

All students entering the 11th grade ELA are required to read one book from the list below (summaries on back), draft an outline, complete the writing assignment, and submit the outline and typed essay on the first day of classes. The assignment will count as THREE homework grades towards your first quarter grade. These books are all available at your local libraries and bookstores. You are welcome to read more than one book, but you only need to submit one writing assignment for one book.

Writing Assignment:

Write an essay that answers one of the following questions (choose only one essay type to complete). Your essay must be 2 ½ -3 pages long, double spaced with 12-point Times New Roman font. All essays must have a clearly articulated thesis and use examples from the book to support the central argument. Please proofread and spell-check your work before submitting it (reading it ALOUD often helps to catch errors) – points will be deducted for careless work that does not meet these standards.

**You MUST also create a OUTLINE for your essay and hand it in with your essay.*

- 1) The protagonist is the main character in a work of literature who often changes in some important way by the end of the work. Identify and describe 2-3 ways that show *how the protagonist has changed* in the book that you read, and what these changes signified in the story.
- 2) In all books, the author wants to convey certain messages to the reader. These are the themes of the novel, and they usually are developed through the characters and the conflicts they face within the text. Write an essay in *which you identify and explain 2 themes in your book*. In other words, what are the major messages that the author is trying to convey through his/her storyline? Your answer to this question will be your THESIS. DO NOT write one word themes, such as family, religion, childhood. **INSTEAD**, write a phrase that explains the topic of your theme, such as: dangers of dictatorships; gender roles can be challenged. Provide about 3 examples from the book for EACH theme. Use details from the book!

A possible outline for an essay on themes could be as follows:

Thesis: The author uses the following three themes: X, Y, and Z, to emphasize the repression of Puritan culture. (write a statement about the ROLE of these three themes)

Theme #1 (paragraph is about 8 sentences-10 sentences)

Example #1: Details

Example #2: Details

Example #3: Details

Why is this theme IMPORTANT to the book?

Theme #2 (paragraph is about 8 sentences-10 sentence)

Example #1: Details

Example #2: Details

Example #3: Details

Why is this theme IMPORTANT to the book?

Conclusion

Restate your thesis

Connect your thesis to the larger world

11th Grade ELA analyzes the clash between individual and society. The nature of these conflicts varies as the individual struggles to assert his/her sense of self in difficult environments. The books below each have strong characters and character development and offer the reader an opportunity to consider how different individuals are accepted (or not) by society.

***Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda N. Adichie**

***In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote**

***Brick Lane* by Monica Ali**

***A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini**

***Death with Interruptions* by Jose Saramago**

***Little Fires are Everywhere* by Celeste Ng**

Book Summaries – 11th Grade

Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda N. Adichie- With effortless grace, celebrated author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie illuminates a seminal moment in modern African history: Biafra's impassioned struggle to establish an independent republic in southeastern Nigeria during the late 1960s. We experience this tumultuous decade alongside five unforgettable characters: Ugwu, a thirteen-year-old houseboy who works for Odenigbo, a university professor full of revolutionary zeal; Olanna, the professor's beautiful young mistress who has abandoned her life in Lagos for a dusty town and her lover's charm; and Richard, a shy young Englishman infatuated with Olanna's willful twin sister Kainene. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a tremendously evocative novel of the promise, hope, and disappointment of the Biafran war.

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini- Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate. As they endure the ever escalating dangers around them-in their home as well as in the streets of Kabul-they come to form a bond that makes them both sisters and mother-daughter to each other, and that will ultimately alter the course not just of their own lives but of the next generation. With heart-wrenching power and suspense, Hosseini shows how a woman's love for her family can move her to shocking and heroic acts of self-sacrifice, and that in the end it is love, or even the memory of love, that is often the key to survival. A stunning accomplishment, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a haunting, heartbreaking, compelling story of an unforgiving time, an unlikely friendship, and an indestructible love.

In Cold Blood by Truman Capote – Controversial and compelling, *In Cold Blood* reconstructs the murder in 1959 of a Kansas farmer, his wife and children. Capote's comprehensive study of the killings and subsequent investigation explores the circumstances surrounding this terrible crime and the effect it had on those involved. At the centre of his study are the amoral young killers Perry Smith and Dick Hickcock, who, vividly drawn by Capote, are shown to be reprehensible, yet entirely and frighteningly human.

Brick Lane by Monica Ali - Monica Ali's first novel is the deeply moving story of one woman, Nazneen, born in a Bangladeshi village and transported to London at age eighteen to enter into an arranged marriage. What could not be changed must be borne. And since nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne. This principle rules her life. It was a mantra, fettle, and challenge. When Nazneen is married off to Chanu, a man old enough to be her father, she moves to London and, for years, keeps house, cares for her husband, and bears children just as a girl from the village is supposed to do. But gradually she is transformed by her experience and begins to question whether fate controls her or whether she has a hand in her own destiny. While Nazneen journeys along her path of self-realization, she and her sister, shaped, yet not bound, by their landscapes and memories, struggle to dream...and live...beyond the rules prescribed for them.

Death with Interruptions by Jose Saramago – What happens when the grim reaper decides there will be no more death? On the first day of the New Year, no one dies. This of course causes stress among politicians, religious leaders, morticians, and doctors. Among the general public, on the other hand, there is initial

celebration—flags are hung out on balconies, people dance in the streets. They have achieved the great goal of humanity: eternal life. Then reality hits home—families are left to care for the permanently dying, life-insurance policies become meaningless, and funeral parlors are reduced to arranging burials for pet dogs, cats, hamsters, and parrots. Death sits in her chilly apartment, where she lives alone with scythe and filing cabinets, and contemplates her experiment: What if no one ever died again? What if she became human and were to fall in love?

Little Fires are Everywhere by Celeste Ng-

Everyone in Shaker Heights was talking about it that summer: how Isabelle, the last of the Richardson children, had finally gone around the bend and burned the house down. In Shaker Heights, a placid, progressive suburb of Cleveland, everything is meticulously planned – from the layout of the winding roads, to the colours of the houses, to the successful lives its residents will go on to lead. And no one embodies this spirit more than Elena Richardson, whose guiding principle is playing by the rules.

Enter Mia Warren – an enigmatic artist and single mother – who arrives in this idyllic bubble with her teenage daughter Pearl, and rents a house from the Richardsons. Soon Mia and Pearl become more than just tenants: all four Richardson children are drawn to the mother–daughter pair. But Mia carries with her a mysterious past, and a disregard for the rules that threatens to upend this carefully ordered community. When old family friends attempt to adopt a Chinese-American baby, a custody battle erupts that dramatically divides the town – and puts Mia and Elena on opposing sides. Suspicious of Mia and her motives, Elena is determined to uncover the secrets in Mia's past. But her obsession will come at an unexpected and devastating cost .