

**English 11 Honors: American Literature
Summer Reading Assignment
2018**

There are two reading requirements for incoming juniors taking American Literature Honors. One is Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*; the second is Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*. You **must** purchase paper copies of the texts for use in class when we return in August. Please do not rely on borrowing from the library or purchasing or borrowing an ebook. In the following document, there are various required assignments. Please read all directions carefully.

All work will be handed in on or before August 27, 2018. All written work must be typed using Times New Roman text, 12 pt. font and double spacing. A heading should appear at the top of the first page and be formatted as indicated below. A title should follow, centered on the next line and contain the information necessary to determine which activity follows.

Student first and last name

Instructor's Name

Honors American Literature 13001

27 August 2018

On August 27, you should have two texts:

To Kill a Mockingbird

The Secret Life of Bees

All written requirements and tagged notable lines

Both novels are classified as Bildungsroman, a German term for a novel about the growth of the leading character's personality from youth to adulthood. As a genre, these stories are often called "coming of age" novels. The narrative follows the protagonist's intellectual, moral, and psychological development. Mistakes and challenges in pursuit of a goal form the person's identity or sense of self in relation to society.

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* follows the first person narration of six year old Scout Finch in post-depression (1935) Maycomb, Alabama. Scout faces the social, economic, and racial prejudices of the town. The novel's plot centers around the trial of Tom Robinson and the mysterious "Boo" Radley- ultimately weaving the two conflicts together. Harper creates a plethora of characters all of whom contribute to the novel's themes. While the subject matter is serious, Lee maintains subtle humor throughout the work.

In Sue Kidd Monk's *The Secret Life of Bees*, Lily Owens grows from a child to a young adult without help from her parents. Lily faces the usual challenges of adolescence: a maturing body, relationships with the opposite sex, independence, identifying talents, choosing a career, and adjusting responsibly to community life. Her separation from her parents is more difficult because Lily remains grief stricken over her dead mother and her hostile father. She lives in rural South Carolina during a period (1964) when women and black people faced social restrictions, including segregation and violence.

Requirements: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

During Reading: Mark with a post-it the passages that contain nuggets of meaning for you as a reader. You may want to jot down the reason for your marking the specific passages as you read so that you don't forget when we get to discussion in August. You should have ten to 15 passages marked.

Study Guide for *To Kill a Mockingbird*: mandatory

While reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, keep an accurate account of characters. The best method of doing so is to connect each of the following characters to Scout. What is his or her relationship to Scout, what events can be connected between the character and Scout, and what ideas/attitudes does the character represent?

Characters

Scout	Jem	Atticus	Calpurnia
Miss Maudie	Stephanie Crawford	Burrus Ewell	Uncle Jack
Miss Dubose	Miss Caroline	Dill	Zeebo
Aunt Alexandria	Lulu	Dolphus Raymond	Bob Ewell
Tom Robinson	Helen Robinson	Link Deas	Mr. Underwood
Heck Tate	Judge Taylor	Tim Johnson	Boo Radley
Nathan Radley	Mayella Ewell	Mr. Gilmore	Mrs. Merriweather
Simon Finch	Cousin Francis	Little Chuck Little	Cecil Jacobs
Walter Cunningham, Jr.	Walter Cunningham, Sr.		Rev. Sykes

Think about these characters in the context of the questions below. Not every question will pertain to an individual character. Also think about each character's purpose. You should have typed notes.

- A. What did the character accomplish in life?
- B. What failures did the character experience?
- C. Who were the character's friends or enemies?
- D. What did the character do for a living?
- E. What was the character's general attitude in life?
- F. What joys, sorrows, fears, or surprises did the character experience in life?
- G. Of what was the character proud or ashamed?
- H. What secrets did the character possess?
- I. What one memory will the character feel is the greatest or most powerful?
- J. How does the character feel now that he/she is no longer alive?

- K. Does the character have interesting information about other characters that would be interesting to know?
- L. If the character were to offer advice to the living, what would it be?

Also you must-

1. Note the setting: time and place
2. What is the point of view (who narrates the story)?
3. What evidence of the themes of social, racial and gender prejudice are present?
4. Atticus states, "It is a sin to kill a mockingbird." He defines a "mockingbird" as something that is vulnerable, makes beautiful music, and brings no harm to anyone. Within the context of that definition, who are the "mockingbirds" of the novel?

Requirements for *The Secret Life of Bees*

During Reading

1. Mark with a post-it the passages that contain nuggets of meaning for you as a reader. You may want to jot down the reason for your marking the specific passages as you read so that you don't forget when we get to discussion in August. You should have ten to fifteen passages marked.
2. Each chapter begins with an epitaph about bees at the top of the page. Choose **three** epitaphs and explain how the "bee" information relates to a character or event in the novel.
3. Note the setting: time and place
What is the point of view (who narrates the story)?
What evidence of the themes of social, racial and gender prejudice are present?
Atticus states, "It is a sin to kill a mockingbird." He defines a "mockingbird" as something that is vulnerable, makes beautiful music, and brings no harm to anyone. Within the context of that definition are there any "mockingbirds" in *The Secret Life of Bees*? If so, who? Why?

After Reading

4. Themes: guilt, forgiveness, coming of age, racism and prejudice, and relationships between parents and children are major themes of both novels.

Create a chart identifying each of the themes, then citing an incident in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and in *The Secret Life of Bees* where this is evident.

5. The novels' settings are approximately forty years apart. Both take place in the South; both have a female child narrator. Both narrators have atypical home situations. Both narrators face prejudice and re-evaluate the racist attitudes of their respective hometowns. What other ideas or events have parallels in the novels? Are the novels more alike or different? Be prepared to discuss from notes and ideas you have taken.

If you have questions while you are reading, jot down your question(s) and the page number(s) for the benefit of class discussion in August. Use the space below.