

## Ninth Grade Summer Reading Assignment

BOOK: *Iliad*, by Homer

ASSIGNMENT: Your summer assignment is to read the first six books of Homer's *Iliad*, and to annotate each book as you read it.

We also ask you to answer each of the following questions in 1-2 well-formed paragraphs, quoting from the text at least one time and as it seems necessary. Unless you have an Educational Support plan that makes specific allowances to type, **handwrite your answers skipping every other line.**

The annotated text and your carefully written answers to each question are to be submitted to the teacher at the beginning of class on the first day of class. Your teacher will likely instruct you as to the specific procedure for how to turn in the assignment.

As each question is paired with one section of the assigned reading, it may be most beneficial to read each question before the relevant section and then to write your answer to the question before continuing on in the next assigned section of your reading. Focusing on the offered question may help you know better what to annotate and how.

1. Toward the conclusion of Book I, Achilles asks his mother Thetis for a favor, he says,

. . .go and sit beside him [Zeus], grasp his knees . . .  
persuade him, somehow, to help the Trojan cause,  
to pin the Achaeans back against their ships,  
trap them round the bay and mow them down.  
So all can reap the benefits of their king –  
so even mighty Atrides can see how mad he was  
to disgrace Achilles, the best of the Achaeans! (Book I, ll. 484-490)

Why does Achilles want Atrides to “see how mad he was”? What has Atrides done “to disgrace Achilles” and why has he done it?

2. After Agamemnon's disastrous command, it's Odysseus who keeps the allies from abandoning the beach. His main opponent in this venture is one man, Thersites, who argues

. . .No, my soft friends, wretched excuses –  
women, not men of Achaea! Home we go in our ships!  
Abandon him her ein Troy to wallow in all his prizes –  
he'll see if the likes of us have propped him up or not. (Book II, ll. 274-77)

What is Thersites suggesting here? What is Odysseus' argument against it?

3. In Book III, we encounter Helen for the first time, introduced to us in the following lines as

. . .Helen in her rooms . . .  
weaving a growing web, a dark red folding robe,  
working into the web the endless bloody struggles  
stallion-breaking Trojans and Argives armed in bronze  
had suffered all for her at the god of battle's hands. (Book III, ll. 150)

Helen is clearly, if artistically, fixated on this war. What is Helen's involvement in the war? How do the people in the city feel about her? How does Priam feel about her? How does she feel about herself?

4. At the opening of Book IV, there is a counsel of the gods, and an argument breaks out between Zeus, the father of gods, and Hera, his wife. Zeus describes her as "insatiable" and asks,

. . .How great are the pains that Priam and Priam's sons have heaped on *you*  
that you rage on, relentless, forever bent on razing  
the well-built heights of Troy? (Book IV, ll. 37-40)

What is revealed in this conversation about the gods' involvement in this war? How does their eventual decision affect the Trojan War?

5. As the war restarts, Diomedes, a hero on the Greek side, is singled out as especially worthy of divine attention. The book opens,

Then Pallas Athena granted Tydeus' son Diomedes  
strength and daring – so the fighter would shine forth  
and tower over the Argives and win himself great glory. (Book V, ll. 1-3)

What does Diomedes accomplish across this section? How do his accomplishments further reveal the role of the gods in this war and the relationship between the gods and mankind?

6. When Hector returns to Troy to find his brother, Paris, he encounters three figures: Priam, his father, Hecuba, his mother, and Andromache, his wife. All three figures request he stay in Troy. Andromache's appeal may, in the end, seem the most convincing, as she pleads,

You, Hector – you are my father now, my noble mother,  
a brother, too, and you are my husband, young and warm and strong!  
Pity me, please! Take your stand on the rampart here.  
before you orphan your son and make your wife a widow. (Book VI, ll. 508-12)

Why does Hector refuse these requests to stay? What reasons does he give? What do these reasons suggest about his character, about what he values?

