

2011 Summer Reading Assignment: Honors English 4

(Essays must be turned in to your English 4 teacher on the first day of school)

PHS English Department Summer Reading Philosophy: In conjunction with Plainfield High School's stated mission to help students develop into lifelong learners, the PHS English Department requires students to complete an independent reading project over the course of each summer. Summer reading assignments are designed to be rigorous, yet flexible enough to accommodate each student's individual needs and interests. Each summer reading assignment includes a writing piece which will engage students' critical thinking skills. All summer reading work correlates directly with course curricula, introducing students to important themes and concepts that will be further explored in their upcoming English classes.

Students must read two of the following books:

A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen

Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Girl With a Pearl Earring by Tracy Chevalier

Essay Prompt: In Honors English 4, students will study several texts in which the protagonist feels alienated from society due to a lack of wealth or social status. Choose any two of the texts above, and compare and contrast how issues of wealth and social class influence the life of one major character from each text. Your essay should be 4-5 pages in length, must be written in MLA format, and must include at least two direct quotes from each text. When crafting your essay, you may want to consider each of the following issues:

- To what social class does each of your protagonists belong? Do your protagonists share a similar social status, or is one far richer/poorer than the other?

- How is each protagonist treated by people of “superior” social status? How does he/she respond?
- Describe the social structure of the society each protagonist lives in. How are people of limited wealth and social status treated? In what ways is each society fundamentally unfair?
- How do each of your protagonists change over the course of the text? How do issues of wealth and social status effect the evolution of each protagonist’s behavior?
- Are each of your protagonists able to overcome their financial/social issues and find acceptance in society? Why or why not?

If you have any questions regarding this assignment, please contact Mr. Farrish by e-mail at the following either of the following addresses: Farrishj@Plainfieldschools.org or Mrfarrish99@hotmail.com