention to Simon's behavior and the description of his "room" in the forest. What you compare his "room" to? What do you think Simon's purpose is here, and what does it reveal about his character?

Chapter Four: Painted Faces and Long Hair

26. How might the natural progress of a day on the island from morning to night symbolize or foreshadow the moral progress of the boys' life on the island? What words in this description strike you as particularly revealing or important?
27. In terms of the boys moral condition on the island, what is the significance of the feeling Maurice has after smashing the sand castles and kicking sand in the eye of one of the little boys?
28. What is it that most delights Henry as he plays at the water's edge?
29. What do you think Roger's motivation is as he throws the stones in a circle around Henry?
30. What invisible power protects Henry from Roger, and how might we interpret the sentence *Roger's arm was conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins* as an omen?
31. What does the whole episode with Roger and Henry suggest about the relationship of fear, power, and the source of cruelty? There is certainly more than one way to answer this question. Read the passage closely a few times and think about it carefully before answering.
32. What do the word "the mask was a thing on its own" and "the mask compelled them" imply about Jack's character and his relationship to the other boys on the island?
33. What do you think the boys' long hair represents, and how is it symbolically significant that Piggy's hair does not grow? How is the comparison of Piggy's hair to the velvet on a young stag's antlers significant? Also, what gesture has Ralph been making with his hair, and how might it be symbolic?
34. Why do the boys have no fire when they need one, and how is this important in the novel?
35. How is Jack's violence against Piggy and the damage to the specs symbolic? Of what are the specs the source?
36. What mood does the reenactment of the hunt produce, and what might it suggest about the character of the hunters? Keep this reenactment in mind and compare it to the one described later in the novel.

Chapter Five: Beast from Water

37. Words to look up: wearisomeness, convulsion, specialist, derisive, majesty, incantation.
38. Consider the significance of the title of this chapter as you read. Be on the lookout for the next reference to the “beast from water.”
39. The narration of the first three pages of this chapter is especially revealing. What does Ralph discover about life in these pages? What do we learn about Ralph in these pages? What sentences, phrases, or words in particular lead you to this conclusion?
40. Why does Ralph dislike “perpetually flicking the tangled hair out of his eyes,” and of what is this tangled hair becoming a symbol?
41. After establishing the priorities of life on the island, especially maintaining the fire, Ralph reaches what he seems to regard as the most important topic of all in his speech, the one he says “people can talk about.” Why do you think Ralph regards this topic as the one that people should or would want to discuss? Do you think he is right?
42. Note Ralph’s words at the bottom of p. 82: “Fear can’t hurt you anymore than a dream. There aren’t any beasts to be afraid of on this island.” Keep these words in mind as you read the rest of the book and ask yourself how they may be important. (not a quiz question)
43. When Piggy asks what a beast on the island would eat, note the answers from the crowd. What do their answers suggest to you, and how do they make you feel?
44. What does Piggy suggest about the only thing we have to fear? Do you agree with him?
45. Where do you think Simon was going in the middle of the night? Why would he make such a trip?
46. What do you think the childrens’ dreams and the “spring [that] had been tapped” in Percival Wemys Madison might represent about human nature in general?
47. What might be the symbolic association between the beast and the sea? Consider that the sea may be used to symbolize the unconscious mind.
48. When “something strange” happens to Percival, why does Jack shake him and demand to know where the beast lives?
49. What does Simon attempt to express about the beast? What is mankind’s “essential illness”?
50. When Jack says “Bollocks to the rules. . .,” how does his concept of the beast seem to have changed?
51. What does Ralph wish for at the end of the chapter? Do you think his wish will come true?

Chapter Six: Beast from Air

52. Words to look up:: dangling, huddled, fitful, obscurity, mutinously.
53. What sort of sign do the boys receive from the adult world, and what do you think it signifies for their future? Reread the first paragraphs of the chapter carefully to figure this one out.
54. What does Simon picture when he hears of the beast? Do you think his vision is accurate? If so, what is the beast? How could a person be at once heroic and sick?
55. Could you argue that the boys *do* encounter a sort of beast at the rocky part of the island where Jack envisions building a fort? What is that beast?

