

IB English 12  
Summer Reading Questions and Guide

*Death in Venice*  
By Thomas Mann  
Translated by H.T. Lowe-Porter

The following questions and reading guide are meant to assist you as you read the novella. Answering the questions on the front of the handout will help you prepare for our class activities and discussions. Your responses will be collected and the grade will fall in the 10% Homework Category.

You will be graded on how thoroughly and thoughtfully you respond to the questions and how well you use the text to support your responses. Your responses should demonstrate a familiarity with and understanding of the text, a willingness to explore the text's deeper implications, an appreciation of the relationship between content and literary style, and a precise use of language. Be certain that the ideas you include in your responses and the language that you use are your own, or else your work may appear to be plagiarized (which would, of course, result in a zero for the assignment). There is no need to consult literary criticism or online study guides; please engage in independent reading and analysis.

Questions to respond to while reading *Death in Venice*

- How does Aschenbach view his writing at the beginning of the novella?
- Who are Aschenbach's heroes? Why is this important?
- Consider the setting of this novella. Look up pictures of Venice, and think about how this city reflects some of Mann's themes. Include evidence of your research.
- How does Aschenbach's reaction to the "strangers" change over time?
- How does Aschenbach's view of Tadzio change over the course of the novella?
- Why is it significant that Tadzio is sickly?
- What changes do you notice in sentence structure and syntax as the novella progresses? Why do you think Mann does this?

Below, you will find some narrative techniques and topics or themes to consider as you read and respond to the questions on the front of this handout. The lists below are not exhaustive; you may want to see if you can identify other narrative techniques and/or topics and themes that are relevant to the novella.

#### Narrative Techniques

- Motifs (the stranger, young-old man, strawberries, beach/ocean, Asiatic cholera)
- Imagery (martial, seductive/destructive, decay)
- Intertextuality and allusion
- Use of archetypes
- Tone – attitude of narrator toward subject
- Changes in syntax and sentence structure over the course of the novella to reflect changes in character
- Use of setting to reflect changes in character
- We find classical Greek references throughout *Death in Venice*.

Please familiarize yourself with the following:

- Apollo
- Dionysus
- The Bacchae
- Crossing the River Styx
- Plato's dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus

#### Topics/ Themes

- Desire for youth, beauty
- How can an artist create lasting work? Through concentrated effort, unbridled passion, a mixture?
- Consuming nature of passion
- Futile fight against old age, decay

**All work will be submitted on Monday, August 29, 2012. Students must submit their work to turnitin.com and staple the receipt onto the hard copy they turn in on the first day of school.**