

Summer Reading
12th Grade Advanced Placement English

The four books that you will read are: *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini, *The Stranger* by Albert Camus, *Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel, and *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. Obtain (either on your own or from the local library) and read the novels, and then respond to the attached topics. Responses will be graded based on the completeness of the entry. Each response should include plot, as well as reader response and analysis.

Keep all responses in one document, which should be typed in size 12, Times New Roman font and double spaced. This will count as a test grade for the first quarter. You will be required to submit your work to turnitin.com to check for plagiarism. This will be done once you receive a password from me at the beginning of the year. Please save all work. There will also be a test on the four books on the first Friday of school.

Like Water for Chocolate

1. The power of food is shown throughout the book. Discuss how the power of food is used in the book to develop characters in Tita's family. What might be the overall purpose of using food for character development in the novel? How does food influence the audience's feelings about the characters? Does our culture have a similar emphasis on food? Explain.
2. There is a sophisticated relationship between Tita, Mama Elena, and Esperanza in the book. Discuss how these relationships convey ideas about family tradition and the role of women using examples from the book. How do these roles influence our overall feelings about the characters? Explain.
3. The structure of the novel is 12 monthly installments, but the plot takes place over longer than 12 months. Why is the novel structured in this way? Discuss the effect of the structure of the novel on the characters, the events, and the themes.
4. Magic realism = a kind of modern fiction in which fabulous and fantastical events are included in a narrative that would otherwise maintain the "reliable" tone of objective realistic report. It designates a tendency of the modern novel to reach beyond the confines of realism and draw upon the energies of fable, folk tale, and myth while maintaining a strong contemporary social relevance (The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms). Explain how the novel has the elements of magic realism. How did you respond to these elements? In your opinion, what overall effect did these elements intend to create? What contemporary social comment might the book be making?

Things Fall Apart

1. The book opens with a presentation of the relationship between Okonkwo and his father. Throughout the book there are many discussions of fathers and sons. Discuss what happens with: Okonkwo and Unoka, Okonkwo and Ikemefuna Okonkwo and Nwoye.

- How do these relationships make Okonkwo the character he is? Is his character seen as likeable because of these relationships or do they cast him in a negative light? Explain.
- Okonkwo can be called a tragic hero: a man responsible for his own destruction. Trace Okonkwo's reversal focusing on events of his own making. What is Okonkwo's tragic flaw? Is this a reflection of his culture or universal? Explain.
 - The book is divided into three parts. What is the overall purpose of each of the three parts? How do the major plot events in each part reflect the purpose? How does each part introduce a new aspect to Okonkwo's character? What aspect is that?
 - Achebe makes commentary about the colonization of Africa in his book. How is this commentary shown? Is it positive or negative? Explain. How is the Christian interpretation introduced at the end of the book? Does Achebe see this as a correct or misguided interpretation? Explain.
 - In Chapter 1 Okonkwo says he hates gentleness and idleness (page 13). Discuss whether events of the book support or disprove this statement. Because of these events, is Okonkwo a character you are meant to like or hate? Explain.
 - The book discusses the role of women through Okonkwo's wives and in particular his daughter Ezinma. How is Ezinma's character developed through the plot? What is her relationship with her father? What is the idea Achebe is presenting through her? Explain.

The Kite Runner

- Explain the importance of kite running in Afghanistan. Why is it an appropriate metaphor in this book? Why does the book both begin and end with a scene of kite running?
- Discuss the relationship between Amir and Hassan. Why are they so close? How does their relationship change after Hassan's tragedy in the alley? How does social status play a role in their ever evolving relationship?
- Discuss the various father-son relationships in the book. How do they change over time?
- Writing is important to Amir. How does it develop his character? How does it affect his relationships with others?
- Explain the importance of setting in this novel. What did you learn about Afghanistan that you hadn't already known? How does this setting as well as America affect the characters?

The Stranger

- What is your impression of Meursault? Do you like him or not? Explain. How do the other characters perceive him?
- How is Meursault's trial about more than shooting a man on a beach? Why does he seem to be so uninvolved in his own defense?
- Explain why Meursault is more concerned with the physical than the spiritual. Refer to specific scenes in the book that highlight this preference.
- Describe how Meursault deals with his death sentence. How are we to perceive the ending?
- Describe Camus' writing style. What specific techniques is he employing? How do these techniques convey meaning?