

William E. Tolman High School
Grade 11 Advanced Standing (AS) British Literature



Part 1: Read one selection from EACH of the three categories.

I. Satire

Waugh, Evelyn. A Handful of Dust

A satirical novel by Evelyn Waugh, examines the themes of contemporary amorality and the death of spiritual values. This novel points out the savagery of so-called civilized London society and the barbarity encountered by the hero in the South American jungle.

Huxley, Aldous. Brave New World

"Community, Identity, Stability" is the motto of Aldous Huxley's utopian World State. Here everyone consumes daily grams of soma, to fight depression, babies are born in laboratories, and the most popular form of entertainment is a "Feelie," a movie that stimulates the senses of sight, hearing, and touch. Though there is no violence and everyone is provided for, Bernard Marx feels something is missing and senses his relationship with a young woman has the potential to be much more than the confines of their existence allow. Huxley foreshadowed many of the practices and gadgets we take for granted today--let's hope the sterility and absence of individuality he predicted aren't yet to come.

II. British Colonization/ Imperialism

Rhys, Jean. Wide Sargasso Sea

Wide Sargasso Sea is the story of Antoinette Cosway, a Creole heiress who grew up in the West Indies on a decaying plantation. When she comes of age she is married off to an Englishman, and he takes her away from the only place she has known--a house with a garden where "the paths were overgrown and a smell of dead flowers mixed with the fresh living smell. Underneath the tree ferns, tall as forest tree ferns, the light was green. Orchids flourished out of reach or for some reason not to be touched."

Forster, E.M. A Passage to India

Among the greatest novels of the twentieth century, A Passage to India tells of the clash of cultures in British India after the turn of the century. In exquisite prose, Forster reveals the menace that lurks just beneath the surface of ordinary life, as a common misunderstanding erupts into a devastating affair.

III. Classic British Literature

Bronte, Emily. Wurthing Heights

A savage, tormented classic love story set in the English moors. The central character is Heathcliff, an orphan, picked up in the streets of Liverpool and brought home by Mr. Earnshaw and raised as one of his own children. Bullied and humiliated after Earnshaw's death by his son, Heathcliff falls passionately in love with Catherine.

Austen, Jane. Pride and Prejudice

The romantic clash of two opinionated young people provides the theme. Vivacious Elizabeth Bennet is fascinated and repelled by the arrogant Mr. Darcy, whose condescending airs and acrid tongue have alienated her entire family. Their spirited courtship is conducted against a background of ballroom flirtations and drawing-room intrigues.

Part 2. Reading Response Essays

ASSIGNMENT: After reading your novel selections, complete 2 of the 3 essays below.

1. Compare and contrast how two of works you read portray some social or psychological problem.
2. Analyze the authors' works through the examination of three literary techniques for structure, style, and thematic value. Examples of literary techniques might include diction, metaphors, symbols, leitmotifs, point of view, allegory, and narrative styles.
3. Examine how the books you selected influenced your understanding of complex social, ethical, or philosophic conflicts and resolutions.

Each essay should:

- contain and successfully analyze at least three direct quotes from the novel (with proper MLA citations)
- typed in a double spaced 12 point Times New Roman font with proper MLA header

AS British Literature teachers may give students evaluating tests at the beginning of the course covering the basics of the selected novels.