REquiRed SuMMer ReADIng EnGliSH 11 hoRors 2019

The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald
Their Eyes Were Watching God, Zora Neal Hurston

Important Notes:
It is expected that both books on the list will be read and annotated. Students should specifically annotate sections of the books that pertain to ONE of the thematic topics below:

- **Identity** (the formation and perception of it, its evolution, its complexities and contradictions)
- **Dreams** (the formation and perception of them, the pursuit of them, its complexities and contradictions, the American Dream)
- **The Impact of the Social Class**

Within the first full week of school, you will be tested over both of the books required for summer reading.

*All summer reading work is 25% of 1st quarter grade

*Due First Day of School – August 15, 2019

Technology is not a valid excuse for late work

*You will need to make sure that you have access to a digital copy so that you may submit the work to turnitin.com during the first week of school.

The Deliberations—100 point assignment

Overview

For The Great Gatsby, you must complete the in depth assignments: The Collection, The Skeletalization, and The Significance.

We highly suggest obtaining a copy of the books that you will be able to keep. This way, you can write your own notes in the book, and you can keep it as part of your own literary library – a good practice for any honors student.

You should assume from this point forward that all assignments should be properly cited and formatted using MLA format.
The Collection—Textual Passages, Questions, and Reflection (30 pts.)

- Choose a collection of ten passages that illustrate your choice of focus. (A passage is no fewer than five sentences in length.) Each passage should have the page number cited in parenthesis. **These 10 passages are worth 10 points.**

- Consider and formulate five genuine questions that these passages suggest. These questions should invite discussion. At least 2 of your questions should deal with your chosen focus as it pertains to the novel. **These 5 questions are worth 5 points.**

- Write a 1-1 ½ page reflection (size 12, Times New Roman, double-spaced, one-inch margins) that explores your chosen focus (identity, dreams, or social class) in comparison to *Their Eyes Were Watching God.* (Aim for 3 MEATY paragraphs.) **This reflection is worth 15 points.**

The Skeletalization (20 pts)

Select one of your passages from The Collection. Following block quote format, type this passage into the center of your paper. These large margins will be for your original, handwritten annotations/skeletalizations. You should fully skeletalize the quote, paying close attention to all significant elements within the passage.

What should be marked on your skeletalization?

- Context of the quote: what’s happening, when (flashback or real time)
- Literary devices? Motifs? Symbols?
- Tone
- Irony?
- 3-5 topics (example: love, hate, jealousy)
- Theme?
- Your commentary in the quote’s significance to theme, character, plot, or author’s purpose
- Questions for clarity AND further discussion.

The Significance (50 pts)

For this assignment, you will write a two-page essay over the novel(size 12, Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1-inch margins), where you establish and defend a theme of the work based on your chosen focus. **BOLD YOUR THEME.** You will be expected to utilize blended (not block) quotes, properly cited, to support this thematic statement. **This essay is worth 50 points.**

MLA Documentation
You must include a proper MLA citation of the novel at the end. For more information, see here: [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/)
LaTia Sweatt  
Mrs. Farria  
Honors English 11  
Summer Reading 2017

Example!

A Lesson Before Dying Summer Assignment

I. The Collection

Focus - Responsibility

1) “...I can't raise the dead. All I can do is try to keep the others from ending up like this--but he's gone from us. There's nothing I can do anymore, nothing any of us can do anymore.” (14)

2) “And I want it. I want somebody do something for me one time fore I close my eyes. Somebody goin' do something for me one time 'fore I close my eyes, Mr. Henri.” (22)

3) But she told me that I would not be one of the others, that I would learn as much as he could teach me, then I would go away to learn from someone else. (63)

4) “You the teacher,” my aunt said, not unkindly.” (100)

5) ‘Go back,’ she said.  
‘Why, Miss Emma?’  
‘Cause somebody go’n do something for me ‘fore I die.’  
‘Why me?’  
‘Cause you the teacher,’ my aunt said. (123)

