



**GRADE 12 International Baccalaureate**  
**SUMMER 2009**  
**READING ASSIGNMENT**  
**SPRINGBROOK HIGH SCHOOL**



The books assigned for summer reading for students entering the second year of the IB program are *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald and *The House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende. *The Great Gatsby* is a novel in Part 2 of the IB English syllabus; it will be studied in preparation for the Oral Commentary in February. *The House of the Spirits* is a novel in Part 3 of the syllabus; it will be studied in preparation for both World Lit Paper 2, to be written in November, and Paper 2, the second of two IB English exams to be taken next May. Read both novels carefully over the summer. There will be tests on them, probably during the first week of school.

In addition to reading these novels carefully, students must write a commentary on one of them. Although papers written in IB English 12 are usually 1000 to 1500 words in length, this one should be brief—between 500 and 750 words. (Use “Word Count” under “Tools” to provide an exact count at the end of your paper.) Given this emphasis on brevity, you must focus your comments on the author’s handling of one (or, at most, two) of the following literary elements: theme, characterization, setting, point of view, plot, style, or tone. If you wish, you may focus on only the first half of either passage.

Passages selected for commentary are often taken from the beginning of a novel; I have therefore attached two introductory passages that would serve this purpose well. Choose one of the attached passages, mark it up, and submit it with your paper. **Consider writing your commentary before you read the novel, but only if you have allowed adequate time to complete the entire reading assignment.** After reading the novel, do not make changes in your commentary if your inferences about the story turn out to be somewhat off-the-mark. Your interpretation is valid as long as it presents a reasonable hypothesis regarding the author’s purposes and is based on detailed evidence from the selected passage. (Keep in mind that Paper 1, the written commentary examination you will take in May 2010, will require you to analyze a passage from a novel that is unfamiliar to you.)

The commentary will be due on the second day of school, **September 1, 2009**. At that time, you must also submit your essay to Turnitin.com.

Students are encouraged to read some or all of the other works we will study together next year. The complete syllabus can be found on the reverse of this page.

Please double-space  
your essay and provide  
an exact word count.



Put "Essay #1" in the top  
left-hand corner and your  
name in the upper right.

# IB English Syllabus SHS Class of 2010

Part 1: World Literature

Candide  
The Metamorphosis  
The Stranger

Part 2: Detailed Study

Hamlet  
Macbeth  
The Great Gatsby  
Poetry: John Donne & Robert Frost

Part 3: Group of Works

Tess of the D'Urbervilles  
Their Eyes Were Watching God  
The Sound and the Fury  
The House of the Spirits

Part 4: School's Choice

Heart of Darkness  
The Woman Warrior  
Ethan Frome  
Chronicle of a Death Foretold

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## Junior Year

Heart of Darkness  
Ethan Frome  
The Woman Warrior  
Chronicle of a Death Foretold

Candide  
The Metamorphosis  
The Stranger  
Macbeth

## Senior Year

The House of the Spirits  
The Great Gatsby  
Hamlet  
Selected Poems of John Donne  
Selected Poems of Robert Frost

Tess of the D'Urbervilles  
Their Eyes Were Watching God  
The Sound and the Fury

(World Literature works are highlighted.)

## Chapter 1

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

"Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone," he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had."

He didn't say any more but we've always been unusually communicative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that. In consequence I'm inclined to reserve all judgments, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores. The abnormal mind is quick to detect and attach itself to this quality when it appears in a normal person, and so it came about that in college I was unjustly accused of being a politician, because I was privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men. Most of the confidences were unsought--frequently I have feigned sleep, preoccupation, or a hostile levity when I realized by some unmistakable sign that an intimate revelation was quivering on the horizon--for the intimate revelations of young men or at least the terms in which they express them are usually plagiaristic and marred by obvious suppressions. Reserving judgments is a matter of infinite hope. I am still a little afraid of missing something if I forget that, as my father snobbishly suggested, and I snobbishly repeat, a sense of the fundamental decencies is parceled out unequally at birth.

And, after boasting this way of my tolerance, I come to the admission that it has a limit. Conduct may be founded on the hard rock or the wet marshes but after a certain point I don't care what it's founded on. When I came back from the East last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart. Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction--Gatsby who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. This responsiveness had nothing to do with that flabby impressionability which is dignified under the name of the "creative temperament"--it was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again. No--Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men.

## ONE: *Rosa the Beautiful*

Barrabás came to us by sea, the child Clara wrote in her delicate calligraphy. She was already in the habit of writing down important matters, and afterward, when she was mute, she also recorded trivialities, never suspecting that fifty years later I would use her notebooks to reclaim the past and overcome terrors of my own. Barrabás arrived on a Holy Thursday. He was in a despicable cage, caked with his own excrement and urine, and had the lost look of a hapless, utterly defenseless prisoner; but the regal carriage of his head and the size of his frame bespoke the legendary giant he would become. It was a bland, autumnal day that gave no hint of the events that the child would record, which took place during the noon mass in the parish of San Sebastián, with her whole family in attendance. As a sign of mourning, the statues of the saints were shrouded in purple robes that the pious ladies of the congregation unpacked and dusted off once a year from a cupboard in the sacristy. Beneath these funereal sheets the celestial retinue resembled nothing so much as a roomful of furniture awaiting movers, an impression that the candles, the incense, and the soft moans of the organ were powerless to counteract. Terrifying dark bundles loomed where the life-size saints had stood, each with its influenza-pale expression, its elaborate wig woven from the hair of someone long dead, its rubies, pearls and emeralds of painted glass, and the rich gown of a Florentine aristocrat. The only one whose appearance was enhanced by mourning was the church's patron saint, Sebastián, for during Holy Week the faithful were spared the sight of that body twisted in the most indecent posture, pierced by arrows, and dripping with blood and tears like a suffering homosexual, whose wounds, kept miraculously fresh by Father Restrepo's brush, made Clara tremble with disgust.

It was a long week of penitence and fasting, during which there were no card games and no music that might lead to lust or abandon; and within the limits of possibility, the strictest sadness and chastity were observed, even though it was precisely at this time that the forked tail of the devil pricked most insistently at Catholic flesh. The fast consisted of soft puff pastries, delicious vegetarian dishes, spongy tortillas, and enormous cheeses from the countryside, with which each family commemorated the Passion of the Lord, taking every precaution not to touch the least morsel of meat or fish on pain of excommunication, as Father Restrepo had repeatedly made clear. No one had ever dared to disobey him. The priest was blessed with a long, incriminating finger, which he used to point out sinners in public, and a tongue well schooled in arousing emotions.