## Tenth Grade Summer Reading Assignment

BOOK: *The Discarded Image*, by C. S. Lewis

BACKGROUND: *The Discarded Image* is based on a series of introductory lectures that C.S. Lewis gave while he was a professor of medieval literature at the University of Oxford. Because their purpose was to give students a basic understanding of the medieval worldview before diving into reading medieval literature proper, this book provides the perfect introduction to our own study of the Middle Ages.

ASSIGNMENT: Think of the text as a series of lectures, instead of treating it as one continuous narrative. Read a chapter, then stop, reflect, and answer the question ascribed to that chapter with a short response (3-4 sentences) on a separate piece of paper. Once you have done that, feel free to move on to the next “lecture” (chapter). Unless you have an Educational Support plan that makes specific allowances to type, **handwrite your answers skipping every other line.**

Do not feel as though you need to understand every reference Lewis makes – many of the texts he mentions are ones we will encounter over the course of our year – but rather, focus on attempting to understand the Medieval Mind and how it differs from our own Modern perspective of the world.

**Chapter 1:** Explain what Lewis means when he refers to “the overwhelmingly bookish and clerkly character of the Middle Ages.”

**Chapter 2:** If the medieval Model being outlined by Lewis primarily influenced poets, what classes/groups of people were less intellectually interested in it? Why?

**Chapter 3:** Summarize the importance of **one** of the four Classical sources Lewis elucidates in this chapter: (a) Cicero’s ‘Dream of Scipio’, (b) the works of Lucan, (c) the works of Statius, or (d) Apuleius’s ‘On the God of Socrates’.

**Chapter 4:** Why is it often difficult to tell whether authors writing during the “Seminal Period” were Pagans or Christians?

**Chapter 5:** After reading the entire chapter, take Lewis’s advice. “Go out on a starry night and walk about for half an hour trying to see the sky in terms of the old cosmology.” How does imagining the cosmos as the medieval did (the overall structure, luminosity of the heavens, music of the spheres, influence and personalities of planetary beings, etc.) change the way you think about the universe and our place in it?

**Chapter 6:** How was the medieval idea of “Fairy” different from the nursery-rhyme version of fairies we commonly think of today?

**Chapter 7:** Choose **one** of the following questions to answer:

- When considering the sections on medieval geography and zoology, how does what the medieval *knew* to be true (i.e. the “facts,” as we understand them) differ from what they *said* about these subjects (as in the *mappemounde* or medieval bestiaries)? What accounts for that difference?
- Describe the structure of the tripartite (three-part) soul and the function of each part.
- What is the medieval understanding of history, and how does it differ from the classical understanding?

**Chapter 8:** How do the Model and the medieval faith in *auctors* contribute to Lewis’s claim that “a certain humility [is] the overall characteristic of medieval art”?

## Eleventh Grade Summer Reading Assignment

### OVERVIEW:

\*\*The OVERVIEW is merely here to help you if you need a bit of help understanding. If you want to read this, it might help you understand the plot and purpose of the book, but does include some plot SPOILERS\*\*

Moliere takes on the religious hypocrisy of his time and place in his humorous play *Tartuffe*. The play opens with a scene that includes every member of a noble French family *except* its head, Orgon. The family members sidestep and respond to Orgon's mother as she criticizes all of their innocent behavior while lauding the current guest of the household, Tartuffe. It quickly becomes apparent that Orgon has failed to bring order and stability to his house and spends all of his time fawning over a religious hypocrite and conman. The play includes a thwarted marriage or two, a lost – and recovered – fortune, and just a little bit of political intrigue. Additionally, much humor is provided through the physical staging of the play, the saucy housemaid, and the witty dialogue. Not to fear, all order is restored at the last minute by the wisdom and grace of King Louis XIV – an unquestionable example of *deus ex machina*.

