

AP English 4: Literature and Composition

Summer Reading Assignment 2021

Mr. Hornback

DUE: August 16, 2021, at the start of class

FORMAT: Composed as a Google Doc according to MLA guidelines

INSTRUCTIONS

A. A *Dystopia* is “an imaginary place or state in which the condition of life is extremely bad, as from deprivation, oppression, or terror.” *Brave New World* is considered a classic of dystopian literature that describes a futuristic totalitarian state whose methods of control are less the overtly coercive repressions of an absolute dictator than an overwhelmingly immersive social-programing by a ruling elite that conditions a passively receptive and compliant populace. *Exit West* describes a world “at the edge of dystopia” (Gilbert), in which the sites of deprivation, oppression, and terror and places of wealth, privilege, and relative calm, once seemingly worlds away, are suddenly much closer than previously imagined.

Taking *dystopia* and *dystopian literature* as conceptual keys, critically read¹ *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley and *Exit West* (2017) by Mohsin Hamid. As you read, consider the ways in which each literary work fits the category of dystopian literature. That is,

- What elements characteristic of dystopian literature does each work of literature possess?
- What are the defining characteristics (political, economic, social, philosophical, religious, technological, etc.) of the society depicted in each work?
- In what respects does each work reflect, magnify, or anticipate elements of contemporary 21st-century society?
- In what respects does each work contain elements that differ or diverge from contemporary 21st-century society?
- What particular aspects of the society depicted in each work resonate most strongly with you?
 - And how did the author convey or develop that resonance?
- What are the main themes² developed in each work?

When you have read both works, consider:

- What elements do these works of literature hold in common with one another?
 - How do these common elements function in relation to dystopian literature?
 - In what significant respects do the societies depicted in these works differ from one another?
 - What are the themes that these works share?
- B. As you read, annotate³ your text, noting developing themes, interesting stylistic techniques, important or unconventional diction and syntax, literary devices, or any other noteworthy--attention-catching--language.
- C. Each time you stop reading, take a few minutes to write about your reading experience. In a notebook or composition book, note the following:
- *How long did you read?* Note the time you started reading, stopped, how many minutes you read, and how many pages you read. Use this information to chart your reading frequency, speed, and fluency.
 - *What happened in the story?* Summarize in a brief paragraph the significant action of the reading. Doing so, will aid your comprehension and your recollection for subsequent work in the course.

Then look back over the topical considerations listed in Part A, and address whatever topic(s) are relevant to your reading. This review process need not be especially laborious or time-consuming, as not every topical question from Part A will necessarily be addressed in every portion of the text; however, such review should be a regular--that is, habitual--part of your critical reading process because beginning and ending a reading session with a review of these topics will provide focus and clarity to your reading, comprehension, and interpretive understanding.

- D. When you have finished *each* literary work, quote at least ten passages from *each* text that demonstrate characteristics of dystopian literature. Do not simply list quotations. Rather, incorporate them into the grammatical flow of a sentence. Be sure to specify the work, the context of the passage, and the precise language of the text that illustrates the element. These requirements roughly correspond to the following compositional elements: transition, lead-in, and quotation (TLQ). Follow the quoted passage with a one- or two-sentence explanation of what element of dystopian literature the passage addresses and what specifically it illustrates. Note the elements in the following example:

In *Macbeth*, soon after the revelation of King Duncan's murder, an Old Man swaps tales of nature in seeming rebellion against itself with Ross, saying:

'Tis unnatural,
 Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
 A falcon, towering in her pride of place,
 Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd. (2.4.10-13)

In this passage, the Old Man remarks on the aberrance of the much smaller mousing owl attacking and killing a hawk, its natural predator, noting both the violation of the natural order and paralleling it with the murder of the king by someone sworn to protect and serve him. Moreover, he suggests that this imbalance in nature is the macrocosmic consequence of so great a crime against the justly-instituted human order.