Chapter Seven: Shadows and Tall Trees

56. What is the narrator trying to show us with the physical description of Ralph, and Ralph's saying "Be sucking my thumb next"? (109)
57. What unusual prediction does Simon pronounce to Ralph? How can Simon know what he tells Ralph? Do you believe him? Explain.
58. During the pig hunt, which boy seems most excited about his accomplishments? How or why might this be important?
59. Read carefully (and reread the scene in which the boys reenact the pig hunt). What does the reenactment reveal about the boys? What is Ralph's desire during this act, and how does he feel when it is over? Cite textual evidence to support your answers.
60. Who volunteers to cross the island alone to give a message to Piggy? Why isn't he afraid to go alone as the other boys are? What does this tell us about his character?
61. How does Jack pressure Ralph into going up the mountain to look for the beast, and how or why is this important?
62. What is the ape-like thing that Ralph and Jack see on top of the mountain? What do you think makes it raise its head? How does fear affect the boys' judgment in this scene?

Chapter Eight: Gift for the Darkness

63. Why does Ralph think the beast squats by the fire? Could Ralph be right on a symbolic level? Explain.
64. After Jack leaves the group, Simon asks for the conch and suggests, "I thought there might be something to do." What suggestion does he make next, and why do you think he makes it? Do you think he is right when he asks, "What else is there to do?" Explain.
65. What approach to the beast does Jack tell his hunters they will take? On a psychological level, are there other beasts in our lives that we choose to handle in the same way?
66. Do you see any parallel to the beginnings of early religions in the behavior of Jack and his hunters? Explain.
67. Read the paragraph that describes the killing of the sow several times. Then read the boys' commentary on the killing. What is the language in these passages suggestive of, and how is this important?
68. Who is the Lord of the Flies? Where do you think his voice comes from? Explain.
69. Do you think the Lord of the Flies speaks the truth? Explain.
70. Why does the Lord of the Flies threaten Simon? What is he trying to stop Simon from doing?
71. What does the beast mean when he says, "I'm part of you?" If this is true, how can he be speaking to Simon?
72. Look up the word *Beelzebub* and research its etymology. What does it mean literally? Why has Golding suggested a connection between Beelzebub and the beast?

Chapter Nine: A View to a Death

73. What does Simon mean when he asks, “What else is there to do?” Is he right? Why? Think about where he goes after he says this.
74. What does Jack’s behavior in this chapter reveal about his leadership style? What does Jack say doesn’t count at this end of the island, and how is this statement significant?
75. When a violent storm approaches, why does Jack urge the boys to “do our dance”?
76. Piggy and Ralph are probably the two boys least likely to join the dance. Why do they finally join the others? How is this important?
77. Why does the narrator initially refer to Simon as the beast in this chapter? How is this important, or what does it reveal to us about the state of mind of the boys?
78. Read the scene of Simon’s death carefully. What is unusual about the language used to describe the boys and their behavior? Look for a pattern of related words. (Hint: I think the pattern begins with the words “beat like a steady pulse” and “the center of the ring *yawned* empty.” What does this language suggest about what is happening to the boys? What is the group of boys being compared to?)
79. What was Simon trying to tell the others before they attacked him? Ultimately, what force silences Simon forever, and what does his death prevent the boys from discovering?

Note: there are no reading questions for chapters 10 and 11. I don't think you need my questions to understand these two chapters, which are a bit less complex.

Chapter 12: Cry of the Hunters

80. What do you think Ralph realizes when Samneric tells him that Roger has sharpened a stick at both ends? What is the purpose of that stick? (Think back to the first time Jack sharpened a stick at both ends.)
81. Observe the officer’s words and behavior carefully. How is he dressed, and how is his clothing significant? Where does he place his hand, and when and why does he move it? Why does he look away from the boys at some point? Where does he rest his eyes, and what might this signify?
82. Finally, do you believe it is fair to argue that the officer cannot really rescue the boys, even if he removes them from the island? Why or why not?
83. This chapter is loaded with irony! What ironies can you identify? Explain them.