*Tartuffe* is placed firmly in the time period of the absolutist monarchs of Europe, and also inches us further along in the development of the modern mind. While Moliere himself received the patronage of the “divinely appointed” Louis XIV, at its heart, this play poses serious questions about the nature of authority and its responsibilities. (We will talk at length about Absolutist Monarchs and Louis XIV once you return in August!) This play introduces the conversation of the breakdown of paternalism and deference that prevails in the Medieval Worldview and is slowly being dismantled in the early Modern Age. Our characters are quite active in their rebellion against the destructive foolishness of the “king” (the patriarch, Orgon). Considering this, *Tartuffe* allows for further conversation about seeing the reality of things instead of what you want to see – a conversation we will have repeatedly and at length this year in Omnibus.

Furthermore, this play introduces two ideas that will permeate the rest of this year of Omnibus. Firstly, this play (as revealed by the author himself) is a direct attack against the religious hypocrisy Moliere was seeing in France. Moliere masterfully portrays Orgon as the foolish man easily taken in by Tartuffe's showy piety; we cringe every single time Orgon proclaims his loyalty to the slithering conman. However, Moliere also uses Tartuffe to educate his audience about the danger of wolves in sheep's clothing. We see Tartuffe is able to manipulate Orgon by infusing his lies with elements of the truth, and he is largely successful because of a willful ignorance on Orgon's part and a refusal to take his duties as *Pater* of the house seriously. Indeed, he wants all the accolades of the head of the household without the burden of acting wisely. We as readers are left equally disgusted by the hypocrisy itself but the characters who insist on being ignorant of it. Students should read Moliere's own preface to this work in order to more clearly see how he is using comedy to correct the vices he sees in this world. Secondly, Moliere uses his play to proclaim the virtue and effectiveness of calm and cool reason. Cleante, of course, seems almost a mouthpiece for the playwright as he makes

speech after speech urging Orgon, Tartuffe, Damis, and the rest to act honestly, rationally, and wisely and “strip off the mask and learn what virtue means/ And carefully avoiding each extreme,/ Be slower in conferring your esteem” (V. iii. 1622-5). It must be noted that play overtly criticizing religious hypocrisy written by a non-Christian author might easily be mistaken for a treatise against organized religion, but that is not Moliere’s main point here. Indeed, Cleante himself gives an impassioned plea to Orgon not to despise all religious people because he was betrayed by only one of them. He leaves his readers instead with a warning against blind obedience and zealous impulsivity.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS:

**Orgon:** Head of an aristocratic French family. He has recently invited a near stranger, Tartuffe, to live with him and his family in his home.

**Elmire:** Orgon’s second wife, and stepmother to Damis and Marianne

**Damis:** Orgon’s rash and passionate son

**Marianne:** Orgon’s (initially) obedient daughter who is in love with Valere

**Valere:** Marianne’s love interest. Their match has previously been blessed by Orgon, but is now at risk.

**Cleante:** Elmire’s brother – whose reason and good sense is too oft ignored.

**Tartuffe:** A stranger who has entered the household. His claimed first priority is his piety and enforcing the piety of those around him.

**Dorine:** The family’s servant who has not exactly mastered the art of obedience or deference.

**Madame Pernelle:** Orgon’s mother, and Tartuffe’s biggest fan.

### THINGS TO NOTE:

This play is written in rhymed couplets . . .so it does sound a bit like a play written entirely in the style of Dr. Seuss. As such, it can be read quite quickly – but **be alert!!** If you read too quickly you might miss (1) crucial plot points and (2) some really hilarious lines! It is a short play, so take the time to slow down and read carefully.

In the French theater of the time, Acts and Scenes function differently. The scene changes *every time someone enters or leaves the room*, and the Acts function more like a Scene would in a more modern play. As such, this play is more similar to the structure and format of a One Act Play.

A lot of the humor of this play involves Dramatic Irony – when the audience knows something the characters on stage do not. Keep this in mind as you read and try to envision the action of the play actually being staged and acted.

## ASSIGNMENT:

Unless you have an Educational Support plan that makes specific allowances to type, **handwrite your answers skipping every other line.**

STEP 1: Read Moliere's "Petition to the King," on the last page of the packet.

