

IB English 11 Summer Assignment
Albert Einstein High School
Rising Juniors School Year 09-10
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Welcome to IB English 11! The following is a list of the novels/text we will be reading throughout the year. If you choose, you may purchase these texts over the summer and begin reading them. All books are available at used bookstores and online. However, this is **NOT** a requirement for success in the course and texts will be provided at the beginning of the school year.

Semester 1

As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner
The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy
The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood
The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka

Semester 2

The Stranger by Albert Camus
The Sound of Waves by Yukio Mishima
So Long a Letter by Miriama Ba

Summer Assignment

The Basics:

- You will complete a practice IB commentary based on examples from a previous IB test.
- Choose 1 of the following selections (poetry or prose) and complete the commentary.
- Your work must be typed in a double space 12 point Times New Roman font with proper MLA headers.
- The commentary will be worth 100 homework/completion points and is due the 2nd day of school. Late work will not be accepted.
- In addition, we will self-evaluate, grade, and peer review your work as part of a class assignment the first week of the year.
- In addition to the commentary, review the published IB rubric for a commentary. Be familiar with this rubric as it will be a key to your grading for the next 2 years.

How to Write a Commentary

- A commentary is one of the primary forms of evaluation for the English portion of the IB program. During the next two years, you will complete both written and oral commentaries. The sooner you are familiar with commentaries, the better you will do!
- Think of a commentary as a running dialogue about the poem or passage. Instead of attempting to prove a thesis, theme, or central idea about the passage; you are analyzing the entire thing on a line by line basis.
- Begin with an introduction which explains how you are dividing up the passage (by stanzas, by paragraphs, by narrative, etc) and any overarching themes or ideas which fit the entire passage.

- For your body paragraphs just start analyzing the poem/passage line-by-line. You do not have to analyze every single word excessively, but you should be very thorough in your analysis. The main thing to avoid is jumping around in the analysis. Don't talk about the first stanza and then jump to the third stanza and leave out the second stanza. That is the main difference between a commentary and an analysis essay- you are talking about the entire passage; not analyzing bit pieces to prove a central thesis, theme, or idea.
- IB recommends an average length of 6-7 pages per commentary. This is a good length to shoot for. Since this is your first commentary, you might fall short of this length. That is ok. However, 1-2 page commentaries are clearly not acceptable. On that same note, commentaries that are 10+ pages are often rambling, unorganized, or overkill. Too long can sometimes be just as problematic as too short!
- If you have questions concerning your assignment, please do not hesitate to e-mail Mr. Garrick. He will respond to your question as soon as possible.

: a commentary on *one* of the following:

The music of the ship was howling around him. The low whistlings; the tortured rumbles; the wheezy sputters of breeze flowing through it. The clatter of loose wainscoting. The clank of chains. The groaning of boards. The blare of wind. Never before had he felt rain quite like it. It seemed to spew from the clouds, not merely to fall. He watched the wave rise up from a quarter of a mile away. Rolling. Foaming. Rushing. Surging. Beginning to thicken and swell in strength. Now it was a battlement of ink-black water, almost crumpling under its own weight; but still rising, and now roaring. It smashed into the side of the bucking *Star*, like a punch thrown by an invisible god. He was aware of being flung backwards into the edge of a bench, the dull crack of metal against the base of his spine. The ship creaked violently and pitched into a tilt, downing slowly, almost on to beam ends. A clamour of terrified screams rose up from steerage. A hail of cups and splintering plates. A man's bellow: 'Knockdown! Knockdown!' One of the starboard lifeboats snapped from its bow-chain and swung loose like a mace, shattering through the wall of the wheelhouse.

The boom of the billows striking the prow a second time. A blind of salt lashed him; drenched him through. Waves churning over his body. The slip of his body down the boards towards the water. A shredding *skreek* of metal on metal. The grind of the engine ripped from the ocean. The ship began to right itself. Snappings of wood filled the air like gunshots. The wail of the klaxon being sounded for clear-all-decks. The man with the club-foot was helping a sailor to grab a woman who was being swept on her back towards the broken rail. She was screaming in terror; grasping; clutching. Somehow they seized her and dragged her below. Hand by hand, gripping the slimy life-rope like a mountaineer, Dixon made it back to the First-Class deckhouse.

Two stewards were in the passageway distributing canisters of soup. Passengers were to retire to their quarters immediately. There was no need for concern. The storm would pass. It was entirely to be expected. A matter of the season. The ship could not capsize; it never had in eighty years. The lifebelts were merely a matter of precaution. But the Captain had ordered everyone to remain below. Laura looking pleadingly at him from the end of the corridor, her terrified sons bawling into her skirts. The three of them being grabbed by an angry-faced Merridith and dragged into her cabin like sacks.

'Inside, sir. Inside! Don't come out until you're called.'

He had found dry clothes and eaten all his soup. After an hour, the storm had levelled down a little. The Chief Steward had knocked on his door with a message from the Captain. All passengers were strictly confined for the rest of the day. No exceptions whatsoever were permitted. The hatches were about to be battened down.

2.

FIELD OF AUTUMN

Slow moves the acid breath of noon
over the copper-coated hill,
slow from the wild crab's* bearded breast
the palsied apples fall.

5 Like coloured smoke the day hangs fire,
taking the village without sound;
the vulture-headed sun lies low
chained to the violet ground.

The horse upon the rocky height
10 rolls all the valley in his eye,
but dares not raise his foot or move
his shoulders from the fly.

The sheep, snail-backed against the wall,
lifts her blind face but does not know
15 the cry her blackened tongue gives forth
is the first bleat of snow.

Each bird and stone, each roof and well,
feels the gold foot of autumn pass;
each spider binds with glittering snare
20 the splintered bones of grass.

Slow moves the hour that sucks our life,
slow drops the late wasp from the flower,
the rose tree's thread of scent draws thin—
and snaps upon the air.

Laurie Lee, *"The Bloom of Candles"* (1947)

* crab: crab apple tree
