

Summer Reading and Reading Journal

For your summer reading, you should read at least two major works of fiction or drama. There are not really any rules for what you choose. The goals here are: (1) to expand your reading; (2) to maintain or develop a habit of regular, independent reading; (3) to use your own response to a text as a way to engage with the work's complexity; and (4) to enjoy your reading. Here are some tips and guidelines for choosing your books:

- Choose books that are different from each other in some important way (e.g., written in different historical periods, different genres, different themes, or distinctive styles).
- Choose books that are accessible but not too familiar. Use this assignment to broaden your reading experience.
- Start early enough so that you can “test drive” books. If you choose to try out a book, commit to reading for at least 20 minutes before deciding whether or not to continue. (Obviously, this is not the same as browsing—which involves looking at books, titles, covers, back covers, the first few pages, etc. in order to decide whether or not you want to “test drive” it.)
- Ask others for recommendations.

Reader Response Journal

In addition to reading the books, for each book you read, you will write three short responses (200-300 words each). Choose from the list of prompts below.¹ You do not have to wait until you've finished the book to write the first two, but the third should be written after you are done with the book. Make sure to indicate how much of the book you've read when you write the response. Also note that these entries do not have to be “essays.” I'd rather see your thought process and discoveries than read a polished essay.

1. **What does the text have to do with you, personally, and with your life (past, present or future)?** It is not acceptable to write that the text has NOTHING to do with you, since just about everything humans can write has to do in some way with every other human. Refer to specifics from the text.
2. **How much does the text agree or clash with your view of the world, and what you consider right and wrong?** Use at least one quote as an example of how it agrees with and supports what you think about the world, about right and wrong, and about what you think it is to be human. Use at least one quotation to discuss how the text disagrees with what you think about the world and about right and wrong.
3. **How did you learn, and how much were your views and opinions challenged or changed by this text, if at all?** Did the text communicate with you? Why or why not? Give examples of how your views might have changed or been strengthened (or perhaps, of why the text failed to convince you, the way it is). Please do not write, “I agree with everything the author wrote,” since everybody disagrees about something, even if it is a tiny point. Use quotes to illustrate your points of challenge, or where you were persuaded, or where it left you cold.
4. **How well does it address things that you, personally, care about and consider important to the world?** How does it address things that are important to your family, your community, your ethnic group, to people of your economic or social class or background, or your faith tradition? If not, who does or did the text serve? Did it pass the “Who cares?” test? Use quotes to illustrate.
5. **How well did you enjoy the text (or not) as entertainment or as a work of art?** Use quotes or examples to illustrate the quality of the text as art or entertainment. Of course, be aware that some texts are not meant to be entertainment or art—a news report or textbook, for instance, may be neither entertaining nor artistic, but may still be important and successful.

IMPORTANT: This is a *Reader Response* journal. You are the reader, and I am interested in your response. (Plus, learning goal #3 above.) For this reason, please don't look to outside sources to inspire or help you with this assignment. You should be able to work through these questions based on your own reading and your own thinking.

¹ All prompts are adapted from <http://utminers.utep.edu/omwilliamson/engl0310link/readerresponse.htm>.

Suggested Books*

Before 1900

Billy Budd Herman Melville
Crime and Punishment Fyodor Dostoevsky
Dracula Bram Stoker
Great Expectations Charles Dickens
Gulliver's Travels Jonathan Swift
Jane Eyre Charlotte Bronte
Madame Bovary Gustave Flaubert
Moby Dick Herman Melville
Oronoko Aphra Behn
Picture of Dorian Gray Oscar Wilde
Portrait of a Lady Henry James
Sense and Sensibility Jane Austen
Wuthering Heights Emily Bronte

First Half of 20th Century

1984 George Orwell
The Age of Innocence Edith Wharton
The Awakening Kate Chopin
Brideshead Revisited Evelyn Waugh
The Grapes of Wrath John Steinbeck
Heart of Darkness Joseph Conrad
My Antonia Willa Cather
Native Son Richard Wright
Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man James Joyce
The Sun Also Rises Ernest Hemingway

Second Half of 20th Century

The Bell Jar Sylvia Plath
Beloved Toni Morrison
Bless Me, Ultima Rudolfo Anaya
The Bluest Eye Toni Morrison
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof Tennessee Williams
Catch-22 Joseph Heller
Ceremony Leslie Marmon Silko
The Color Purple Alice Walker
Fahrenheit 451 Ray Bradbury

Second Half of 20th Century (cont.)

The Handmaid's Tale Margaret Atwood
The Heart is a Lonely Hunter Carson McCullers
Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy Douglas Adams
House of the Spirits Isabel Allende
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings Maya Angelou
In Cold Blood Truman Capote
Invisible Man Ralph Ellison
The Joy Luck Club Amy Tan
Like Water for Chocolate Laura Esquivel
Lolita Vladimir Nabokov
Midnight's Children Salman Rushdie
On the Road Jack Kerouac
A Prayer for Owen Meany John Irving
Reservation Blues, Sherman Alexie
Siddhartha Hermann Hesse
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? Edward Albee

Contemporary

Arcadia Lauren Groff
Black Swan Green David Mitchell
The Book Thief Markus Zusak
The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao Junot Díaz
A Gesture Life Chang-Rae Lee
The God of Small Things Arundhati Roy
Half of a Yellow Sun Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
House of Sand and Fog Andre Dubus
Life of Pi Yann Martel
Oryx and Crake Margaret Atwood
The Road Cormac McCarthy
The Secret Life of Bees Sue Monk Kidd
A Visit from the Goon Squad Jennifer Egan
White Teeth Zadie Smith
White Tiger Aravind Adiga

*you are not required to choose from this list.