STEP 2: Respond to the following questions in 1-2 sentences.

1. According to Moliere's "Petition to the King," what does Moliere think is "the duty of comedy"?
2. Why has there been criticism of *Tartuffe*, and how does Moliere respond to the charges?

STEP 3: Read Moliere's *Tartuffe*.

STEP 4: Respond to **5 of the 6** of the following questions. Your responses should be thoughtful and complete without being overly long. When appropriate, include quotations from the text to support your ideas. Most answers should be about 1–2 paragraphs in length.

1. Reread Cleante's speeches in I.v (pages 261-3). What figurative language is Cleante using? What picture is he painting and why? Based on this speech (and all of Act I), what do you think is Moliere's opinion of Christianity? Of the current church?
2. In Act II Scene 1, Orgon insists that Marianne declare her fondness for Tartuffe and her joy at taking him as her husband, but she replies, "But that's not true, I'm sure you realize./ Why do you want me to tell a pack of lies?" Orgon, in another stunning act of obtuseness, says "The thing is, though, you see, I want it to be true,/ And doing what I say should be enough for you." (449-452)

Here we can see that Orgon has a rather perverted idea of his authority in the household; he seems to think that his mere *desire* for something to be true makes it so, and as head of the house he is allowed to insist upon everyone else acts in light of this "truth" as well.

Is this a true and virtuous representation of the hierarchy of the medieval and early modern world? Why or why not? Does the hierarchal structure/Great Chain of Being perpetuate more virtue or more vice?

3. As Act III unfolds, the people of Orgon's household plot to save Marianne from marrying Tartuffe and to expose Tartuffe for who he really is. Elmire's plan involves scheming and manipulation, but is foiled by Damis' rash insistence on unmasking the whole truth immediately. Whose plan is better? More virtuous? More effective?

4. Spend some time tracking the ways in which Moliere communicates through the following paradox:
  - a. In how many instances does Orgon insist on his authority?
  - b. In those instances what does he base his claim to authority on?
  - c. In those instances, what are his real motives (expressed or unexpressed)?
  - d. How do these motives convict him of acting like a child (i.e. someone who needs to be ruled by an authority)?

What might Moliere be trying to communicate about the larger question of authority in this time?

5. The ending of *Tartuffe* sees order restored because of the wisdom and patronage of the king and included a 50-line ode to this monarch. Some have called this use of *deus ex machina* a cheap and easy ending. Do you agree? Why might Moliere have chosen this ending? Do you agree with his choice?
6. Now that you have read *Tartuffe*, what do you think about his theory of comedy? Is it virtuous? Is it effective? Additionally, where do you see this type of comedy being used today (think TV, movies, music, social media, etc.) and do you think it is effective? Virtuous?

**First Petition**

**PRESENTED TO THE KING**

**Concerning the Comedy *Tartuffe***

SIRE:

Whereas the duty of comedy is to correct men by amusing them, I felt that, being in that profession, I could do no better than to attack, by ludicrous portrayals, the vices of my age; and since hypocrisy is certainly on the commonest, most disagreeable, and most dangerous, the thought occurred to me, Sire, that I should render no small service to all the upstanding people of your kingdom, if I wrote a comedy which would discredit hypocrites and properly expose all the studied grimaces of those excessively pious folk, all the covert rascalities of those counterfeits of piety who try to trap men with spurious zeal and sophisticated charity.

I made this comedy, Sire, with, I believe, all the possible care and circumspection demanded by the delicate nature of the subject, and, the better to preserve the esteem and respect we owe to the truly pious, I differentiated as well as I could between them and the character I had to deal with. I have left no ambiguity, I have removed whatever could confuse good with evil, and in this portrait I have used only clear colors and essential traits that make immediately manifest a true, out-and-out hypocrite.