6) “No matter how bad off we are,” I said, “we still owe something. You owe something, Jefferson. Not to me. Surely not to that sheriff out there. But to your godmother. You must show her some understanding. Some kind of love.” (139)

7) “Because even though he wants to change it, and maybe even tries to change it, it is too heavy a burden because of all the others who have run away and left their burdens behind. So he, too, must run away if he is to hold on to his sanity and have a life of his own.” (167)

8) Do you know what a hero is, Jefferson? A hero is someone who does something for other people. He does something that other men don't and can't do. He is different from other men.” (191)

9) “I want you to chip away at that myth by standing. I want you -- yes, you -- to call them liars.” (192)
II. The Questions:
   a) What defines a person as “educated?”
   b) How does the presence of a hero impact a community?
   c) What creates a sense of responsibility in a person?
   d) What does a person “owe” to his family? To his community?
   e) What effect does the desire of a community have on one individual?

III. The Reflection:
   For much of the novel, A Lesson Before Dying, Grant faces his responsibility with dread.

   Being tasked with making a man out of the imprisoned, uneducated Jefferson, Grant bulks saying there’s “nothing I can do anymore.” (Gaines 14) Resentful of the continual pressure that is put on him by his aunt and his community, Grant just wants to run away and “live for myself and for my woman and for nobody else,” (191) but he can’t: he’s trapped. He’s trapped because Tante Lou and his community are responsible for his success. They made sure that he received the proper education. They made sure that they did the hard manual labor so that he could have the intellectual teaching job. By accepting this responsibility FOR him, they expect the same responsibility FROM him. Responsibility in this book is an act of reciprocity: I did this for you, now you owe me. Grant complies and fulfills his “duties” out of respect, but he is always bitter about it. Even after warming to both Jefferson and his job, he is always resentful of the responsibility that is dictated to him.

   In the same manner, Shakespeare’s Juliet is also opposed to the responsibility imposed upon her by her family, but her actions are more openly defiant than Grant’s. Juliet does exactly what she wants to do, allowing her heart to lead her as opposed to any sense of duty to her family. She knows her parents expect her to marry Paris and to stay away from their enemies, the Montagues. Yet Juliet ignores her parents and secretly weds Romeo Montague anyway. When her father insists that she marry Paris (unaware that she is already married to Romeo), Juliet argues saying she will not be
a "joyful bride," (Shakespeare III.3.115). She is even willing to commit suicide in order to defy her parents. Her love for Romeo is larger than any sense of obligation to her family, whereas nothing is large enough for Grant to make him disregard the demands of his family and community.

George, from Of Mice and Men, differs from both Grant and Juliet in that his responsibility is not pushed upon him by either his family or community. In fact, no one asked or demanded that George take care of Lennie; George willingly makes a promise to Lennie’s Aunt Clara and is faithful to his word. George’s words make him appear similar to Grant and Juliet, as he speaks bitterly about having to care for his mentally challenged friend, Lennie. Often he yells at Lennie, calling him “stupid” and “crazy.” He laments he could “have it so good,” (10) without Lennie. However, even though his words are spiteful, his actions, like Grant’s, are out of duty. As the only character without a biological family present, George’s sense of responsibility towards Lennie may be an attempt to create a family and curtail his own loneliness. He actually desires to be burdened because being free of his “responsibility” means being alone. In contrast, Grant and Juliet do have families, and it is the demands of these families that stifle and confine them, creating the feelings of antipathy these characters have towards their obligations.
"Jefferson," I said. We had started walking. "Do you know what a hero is, Jefferson? A hero is someone who does something for other people. He does something that other men don't and can't do. He is different from other men. He is above other men. No matter who those other men are, the hero, no matter who he is, is above them."

I lowered my voice again until we had passed the table. "I could never be a hero. I teach, but I don't like teaching. I teach because it is the only thing that an educated black man can do in the South today. I don't like it; I hate it. I don't even like living here. I want to run away. I want to live for myself and for my woman and for nobody else.

