



Honors British Literature
Summer Reading Assignment Packet 2024-2025
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Hello, and welcome to British Literature! I hope you all finished your school year strong, and have a fun summer planned. You should know that all of you are already in my prayers, and I'm looking forward to meeting each of you at the start of the 2024-2025 school year. Below are your instructions for your summer reading assignment. I've chosen one of my very favorite books for you to read, and in my opinion, it's probably one of the most important books you'll ever come across. I'm so excited to hear what you guys think about it!

1. You will need to buy the book *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis. You will need a hard copy of the book because you will be required to annotate the book as you read. However, if you'd like to download an Audible version of the book and read along with it, I'd highly recommend you do so. *Mere Christianity* is compelling, challenging, and dense. It is not a quick read. Most of you have not read philosophical texts before; this is not a "plot book" which will suck you in with lots of action. This is a logic book. And it is AWESOME, but will probably take you a longer time to read. Plan to start reading when you finish the 2023-2024 school year, and read a few chapters a week. This could even be used as a daily devotional reading. You'll have to read it slowly to fully grasp the book, so DO NOT wait until the last minute. **This assignment will be your first test grade, and is due on the first day of school.**
2. Annotate the book! You should be looking for examples of symbolism, motifs, occurrences of irony (dramatic, situational, or verbal), imagery, allegories, anything that surprises you, etc. See below for more details if you need them.
 - a. Annotations will count as 25% of your grade. *You should have at least 1 thoughtful annotation per 2 pages.*
 - b. I have additional annotation instructions further down in this packet.
3. Lastly, you will write **one-page** reflections as you read using the prompts provided. Your reflections should be in MLA format; have an introduction; at least one, well-organized, body paragraph; and have a conclusion. You will be graded on originality of content, grammar, punctuation, and organization. Each reflection should take up a **full page**. If you add additional spacing, or consistently state redundant thoughts, points will be deducted. Your responses should be printed out, stapled together, and brought with you on the first day of school. Any late work will receive a deduction of 50% according to the British Literature late work policy. Students who enroll within three weeks of the school year will have a 1 month grace period into the school year.

Mere Christianity Writing Prompts

- 1.) In your own words, explain what the Law of Human Nature is, and why Lewis sees that as a clue to the existence of God. Do you think the Law of Human Nature exists? Why or why not?
- 2.) Lewis says that the field of science is not relevant to proving or disproving God. Explain why he thinks this. Do you agree that science won't ever be able to prove the existence of God? Why or why not?
- 3.) Which sin does Lewis say is the worst? WHY does he claim this sin is the worst? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
- 4.) In "The Shocking Alternative" Lewis states that God gave us free-will. Why is this important in considering the power of God? Why does Lewis say God would have given us free-will? What is the danger in having free-will?
- 5.) Lewis responds to a number of objections to, or misunderstandings, of Christianity. Select one of them and explain his defensive argument. Consider arguments that YOU have heard against Christianity before. Do any of Lewis' explanations respond to objections you've personally heard? Explain your answer.
- 6.) Some people would say faith is just blind belief. Lewis says that there are two kinds of faith, one which is an intellectual decision and one which is an act of virtue. Explain fully, and express your own opinion on faith: do you think there are different kinds of faith? What kind of faith do you personally possess?
- 7.) Lewis, in the fourth section of the book, tackles the topic of the Trinity as perhaps the most crucial aspect of Christian theology. How does he explain the Father, Son and Holy Ghost? Discuss "making and begetting" as well as the "super personal" Being.
- 8.) Select one of the chapters on Virtue and review Lewis' key points about that virtue or virtues; follow up with a personal reflection about how you see these virtues playing out in your own life, and whether or not you agree with Lewis' emphasis on the importance of that virtue.
- 9.) Lewis also has some fascinating descriptions or analogies for the Christian life, or what it means to be saved. Select one or more of these and explain fully. Follow up with a personal reflection of how this analogy is relevant to you.

10.) Lewis gives three reasons why “nice” people are not the same thing as “new” people. Explain fully, and identify yourself as either a “nice” person, a “new person” or both. Make sure to explain why you feel that way.

Additional Annotation Notes

Some of you will be new to my class, and therefore, I'm not sure how familiar you are with annotating. Underlining is not the same thing as annotating. Just in case, here are some helpful tips! Know that we annotate to connect better with the text. Here are a few purposes that annotations can serve:

- Describe the mood of a passage
- Pointing out literary elements
- Analyze the author's purpose
- Deeper understand the text
- Strengthen reading skills
- Show your own opinions
- Remember definitions of unknown words
- Summarize passage for better understanding
- Relate to the characters' emotions
- Notice allusions and what they allude to
- Note author's differing perspective
- Note the setting
- Note the historical context
- Connect to other texts and media
- Make connections to other parts of the text
- Make connections to your own life

Here is an example of an annotated page in *The Great Gatsby*. Remember, you need one annotation per 2 pages.

This will get everything out in the open

- this is an awkward moment - I've had these.

- what this is

Another pause A waiter knocked and came in with crushed mint and ice but the silence was unbroken by his "Thank you" and the soft closing of the door. This tremendous detail was to be cleared up at last.

Tom dislikes Gatsby and wants to ruin his reputation by showing that he's a nobody.

- Oxford

"I told you I went there" said Gatsby.

What is so important about this?

"I heard you, but I'd like to know when."

It was nineteen-nineteen. I only stayed five months. That's why I can't really call myself an Oxford man."

I found out that this is a college in England. Maybe I can use it as a picture.

Tom glanced around to see if we mirrored his disbelief. But we were all looking at

Gatsby.

"It was an opportunity they gave to some of the officers after the Armistice," he continued. "We could go to any of the universities in England or France" (136)

Tom wants everyone to be like him - he is so arrogant.

What is this?

once again - Gatsby gets all the attention

why not any in the United States? Is this more prestigious?