



MINOOKA COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT # 111

Mission: To inspire and motivate our students with an educational experience that leads to achievement and success.

May 2017

Dear English I Honors Student:

As preparation for next fall, the novel To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee is this summer's required reading. You will need your own copy of the novel since we will be using the book during the first few weeks of school. Copies are available at local bookstores or in libraries. On the first day of school, we will collect your reading journals.

Please keep a reading journal as a record of your thoughts as you read the novel. We expect that you will have at least fifteen entries, which is one entry for every two chapters. Each entry should contain a brief summary of the plot, but **the majority of the entry should be your own thoughts**. In other words, what are you thinking about as you read this book? Label your entries with the chapters they cover. In addition, your reading journal **must be typed** using size 12 point Times font, double-spaced, with each entry about a page in length. Please take a look at the sample reading journal entry on the other side of this paper.

Consider these questions as you read:

1. Write down and comment on any quotes or words that you find significant.
2. Do any of the characters' actions surprise you? What actions and why?
3. What do certain facts or statements reveal about a character?
4. What do you predict might happen next?
5. Is there something you wish you knew more about to fully understand what you are reading?
6. Is there a character or a character's actions you like? Don't like? Why?
7. Explain how a theme is developed during the chapter(s).
8. Who is telling the story? Does that have an effect on your reading/understanding?
9. Is there anything in the chapter that reminds you of another text or a personal experience?
10. What literary elements can you identify? Record examples in your journal.
11. How do you feel about the way the story is told? Is there anything you enjoy or that irritates you about the way the story is written?
12. What do you feel is the most significant passage in the chapter?

You do not need to respond to each of these questions, but you should respond to some of them. Remember, we want to know what **you are thinking** as you read, so the majority of each entry should be your own thoughts.

Enjoy your summer. We look forward to meeting you in the fall.

Sincerely,

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Sample Reading Log Entry from a former English I Honors Student:

In chapters three and four of the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the story continues as summer returns, and Jem and his sister are able to enjoy the freedom with friend Dill. The three of them start to play a game where they re-enact the events that they believe happened at the Radley place.

In the story I enjoyed how some of the spelling is different because of the time that the book took place. It gives the feel that the story is from a different time, and it helps my understanding of it. A part in the chapter that I found significant is when Jem told Scout that she was acting like a girl: "I was not so sure, but Jem told me I was being a girl, that girls always imagined things, that's why other people hated them so, and if I started behaving like one I could just find someone else to play with." This also reveals that Jem and Dill enjoy play with her because she isn't girly, and she can play boy things with them. I also found that quote to be true about girls. We always imagine things we want to happen, and we tend to overthink or overanalyze someone else's actions. That's a major difference between boys and girls. Girls tend to overthink what they do and say whereas boys seem to just do and say what they feel. It's a curse really. I guess we could change that if we wanted to, but by now it's a force of habit, and we can't really do anything about it. I liked how Jem, Jean, and Dill all played games outside and made up their own games. It reminded me of when I was smaller, and I would go outside with my cousins and make silly games. Today it seems like everyone has turned to technology for entertainment, even me. Also, I noticed a simile in these chapters, "his eyes as blue as Dill Harris's," which emphasizes the fact that Scout has noticed how blue Dill's eyes are. Hmmmm....