

Summer Instructions for Senior Thesis Writers:

#1 - Collect 10 thesis ideas: Before reading the book again, collect at least 10 great ideas for essays/writing projects on this book. These are not your ideas; these are someone else's ideas. Just google "essay ideas for *the title of your book*." You may use sources like Gradesaver, Sparknotes, Shmoop, paperstarter.com, cummingsstudyguides, etc. Choose your 10 favorite themes/motifs/essay prompts. Create a document and record the ten ideas and the websites where you found them. **You should state each idea in your own words and cite the source of the idea.** These ideas must be fully developed ideas that are specific to your book. Do not use phrases or fragments that could apply to most pieces of classic literature. To be perfectly clear, I will collect this type-written, properly formatted document of ideas on the first day of class. You must include the source of each idea. **This is a graded assignment.**

#2 - Prioritize your interests: Of the 10 ideas you selected, choose 3 that seem most interesting to you. Eventually, you will be formulating your own thesis, but for now let's see what others think your book is about. You may end up refuting one of these ideas, or blending a couple of them, or you may present your own slant on one of the ones you found. However, you must first collect 10 and then indicate which ones are your top 3 thesis ideas. This is the brainstorming stage of the project.

#3 - Read the book: Everyone must read the book you have selected for your summer thesis. It does not matter when you read it last; you still have to re-read it this summer. This time you are reading it with those 3 favorite essay topics in mind. You will also keep in mind the other 7 ideas you chose. Take notes. Notice supporting evidence for these ideas as you read. Again, so no one is confused . . . you will be asked if you re-read the novel on the first day of class and I will ask to see your note-taking system. **This, too, is a graded assignment.**

#4 – Research your book: Find 15 sources and create an annotated bibliography on each source. You must read the whole article or chapter or at least 15 pages of each source. If it is a book, you do not have to read consecutive pages; three separate five page chapters would suffice. Record your page numbers if available. **Have I mentioned that these are all graded assignments due on the first day of class?** When we return in August, we will discuss your 10 ideas as a class as well as your 3 favorites. You will evaluate the sources you found to verify that they are scholarly and worth your time. Together we will move toward your developing a thesis statement of your own.

My first bit of advice concerning your senior thesis is this: **Find something you really want to write about.** If you really want to make your point or prove your claim, the writing will be so much easier. This is your chance to control the message. You get to decide what you will spend your time thinking about. The more time you spend selecting a topic that interests you, the better off you will be as you begin to write.

You may certainly email me this summer if you have any questions: dgeiger@eastwoodschoool.org. I will be available throughout the summer if you want to organize a group trip to one of the libraries or a morning in the computer lab at the school. If interested, please contact me. There are also books available in the "senior resource library" in room 201. These cannot leave the room, but you may arrange to come to the school in order to read and take notes. Most of these resources are collections of scholarly articles which may be appropriate to your subject.

Have a great summer and I'll see you in August,
Dawn Geiger