The transitional element in this example is “In *Macbeth*,” as it signals a movement from a topic sentence (not included in the example) to supporting evidence from the text. The lead-in, “soon after the revelation of Duncan’s Murder, an Old Man swaps tales of nature in seeming rebellion against itself with Ross, saying:” conveys the specific context of the passage, that is, when it occurs in the plotline of the play. When providing context, do not summarize large chunks of the story in advance of a quotation; instead, focus either on an event connected to the time of the passage (as in the previous example) or on its relation to other significant events in the literary work (e.g., “in his second meeting with the witches,”). Similarly, do not use chapters or pages as lead-ins (e.g., “in Act 2, Scene 4,” or “on page 12,”) because these are references to organizational units rather than to events that would be familiar to someone who has read or watched a performance of the work. With respect to the quotation, please note that the example does not include the entire conversation, just a specific portion that effectively illustrates “nature in seeming rebellion against itself.” At the same time, it is of sufficient length to show the connection between regicide and the natural world and to make clear the magnitude of the injustice and the harm it causes, the substance of the interpretive commentary that follows the quotation.

- E. The assignment should include a minimum total of at least 20 quoted passages, incorporated into the grammatical flow of your own sentences (as indicated above), with accompanying interpretive commentary. It should be ready for submission as a Google Doc, formatted according to MLA guidelines, including a list of Works Cited. The assignment should be entirely double-spaced, in a standard 12-point text font, with no additional spaces between paragraphs. Please indicate new passages by using the Tab key (as illustrated in the example above). For information and an example of standard MLA format, see Addendum 1: The Jesuit English Department Style Sheet.

- F. In addition, you will need to have your annotated text and daily reading notes ready for review at the start of class.

Notes

1. Although it can—and often should—be enjoyable, *critical reading* is more than reading for pleasure or diversion. And although basic understanding is an essential component, it entails more than scanning a text for key terms and main ideas. Instead, critical reading requires conscious effort and deliberation on the part of readers as they work to achieve various levels of understanding a text. Begin by informing yourself about the literary work and its author. Establish expectations for your critical reading project by identifying the type of reading you will be doing, the length of the assigned work, its style and level of difficulty, and the probable time it will take to complete the reading assignment. Before each reading session, read over focussing study questions, and review them briefly after completing an individual reading session. Read for understanding rather than judgment; be conscious of preconceptions, and do not allow them to interfere with your understanding of what the text actually says. Read with purpose; that is, use study questions to focus your attention on the text and aid in your identification of key stylistic and thematic elements of the narrative. As you read, predict what will likely happen next based on what you have already experienced in the story. Finally, document your daily reading by writing down your perceptions, responses, and predictions.
2. A *theme* is “an idea or topic expanded in a discourse, discussion, etc.” (def. 1). In literary terms, it is often conventionally described as a “controlling idea” (potentially one among several), whose meaning is developed through the experience of the work of literature.
3. For the purposes of this assignment, *annotation* refers to a mnemonic process associated with critical reading by which significant passages from a text are marked in order to aid in their recollection, retrieval, and interpretation. This process entails immediate response to the text. For tips on effective annotation, see Addendum 2: How to Annotate.

Addendum 1: The Jesuit English Department Style Sheet

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Mr./Ms./Mrs. Teacher

Course Title, Period X

16 August 2019

The Jesuit English Department Style Sheet

Follow MLA format for all formal writing assignments: Make sure your word processor's default settings have 1" margins on all sides. Google Docs defaults to this, but Microsoft Word does not. Use Times New Roman font in size 12, or Arial or Calibri in size 11. In the left-hand corner, type your full name, instructor's title and last name, course and period, and due date (day month year—no punctuation and no abbreviations) on separate lines. Then, center your title—do not underline, bold-face, or use quotation marks. Your title should be something catchy and interesting; do not just state the purpose of the essay (e.g., *Lord of the Flies* Essay). Use a header with your last name only, a space, and page number (e.g., Smith 1, Smith 2) in the upper-right corner of each page. Google Docs makes it easy to insert the page number so it changes automatically with each new page. On a PC/Mac/Chromebook, select to Insert > Header and page number > Page number > the first option. On the Google Docs app, make sure you are viewing the document in Print layout mode. Then, tap into the header space, and select the + option, which will open the Insert menu. Scroll to the bottom of the list, and select Page number,

and select the first option. A gray box will appear around the number(s) if you have done this correctly.

