

May 30, 2019

Dear Incoming Student of IB English A: Language and Literature:

As a student in the International Baccalaureate English program at the American Community Schools of Athens, you will be studying a wide range of challenging literature over the next two years. The literature and units of study all connect to the broad theme *The Individual and Society* and include smaller thematic units of the *Question of Identity*, the *Importance of Beliefs and Values*, and the *Importance of the Journey to the Plot and the Theme*.

Due to the intensive nature of this program, it is necessary that you have your own personal copy of each of the titles on the syllabus. Therefore, the English Department requires that you purchase the following books for the 2019-2020 school year:

Oedipus, the King, by Sophocles (this play may be purchased as a part of a collection of plays by the same playwright or purchased alone; any translation is acceptable)
A Raisin in the Sun, by Lorraine Hansberry
Iphigenia, Phaedra, and Athaliah by Jean Racine (*Penguin Classics*, translated by John Cairncross.)

The above works will form the basis for our study in this first year of the course.

The Summer Assignment

- Read *Oedipus, the King* and take several pages of notes using the **S C A S I** format (Setting, Characterization, Action, Style, Ideas). We suggest one page (minimum) for each heading – adding to your initial ideas as you work your way through this play.
- Choose a favorite passage from the play (30-40 lines maximum), type it out, and write a short response to it, explaining why you have chosen this particular passage, and how it relates to one (or more) of the themes: *Society and the Individual*, *Question of Identity*, the *Importance of Beliefs and Values*, and the *Importance of the Journey to the Plot and the Theme*. Maximum length of your response: 500 words.
- Notes, passages and 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 this work but also as your first major grade of the year. ☺

Please note that these are to be personal responses to the novel and should contain only your own thinking, observations and questions. You will not need to consult critical reviews of the novel (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!

We hope you will enjoy reading this play and we look forward to seeing you in September.

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

Ms. Evelyn Pittas
IB English Teacher
IB Group 1 Examiner

The SCASI Method

Setting: Where and when does it take place?

What is significant about the setting?

Characters: Who takes part? What does the reader / audience know about the characters at this moment in the play? What does this particular passage reveal, and how does it do so?

Action: What happens? How does the action in this scene fit in with the play / novel as a whole? What new information do we learn here? How does this affect our **understanding**?

Style: How does it happen? What literary devices does the author insist on, and how do they affect our understanding?

Ideas: What conclusions can we draw from all of the above? What themes emerge in this passage? How do they compare with those in the rest of the play / novel? What is the author trying to do in this passage? How does s/he succeed?