**AP English IV** at Broughton High School  
2013 Summer Reading Assignment  
Gulledge/Merchant/Pattisall-Williams

Welcome to AP English 12! We look forward to seeing you in August!  
 **Before your first day of class, read the following three selections**:

1. ***The Road* by Cormac McCarthy** Please know that this novel is both deeply moving and intensely disturbing. Though kernels of grace are present and powerful, much of the book is difficult to read. Consider what might be the value of this horrifying, post-apocalyptic novel and what relevance it might have for you or for any of us. Consider, too, why this 2006 work received the most coveted literary award—the Pulitzer. You may pick up a copy of this novel at a local bookstore or order a copy online.
2. **“Utopia versus Dystopia—a perfect Environment for a Perfect Existence” by Stancuta Ramona Dima-Laza** The writer of this essay explores what “new forms of knowledge can contribute to reaching the ideal of a perfect community.” As you read the essay, consider how the writer’s idea of a perfect world compares to the dystopian, post-apocalyptic world in *The Road.*   
   <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/83457512/utopia-versus-dystopia-perfect-environment-perfect-existence>
3. **“Beyond Redemption?: Reading Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* After the End of the World” by Shelly L. Rambo** This second essay is quite challenging. Do your best to immerse yourself in this college-level critique. Be comfortable with knowing that you may not understand everything, but digest and interpret what you can. Your efforts will be rewarded, and enlightening discussion can come from your careful attention to the points the essay makes. (<http://www.questia.com/library/1G1-206051098/beyond-redemption-reading-cormac-mccarthy-s-the>

**Bring to class on the first day the following readings and assignments, worth 50 points**:

1. Your copy of *The Road* (5 points)
2. Your 15 typed annotations in a double-entry format for *The Road* (20 points)
3. Your one-page typed, response to the question of your choice, selected from the list of questions about *The Road* (10 points)
4. Your print-out of the short, first essay, along with the 5 legible annotations you have hand-written in the margins (5 points)
5. Your print-out of the longer, second essay, along with the 5 legible annotations you have hand-written in the margins (5 points)
6. Your readiness to write an in-class essay and/or take a challenging reading-check quiz about *The Road*. You will also be required to answer some questions about the two assigned essays. (10 points)

**Follow the detailed instructions below to create the annotations and selected responses you will bring with you on the first day:**

1. **As you read *The Road*, make annotations in the margins or on any sticky notes you use to mark significant passages:**
2. An annotation is your own, written, thoughtful response to a particular passage in the text that “speaks to you.”
3. More specifically, your annotation is a written, brief, personal analysis, interpretation, observation, or relevant question about the passage.
4. As you decide what to annotate in the margin beside the passages that “speak to you,” consider how a particular meaning, idea, or theme might be powerfully communicated by a word, a phrase, an image, a literary device, or a writing technique.
5. Other effective annotated responses can include the ways the text might supply answers to the thought-provoking questions included below.
6. Review your knowledge of literary devices and techniques so that you can more effectively include in your annotations the ways McCarthy uses irony, ambiguity, imagery, metaphor, symbol, setting, and style to contribute to meaning and tone. Explanations of a few literary devices/themes are near the end of this hand-out.
7. **When you finish reading *The Road,* look over your plentiful annotations and select the 15 annotations you like the best:**
8. In a Word Document, create a two-column chart (sometimes called a double-entry format). Use as a guide the attached sample annotation chart at the bottom of this hand-out.
9. In the first column, type your favorite15 passages, making sure you include the **page** **number** of each passage. Please note that sometimes a sentence-long quote is enough; other times several sentences together are necessary to communicate a particular meaning. So, if your passage is lengthy, you may quote part of it—making sure you use quotation marks, and paraphrase the part of the passage you do not quote.
10. In the second column, beside each of your 15 noted passages, copy from your notes your corresponding annotated analysis, interpretation, observation, or question.
11. **From the list of questions about *The Road* below, choose one or two questions and type a thoughtful, detailed response.**  Make your response about a page long, double-spaced and in MLA format. Use specific examples from the text to support your answer. Feel free to use in your response any ideas from your annotations!!!
12. **As you read the first essay, make 5 thoughtful annotations in the margins.**
13. **As you read the second essay, make 5 thoughtful annotations in the margins.**

