

# Chantilly High School Senior Summer Reading 2007-2008

## English 12 Summer Assignment

English 12 will read Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, a mystery story about a unique young man setting out to solve an unusual crime and record his progress in a novel. Haddon's work journeys through the world of Christopher Boone, a 15 year-old who suffers from Asperger's syndrome. Christopher's simple life is turned upside down by the discovery of a murdered dog and his decision to investigate. For an autistic child who cannot be touched and who fears speaking with strangers, the need to knock on doors on his own street and to search for answers is a task of monumental proportions. When the mystery begins to turn closer to home, what begins as a light-hearted search quickly becomes a moving family saga.

All 12<sup>th</sup> grade students will be assessed on the novel (short answer test) early in the first quarter.

## AP Literature and Composition Summer Assignment

AP Literature and Composition is designed to strengthen and refine your ability to analyze and write about literature. We hope these assignments will invigorate your love of reading as well as your understanding and appreciation of literature. The pressures of the normal school year do not always permit the kind of leisurely reflection needed to absorb the intellectual richness of great works. In addition to the advantages inherent in pursuing stimulating reading, you will benefit from these assignments in practical ways. First, a full understanding of a great piece of literature requires multiple readings, so you will have a head start on some of the longer works we will pursue next year; you will also experience the joy of discovery that comes only with repeated readings

**Source Works:** You will draw upon this phase of your summer reading when you investigate a literary text for its references to scriptural and/or mythological sources.

*The Bible*, Greek mythology, and the works of Shakespeare undergird much of Western literature, either as sources of direct quotation, allusion, or stylistic inspiration. We will pursue Shakespeare together, but we would like you to prepare with Biblical and mythological studies this summer. Please read the following books from *The Bible*:

from the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Job

from the New Testament: The Gospel According to Matthew

These books represent a **minimum** acquaintance with important Biblical stories, images, and associations. Obviously, you will benefit from further reading. If you have either the time or the inclination, we suggest Ruth, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Samuel I & II, and Kings I from the Old Testament and The Gospel According to John and Revelations from the New Testament. If you are unfamiliar with *The Bible*, you may wish to conduct some background investigation.

*The Bible* is an excellent resource—like a dictionary or a collection of Greek mythology—that all students of literature should have, but if you do not own a copy and do not wish to purchase one, go to [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) where you will find free downloadable versions of *The Bible*, and you can print only the books you need for this assignment.

Excellent sources are *Introduction to Biblical Literature* by O.B. Davis (Boynnton-Cook Publishers and *The Bible as Literature: An Introduction* by John B. Gabel and Charles B. Wheeler (Oxford University Press). A useful source that is no longer in print but generally available in libraries is *The Bible for Students of Literature and Art*, edited by G.B. Harrison.

Also, please purchase (borrow, or dig up) a copy of Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*. Read the chapters on the major Greek deities, the House of Atreus, the Royal House of Thebes, and the Trojan War. Again, if you have the time or inclination, read all of Edith Hamilton.

\*\*\*To make the most of your source readings, we recommend that you first determine what you **DON'T** know. Please take the attached "Self Assessment"; score your own test, with the attached "Self Assessment Answer Key." Use the results to guide your summer reading (i.e. focus on the areas of greatest need).

Early in the first quarter, you will be assessed on your Summer Assignment. This assessment might include an objective test on the Biblical and mythological material.

**Allusion Reading:** To build on your introduction to this source material, please read *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver. This novel makes extensive use of Biblical allusion. We **strongly suggest** you underline or highlight the allusions as you encounter them to expedite follow-up assignments. Early in the first quarter, you will have an in-class timed writing based on your reading of this novel. Your teacher might also assign a major project or paper based on Kingsolver's book. This assignment will require that you move beyond simple identification of the allusions to explain how the classical and/or Biblical references enhance the characters or develop themes. Such an understanding demands multiple readings of the novel; so, we ask that you complete a first reading over the summer. As you read, consider the following:

- how do you come to know the characters?
- what do you find appealing or difficult about the author's technique?
- what makes this an important piece of literature?
- how does it relate to other works you have read?
- how does it relate to American history?
- what is your general impression?

Please record your reactions to the novel (about **3 - 4 pages**, typed and double-spaced). Please use direct quotations to illustrate your observations. We do not expect an expert analysis of the novel but **YOUR** honest assessment of Kingsolver's work after a single reading. Please do not consult outside sources (i.e. the internet). We do not care what the publishers of Cliff Notes or Spark Notes have to say about Kingsolver's novel; we are interested in **YOUR** thoughts and feelings. If you do not like the book, please say so but also provide specific reasons for your opinion

**And Just for Fun**, we suggest you pick up a copy of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster. This is an excellent introduction to college-level literary analysis.

If you have any questions about the summer reading, please contact any of us for clarification.

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