That is not a hero. A hero does for others. He would do anything for people he loves, because he knows it would make their lives better. I am not that kind of person, but I want you to be. You could give something to her, to me, to those children in the quarter. You could give them something that I never could." (191)

This scene exemplifies an actual lesson that Grant teaches Jefferson.

Theme: A hero is willing to sacrifice for the good of others.
V. The Theme Essay

Authors typically employ several literary elements in order to convey a message. Ernest J. Gaines is no exception. Gaines's thematic topics of responsibility and sacrifice in A Lesson Before Dying are evidenced through various means throughout the work, arising as motifs. Each element of this motif works together to prove the dominant theme of the novel which is that it is the responsibility of a hero to sacrifice for others.

Gaines subtly begins to convey this message through the protagonist's conflict with responsibility in the novel. When Grant is given the responsibility to teach Jefferson to become a "man" before he dies, Grant is hesitant and resentful. Initially he tries to resist telling his aunt and Miss Emma, "there’s nothing I can do anymore," (14). Grant is adamant that teaching Jefferson is something that he does not want to do, but he does it. Grudgingly he accepts the responsibility because he loves Tante Lou...and because he owes her. She is his hero and she has sacrificed for him. It was her initial sacrifice that allowed him to even become a man of importance in their community. She bent, she broke, she took on the hard manual labor so that he wouldn't have to, and she didn't complain about it. She is a quiet hero and this tacit understanding is shared between them, so when she makes this request he knows it is his turn to carry on the legacy of the hero; it is his turn to sacrifice. As was done before him, he must sacrifice his pride and some of every good thing that was invested within him for the good of someone else.

The motifs of responsibility and sacrifice are then communicated through the "lessons" within the novel. In reflecting on his own education under Matthew Antoine, Grant recalls the lessons of hope and encouragement that came from his Tante Lou who "told me that I would not be one of the others, that I would learn as much as he could teach me, then I would go away to learn from someone else," (63). Her example taught him love and responsibility and the relationship between the two. Obviously this instruction stays with Grant, because in his best moments of
teaching Jefferson, Grant invests these same sentiments and qualities into his pupil. When Jefferson wants to retreat into his own self-centered depression, Grant teaches him that "no matter how bad off we are, we all owe something," (139), coaching him to sacrifice selfish desires and to develop the mindset of a strong man. He encourages Jefferson to fulfill his potential and to stand because he can "be bigger" than any one of them could ever imagine (192).

The final way that Gaines communicates his theme is by highlighting the topic of sacrifice. He does this by creating the character of Jefferson as an archetypal Christ figure and by continually alluding to the sacrifice made by Christ. Jefferson is convicted for murders he does not commit and his death is planned for the Friday after Easter (the holiday that celebrates the resurrection of Jesus). Jefferson dying as a "man" is a sacrifice that he must make for a greater good: his community. His conviction for something he is innocent of and the resulting sacrifice mirrors the conviction of Christ who also had to die for a greater good. Jefferson must be the savior for his community, by proving to the racist society that he is human, he is dignified, he can stand. In doing so, he becomes a symbol and legacy for a dehumanized community that needs both hope and a hero. Though Jefferson struggles with the responsibility requested of him, questioning, "whoever carried my cross," (223) the lessons instilled in him by Grant give him the strength to become the hero his community needs and to die like a man. Jefferson fulfills the titular promise of learning a lesson before dying. The lessons he's received on responsibility and sacrifice enable him to become "a man good" by "mr wigin" ( ).

Ernest J. Gaines's novel, A Lesson Before Dying, emphasizes the thematic topics of responsibility and sacrifice. Gaines uses the conflict of his protagonist, the lessons and religious allusions dispersed throughout the novel, and the archetype of Christ to develop his theme of a hero's responsibility to sacrifice for others. In the end, his theme is ultimately communicated in
the death of Jefferson who is elevated to hero status when he sacrifices his own desires and assumes the responsibility of dying like a man.

Works Cited

