

Dear Incoming Student of IB English A: Literature,

Congratulations on your acceptance into this rewarding and challenging course. We will be working together to understand, reflect on, and respond to a number of classic works of literature. Your work begins this summer!

In preparation for the upcoming academic year, please **purchase the following texts**:

<u>Author</u>	<u>Year One Texts</u>
Sophocles	<i>Oedipus the King (The Three Theban Plays</i> , Translator Robert Fagles, Penguin Classics)
William Shakespeare	<i>Hamlet</i> (Edited by Philip Edwards, Cambridge University Press)
Jane Austen	<i>Northanger Abbey</i> (Penguin Classics)
Henrik Ibsen	<i>The Wild Duck (Four Major Plays Vol. 1</i> , Translator Rolf Fjelde, Signet Classics)
Joseph Conrad	<i>Heart of Darkness</i> (Penguin Classics)
Virginia Woolf	<i>To the Lighthouse</i> (Penguin Classics)

THE SUMMER ASSIGNMENT

- 1. Read Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.** I recommend that you keep notes, annotate your texts, highlight significant passages, use post-its, or adopt your own system of recording your observations as you read. This will assist with class discussions and the completion of future assignments.
- 2. Read Aristotle's *Poetics* (excluding sections 20-21).** You can find an online version of Ingram Bywater's translation, that we will use in class, here: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6763/6763-h/6763-h.htm> .
- 3. After reading Aristotle's *Poetics*, answer the following questions:**
 - According to Aristotle, which are the constituent parts of tragedy? Provide a definition for each one of them.
 - Why does he consider plot (or fable/ myth) the most important element of tragedy?
 - Why does he subordinate character to plot?
 - What is the proper structure of the plot?
 - Why does he distinguish between character and thought (intellect)?
 - What are the separate parts into which tragedies were divided?
 - In constructing the "perfect tragedy," what are the circumstances that occasion fear and pity? What situations are NOT tragic?
 - Why should a tragedy observe the three classical unities of time, place, and action?
 - Which are the similarities and differences between tragedy and the epic?
 - What qualities should the tragic hero possess?
 - What kinds of recognition does Aristotle identify? Which does he consider the most effective?
 - How important is the chorus?
 - Do you believe that *Oedipus the King* is the ideal tragedy, according to Aristotle's understanding of the term? Substantiate your answers with examples from the text.
 - Do you believe that *Hamlet* exhibits the characteristics of tragedy as described by Aristotle? Substantiate your answer with examples from the text.

Your responses will be collected and checked at the beginning of the school year in September and will be used not only as the basis for our discussions on these works but also as your first major grade of the year. ☺

Please note that these are to be personal responses to the texts and should contain only your own thinking and observations. You will not need to consult any critical reviews (in print or online) and you will not receive credit for doing so. Later, we will be researching authors and their works, but for now, **your** thoughtful and critical ideas are what count!

Best wishes for a safe, happy, and productive summer!