

ELA II and Honors-Summer Reading Assignments

Nonfiction

In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

College Prep/ Academic:

Essay Prompts

1. *In Cold Blood* is set in the Midwest, an area associated with traditional values and hard work. The Clutter family was seemingly a living example of the American Dream. In a well organized essay, discuss what this nonfiction novel says about the nature of the American Dream, not only in relation to the Clutter family but also in relation to one or more other characters in the work. Be sure to mention specific sections and incidents (at times citing directly from the text).
2. Perry Smith eventually admitted that it was he alone who actually committed each of the four Clutter murders. At the trial, the prosecuting attorney told the jurors that “Regardless of who pulled the trigger on Richard Eugene Hickock’s shotgun, both men are equally guilty.” Dick steadfastly maintained that he was less guilty and did not deserve the death penalty because he “never touched a hair on a human head.” In a well-organized essay, discuss which of those two points of view is more valid. Use evidence from your own reading, observation, experience or specifics from the novel to support your position (at times citing directly from the text).

Honors:

Essay Prompts

1. In the course of *In Cold Blood*, Truman Capote manages to create sympathy for almost every character at some point, whether the character is a murder victim, a murderer, a law enforcement official, or an ordinary citizen. Select two characters – from two of the four categories above – and in a well-organized essay, discuss how Capote creates sympathy for the two characters. Use specific evidence from the work to support your points (at times cite directly from the text).
2. The theme of American middle-class is central to Capote’s text. Read the passage from the section “The Last to See Them Alive” from Capote’s *In Cold Blood*, starting from “The master of River Valley Farm, Herbert William Clutter...” and ends several pages later with “...had small reason to complain.” Then, write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how Capote uses the Clutter family to represent the rising middle-class in 1950’s America. Be certain to ground all of your assertions firmly in the text. Do not merely summarize the passage.

Fiction

Lord of the Flies by William Golding

Part I.

For each character, give at least 5 bullet pointed characteristics (both physical and personality-based).

Piggy→

Ralph→

Jack →

“The littluns” (means “the little ones”, as in, young children) →

Simon →

The Twins →

Questions:

1. What makes a person good? What makes a person bad?
2. How does our society define good and evil?
3. What is a leader? How do you personally define a leader? Do you think your definition of a leader is different from most people's?
4. Who you think the best ruler/leader in the book is. Make sure you can explain your choice thoroughly and in detail.
5. Do the boys form a democracy or a dictatorship?
6. Is the beast real? How do you know?
7. What does the beast symbolize?
8. What is an allegory? How is this entire novel an allegory for society?
9. Do you believe humans are generally good or evil? What does this novel suggest about human nature?
10. Why does Simon act so differently from the rest of the boys? What is Simon motivated by?
11. Who is the Lord of the Flies?
12. Why do they call him the “lord?” Does he rule anything?
13. Who changes the least in the novel? Who changes the most?
14. Who changes for the positive? Who changes in a negative way?
15. Pick on chapter title and explain why you think that chapter was named so.
16. “Maybe the beast...is us.” Interpret what this quote means and describe how the boys come to this realization. Does it change the way they act? Do you really think the boys are the beast? Or is there a real beast too?