**Questions about *The Road*:**

1. As you consider your own feelings about the novel and what you conclude might make it valuable, think also about the author’s purpose for creating such a story.   
   What do you think McCarthy, the author, intends to communicate to us by writing this book?
2. How do the particular consequences of this post-apocalyptic existence change the value system and moral code of those who survive its horror? Think, in particular, about how the consequences change the man and, also, how they change his wife.
3. In what other ways has the apocalypse and its aftermath changed McCarthy’s characters? How does McCarthy use specific literary techniques to communicate more effectively the changes his characters have undergone?
4. Does McCarthy suggest that there are particular factors which can cause ethical human beings to forego their moral code? Does he, likewise, suggest that there are some influences that keep a person’s moral code intact, even when the person’s survival is threatened?
5. Why does the author make it so that the boy is born after the apocalypse and not before?
6. Why does he decide to make this boy—who has only had experience with the post-apocalyptic world—maintain a desire to help others in need, despite his adverse circumstances? Why does this boy continue to trust?
7. What is the author trying to say to us by putting this kind of boy in the middle of this kind of horror? As you explain, be sure to give examples of the boy’s altruistic character.
8. How would you describe the relationship between the boy and his father?
9. Does the father always tell the boy the truth? Does the boy believe what his father tells him?
10. What kind of pretense exists between the father and the son? Is the pretense damaging to their relationship and their survival? Or…is the pretense necessary for their survival? How does such pretense also, ironically, demonstrate the powerful love that exists between them?

**Some additional ideas to consider when making annotations for *The Road*:**

* 1. **Ambiguity**
     1. Ambiguity exists when meaning is doubtful or uncertain.
     2. What aspects of the text (characterization, setting, plot, theme…) do you find ambiguous? Why?
     3. What may be the author’s purpose in creating this ambiguity?
     4. What effect does ambiguity have on the reader?
     5. How does ambiguity contribute to the overall meaning of the text?
  2. **Imagery**
     1. Imagery is language which evokes a picture or creates a sensation of a person, a thing, a place, or an experience. Imagery is often created by the use of similes, metaphors, personification, allusion, hyperbole, understatement, and other figurative language devices. Imagery often appeals to one or more of the five senses.
     2. What images do you see/hear/smell/taste/touch?
     3. What colors do you see/not see?
     4. What images are describe but not present?
     5. What is the author’s purpose in creating those particular images?
     6. How do those images contribute to the overall meaning of the text?
     7. What impact/effect do the images have on the reader?
  3. **Setting**
     1. Setting includes the time and location in which a story takes place. It is often used to create conflict, atmosphere and mood, and character.
     2. What do you know/not know about the setting?
     3. How does the setting impact the overall meaning?
     4. What is the author’s purpose with the setting?
     5. What impact/effect does the setting have on the reader?
  4. **Morality** 
     1. Morality involves the conformity to the rules of right or ethical conduct.
     2. How does one find good in an evil situation?
     3. Is a person completely good or completely evil?
     4. What is the author’s message regarding morality and humanity?