Begin your assignment on the next line after the title. Do not use extra spaces above or below the title line(s) of your paper. Indent all new paragraphs five spaces (or tab). Double-space the entire paper, including your heading and title. Italicize novel, play, or other book titles (e.g., *Romeo and Juliet* or *Writers INC.*), and place the titles of stories, poems, or essays in quotes (e.g., “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place”). Cite your sources appropriately and introduce your quotations with context. Use MLA parenthetical notation when citing your sources unless otherwise directed. Your citation should have only the author’s last name and the page number inside the parentheses, (e.g., Twain 100). Do not refer to authors by their first names. When you write about Mark Twain, he is Twain on second reference, not Mr. Twain—never Mark.

If you are writing a paper that requires a Works Cited page, start with a new page following the end of the text of your essay. It should have the same header with your name and page number, and then a centered title that says Works Cited. That’s it—no underlining or italicizing. Begin your works cited list on the following line. Your sources should be alphabetized by the first word in the citation. Do not make a numbered or bulleted list. Double space everything, including the title of the page, and create a “hanging indent” by indenting any lines other than the first line of each entry by 0.5”. Use an MLA reference or website like *Noodle Tools* to ensure your citations conform to current MLA expectations.

Follow these basic guidelines to give your paper a professional appearance. Most colleges

also follow this layout as it reflects MLA guidelines for formatting papers. If you need additional guidance, *Writers INC.* is a good resource, as is the *Purdue OWL* website. In any event, do not guess what MLA guideline would be—when in doubt, look it up. Good luck!

Addendum 2: How to Annotate

(Adapted by Colin O'Connor from work by Bert Webb, 2006)

What Not to Do

1. Don't use a fat-tipped highlighter to highlight large amounts of text. You need to write notes about what you read. If you need color, use some color pens.
2. Don't mark large volumes of text; you want important points to stand out. Although we all know that everything can't be important, we often highlight all of the text on the page. You want to find the 20% of the text that is important and mark that.
3. Don't mark the obvious. Don't waste time marking things you already know.
4. Don't take the time to mark up items that you read on a daily basis – (e.g., magazines, newspapers), unimportant or irrelevant items.

What to Do

1. Know your preferences – Some of you have an aversion to mark directly in the text. Books are precious things to many people and they want to protect them from damage and even the wear and tear of everyday use. If this describes you, grab some Post-It brand notes and do your marking and writing on them. This also gives you the advantage to move and re-organize them should you see fit. As for me, I like to mark directly on the page. I find that my books become more valuable to me when I add my contributions to the information that they contain.
2. Mark the text with pen, pencil, or colored pens.
3. Underline the topic sentence in a passage, then it will be easier to find the supporting evidence and explanations.
4. Use codes. For example, use question marks for places of disagreement, exclamation points for agreement or a strong statement, triangles to indicate a change in thinking, a star for the topic sentence.
5. Write passage topics in the margin.
6. Write questions in the margins. When you don't understand something or when you don't understand the author's thought process on a particular topic; write the question in the margin as a reminder to settle the question.
7. Circle new and unfamiliar words; look them up as soon as possible. Define them on the article.
8. Add your or other author's perspectives in the margins. Other authors have surely written on the subject. What do they say? Do they agree with this author? If not, what do they say? Add these in margins.
9. Add cross-reference notes to other works on the same topic, or to other sections of the same work. Use the author's name and a shortened version of the other book's title.
10. Draw arrows to related ideas.
11. Summarize. Add your own summary after the last paragraph of each chapter/segment/article. That simple exercise will crystalize your thinking on the topic. If you can't write it, you don't understand it.

Works Cited

- “dystopia.” *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 5th ed. 2011. Houghton Mifflin. 3 Jun. 2019. Web. <<https://www.thefreedictionary.com/dystopia>>.
- Gilbert, Sophie. “*Exit West* and the Edge of Dystopia.” *The Atlantic*. The Atlantic Monthly Group, 2019. Web. 8 Mar. 2017. <<https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/03/exit-west/518802/>>.
- “theme,” def. 1. *Collins English Dictionary—Complete and Unabridged*, 12th ed. 2014. HarperCollins. 5 Jun. 2019. <<https://www.thefreedictionary.com/theme>>.