Nevertheless, all my precautions have come to naught. They took advantage, Sire, of the susceptibility of your heart in matters of religion, and they were able to overcome you in the only way by which you are vulnerable, I mean by your respect for sacred things. The *tartuffes* have had the underhanded skill to find grace in the eyes of your Majesty, in short the originals have had the copy suppressed, no matter how innocent nor how true the likeness.

Although the suppression of this work was a severe blow, nevertheless my misfortune was softened by your Majesty's explanation of this matter; and I believed, Sire, that you relieved me of all grounds for complaint by your kindness in saying that your Majesty found nothing to criticize in the play that you forbade me to present in public.

But despite this splendid declaration from the greatest as well as the most enlightened king in the world, despite the added approval of his Eminence the Papal League [1] and the great majority of our prelates, who all, after my private readings of the work, have been in agreement with the sentiments of your Majesty; despite all that, I say, we see a book composed by the curate of – [2] which brazenly contradicts all that august testimony. Your Majesty speaks for nothing, and his Eminence the Legate and the prelates give judgment for nothing; my comedy – though not seen – is diabolical, and diabolical, my brain; I am a devil dressed in flesh and clothed like a man, a freethinker, impious, worthy of an exemplary execution. Public burning would not suffice to expiate my offense, that would be letting me off too lightly; this worthy gentleman is careful not to stop there in his charitable zeal; he wants me to get no mercy from God; he insists that I be damned – the matter is settled.

This book, Sire, was presented to your Majesty; and, surely, you can imagine how disagreeable it is for me to be exposed every day to those gentlemen's insults, how much wrong such calumnies will

do me in the world if they must be tolerated, and, finally, how much it is in my interest to be purged of its deceit and to make known to the public that my comedy is nothing like what is claimed. I shall not say, Sire, what I should like to request for my reputation and to justify to all the innocence of my work. Enlightened kings like yourself have no need to have our wishes pointed out; the see, like God, what we need, and know better than we what they should grant to us. It is sufficient to place my interests in the hands of your Majesty and to await respectfully whatever it may please your Majesty to ordain.

#### NOTES

1. The Papal Legate, Cardinal Chigi, nephew of Pope Alexander VII and his ambassador extraordinary, had heard a reading of *Tartuffe* while at Fontainebleau.
2. A certain Pierre Roulle, curate of Saint-Barthelemy, had published a vitriolic pamphlet against Moliere. The expressions used by Moliere are taken directly from this work. As a result of Moliere's petition, Roulle was made to feel that his work of supererogation was not appreciated.
3. Before leaving to take personal command of his armies in Flanders, Louis XIV had apparently given Moliere verbal permission to present his revised version of the play. After the first performance, the police forbade its further presentation. The order came from Guillaume de Lamoignon, First President of the Paris *parlement*, who, unbeknownst to Moliere, was member of the Company of the Holy Sacrament.

## Twelfth Grade Summer Reading Assignment

BOOK: *To Kill A Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee

ASSIGNMENT: Pick 3 questions. Answer them using complete sentences and good rhetorical form. Make your thesis and your conclusions clear. Unless you have an Educational Support plan that makes specific allowances to type, **handwrite your answers skipping every other line.**

1. Who is the hero of the story? Support your answer.
2. Explain the title of the book. Is it a good title? Why or why not? Support your answer.
3. What does this book add to your understanding of the Civil Rights movement? Be specific, listing and explaining examples.
4. *To Kill A Mockingbird* portrays several characters that are racially progressive. However, there have been many who criticize the book for still being racist itself. Do you agree with this criticism? Why or why not? Support your answer.
5. Why does Atticus consider Mrs. Dubose his hero? Do you agree with his assessment? Why or why not? How should this changed how we see people in our own lives?
6. Which characters change the most in this story? Which change the least? Give evidence to support your claims. Why did the author choose the characters they did to either change or stay the same? What purpose did it solve?
7. Why did Atticus put his reputation, his safety, and his children at risk to defend Tom Robinson? Did he make the right decision, knowing what it almost cost himself and his family? Support your answer.