

AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT

The purpose of the summer assignment for AP English is to get you to think critically about what you read before you join me in the fall. By doing this assignment, you will start breaking down what you read in a way that will be our year-long focus in AP English Language.

The Assignment: get **Arthur Miller's *The Crucible***. You can purchase this very readable and classic American play almost anywhere (do NOT buy the "Dramatists Play Service" version!). If you prefer to check it out from the CHS Library, that is fine, **but you need to discuss it with me first**. However, having your own purchased copy is ideal since you can annotate the text directly on the pages. (*Kindle* or other electronic versions of *The Crucible* will not be allowed as I am collecting the plays to check annotations.)

1. **BACKGROUND:** Research why Arthur Miller wrote this play. The story is based on true accounts of what occurred in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. Find out why Arthur Miller wrote this play about the 1600s to criticize America in the 1950s and 1960s.
2. **WHILE READING ANNOTATE FOR THE FOLLOWING:**
 - a. **What is Arthur Miller's main argument about American society (regardless of time period)?** After finding out the background, give yourself a day or two to read the play. Pay close attention to not only the play itself but Arthur Miller's commentary before and during the play (which he interrupts sometimes). Annotate key areas where this main argument is expressed in his own commentary or suggested in the drama itself.
 - b. **How do elements of the play help make Miller's argument persuasive?** Look at plot, specific characters and how they develop, and key dialogue (or monologue/quotes). Annotate when you see these and note how they support Miller's argument.
3. **WRITTEN PRODUCT:** First, write a reading notebook on all four acts. Now that you have some experience with reading notebooks, I expect them to be thorough. Then, you will write your very best five paragraph essay in MLA format. Save it in Google Docs, for you will be expected to submit it into turnitin.com the first week of school.

Prompt: Focusing on three key literary elements of the play, write a five paragraph essay in which you explain how these key elements help Arthur Miller deliver his main argument about American society. Offer some of the background information that you researched in your introduction along with a solid thesis statement that you will prove throughout your essay. If you do your reading notebook correctly, then you should be able to use the elements in your notebook to help you with your essay.

You need a works cited list to cite both the play and the research sources that you found for your intro.

Disclaimer: Last year, several students disregarded the phrase “literary elements” and wrote about three key ideas instead. Don’t do the same thing! Those students failed this assignment.

I will collect your play with the annotations, your reading notebook, and your essay when school begins.

Looking forward to a rewarding and enriching experience with you,

Cindy Wilken

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Reading Notebook: You will create a page for each reading assignment. Please include a Cover Page and a Table of Contents.

I. Diction:

- a. Note unfamiliar words used by the author; look them up in a dictionary and commit them to memory.
- b. Note interesting word choices by the author; Why did he/she use this particular word? How does it affect the style, form, or language of the selected piece?

II. Patterns:

- a. Identify the notable developments or stages that occur in each piece.
- b. Who are the key figures of the work? Explain how they are developing and/or staying the same.
- c. For fictional works, make predictions as you read.

III. Analysis:

- a. What literary elements or notable stylistic devices (e.g., persuasive argument, metaphor, tone) are being utilized in this selected piece?
- b. For fictional works, what possible symbols are being portrayed in this selected piece? What do they represent?
- c. Identify the author's point of view, motivation, and audience. Analyze the author's intention. Did the author succeed in his/her attempt at writing?

IV. Key Passages:

- a. While reading, identify key passages within the piece (use a highlighter, pen, post-it). Note the pages and topics in your reading notebook.
- b. Write a clear, concise, and descriptive phrase or two to identify the content and significance of each passage.