**The four ways to read a text:** (These levels are listed from least complex to most complex reading level)

* 1. Linguistic
     1. Linguistic reading is largely *descriptive*. We are noting what is in the text and naming its parts for possible use in the next stage of reading.
     2. Readers pay especially close attention to the surface linguistic elements of the text – that is, to aspects of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. You might also note such things as figures of speech or any other features which contribute to the writer’s individual style.
  2. Semantic
     1. Semantic reading is *cognitive*. That is, we need to understand what the words are telling us – both at a surface and maybe at an implicit level.
     2. Readers take account at a deeper level of what the words mean – that is, what information they yield up, what meanings they denote and connote.
  3. Structural
     1. Structural reading is *analytic*. We must assess, examine, sift, and judge a large number of items from within the text in their relationships to each other.
     2. Readers note the possible relationships between words within the text – and this might include items from either the linguistic or semantic types of reading.
  4. Cultural
     1. Cultural reading is *interpretive*. We offer judgments on the work in its general relationship to a large body of cultural material outside it.
     2. Readers note the relationship of any elements of the text to things outside it. These might be other pieces of writing by the same author, or other writings of the same type by different writers. They might be items of social or cultural history, or even other academic disciplines which might seem relevant, such as philosophy or psychology.

What should I look for when I read?

* 1. Grammar
     1. Syntax—the ordering of words into meaningful verbal patterns such as phrases, clauses, and sentences (construction, structure, length)
  2. Vocabulary
     1. Diction—a writer’s choice of words, phrases, sentence structures, and figurative language which combine to help create meaning
     2. Denotation—the dictionary meaning of a word
     3. Connotation—associations and implications that go beyond the literal meaning of a word, which derive from how the word has been commonly used and the associations people make with it
  3. Figures of Speech/Literary Devices
     1. Rhetorical devices used to give decorations and imaginative expression to literature such as simile and metaphor
     2. Devices commonly used in literature to give added depth to the work, such as imagery or symbolism or characterization
  4. Tone
     1. The author’s attitude toward the subject/audience/characters as revealed in the manner of the writing
     2. Can be created by diction, syntax, imagery, point of view…
  5. Style
     1. The author’s particular choice and combination of all the features of writing which creates a recognizable and distinctive manner of writing

**Sample annotation chart, in MLA format, for you to use as a guide:**

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Mrs. Pattisall-Williams

AP English IV

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Annotations for *To A God Unknown*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Quote/Passage from Text**  **(exact words from the text with page numbers in MLA format)** | **Annotation**  **(your thoughts, words, ideas, and/or conclusions regarding the passage in the text)** |
| “ …Going to build under a tree? That’s not good…”  “…Is your house away from a tree?”  “Well no, that’s why I’m telling you…Many a night I’ve laid awake and listened to the wind and thought about a limb as big around as a barrel coming through the roof.” (10) | This seems to be some sort of *foreshadowing*. Why is the driver making such a big deal about whether or not Joseph builds under a tree? The driver’s house is under a tree and nothing has happened. It also creates a vivid image of a really large limb piercing the roof of the house during a storm with the use of the simile. |
| The frame of the house was standing, waiting for its skin, a square house crossed by inner walls to make four equal rooms. (16) | This is an example of *figurative language/personification*. Steinbeck is trying to suggest that the house will become a living breathing being. |
| The venerable tree was tufted with new, shiny leaves, glittering and yellow-green in the morning sunshine. (16) | Imagery and use of the word glittering—for what purpose? Is he trying to create a sense of newness? Is he suggesting happiness or a sense of harmony with nature? |
| …shining with moisture…damp with dew, sprinkled with fire. (16) | Again with the idea of shining and reflective—sparkling new day? |
| Three meadowlarks with yellow vests and light grew coats hopped near the tent stretching their beaks, friendly and curious…puffed their chests and raised their heads like straining prima donnas and burst into a rising ecstasy of song, then cocked their heads at Joseph to see whether he noticed or approved…(16) | Imagery and the color yellow—notice that he used yellow with the tree description above. Does yellow have a meaning? Money and wealth, spirituality, happiness? Interesting how he suggests that the birds look for Joseph’s approval, as if they are people. Makes me think of the scene from *Snow White*. In his novel *The Pearl*, he talks a lot about songs that join ideas of nature and humanity. Makes me think of a church hymn “Welcome Happy Day.” |
| …stood up…stretched…strong sunlight…hobbled horses hopped…(16) | Alliteration—usually seen in poetry—what is the purpose in including it in this piece of prose? Is he trying to create something poetic or song-like? |