

GT/GS/AP Summer Reading Assignment 2017 (English III, English Language and Composition)

Synopsis: Incoming GT/GS/AP students are required to read **two** books over the summer. Students will be required to write an out of class essay during the first two weeks of school; the topic options are listed below.

****This assignment will be due the second week of school****

Each student **MUST** do the following:

- 1) Choose **ONE** book from the list below to read.
- 2) Read Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*. Be sure to also answer all associated questions and make all indicated notations. ****This is a required text****
- 3) Select **ONE** of the essay topics listed below. **BOTH** novels must be used as evidence to support your response. Direct quotations are expected.

Essay Topics:

- 1) Consider the distinct perspectives expressed in the following statements:

If you develop the absolute sense of certainty that powerful beliefs provide, then you can get yourself to accomplish virtually anything, including those things that other people are certain are impossible

William Lyon Phelps, American educator, journalist, and professor (1865-1943)

I think we ought always to entertain our opinions with some measure of doubt. I shouldn't wish people dogmatically to believe any philosophy, not even mine.

Bertrand Russell, British author, mathematician, and philosopher (1872-1970)

In a well-organized essay, take a position on the relationship between certainty and doubt. Support your arguments with appropriate evidence and examples.

- 2) American essayist and social critic H.L. Mencken (1880-1956) wrote, "The average man does not want to be free. He simply wants to be safe." In a well-written essay, examine the extent to which Mencken's observation applies to society, supporting your position with appropriate evidence.
- 3) "Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which in prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant." –Horace

Consider this quotation about adversity from the Roman poet Horace. Then write an essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies Horace's assertion about the role that adversity (financial or political hardship, danger, misfortune, etc.) plays in developing a person's character. Support your argument with appropriate evidence from your reading, observation, or experience.

Choose **ONE** from the following book list:

Devil in the White City by Eric Larsen

A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey

Sula- Toni Morrison

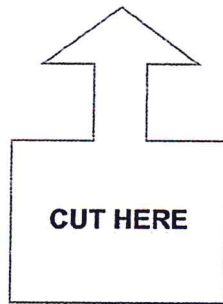
The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan

The Handmaid's Tale- Margaret Atwood

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Truman Capote's In Cold Blood

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- *tension/foreshadowing*
- *language you find evocative*
- *characterization/foils*

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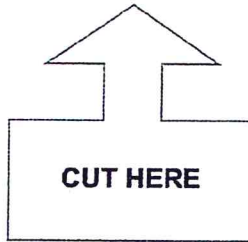
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In Cold Blood Study Questions

BOOKMARK: For the following, answer the questions in complete sentences and **IN YOUR OWN HANDWRITING.**

The Last to See Them Alive

1. What effect is achieved through the use of the *simile* comparing grain elevators to Greek temples?
2. What is the purpose of the opening section of the text ending with “and as strangers”? What details are discussed and why?
3. According to the text, what is Mr. Clutter’s only reason for “*disquiet*” in his life?
4. What aspect of River Valley Farm is Mr. Clutter’s pride and joy?
5. How do the *narrative voice* and the *sentence structure* of the text change when the story shifts from descriptions of the Clutter family to descriptions of Dick Hickock and Perry Smith?
6. How do comparisons between Perry’s physique on the one hand and images of weightlifters and jockeys on the other hand help establish Perry’s physical challenges?
7. How does Perry’s obsession with foreign countries and sunken treasures symbolize his social status as an outcast?
8. What is the purpose of introducing the Ashida family and their relationship to the Clutters?
9. What is the most significant element of Perry and Dick’s big “score”? What does their agreement on this element foreshadow?
10. What do Holcomb citizens mean when they describe Kenyon as a boy who “*lives in a world of his own*”?
11. What is the biggest challenge to the friendship between Perry Smith and Willie-Jay?
12. What is the primary motivation behind Perry’s decision to meet with Dick and become a part of the *big “score”*?
13. What is Dick’s number one motivation for persuading Perry to become part of his plan to rob the Clutter home?



14. As the Holcomb community gathers at Hartman’s Café, what is the initial speculation about the killer or killers?

15. How does initial speculation about the murders change the *atmosphere* within the Holcomb community?

Persons Unknown

1. What aspects of the crime scene as observed by Al Dewey examining photographs *foreshadow* the eventual capture of the suspects?
2. How do the opening pages of this section serve to establish *In Cold Blood* as an important forerunner of the True Crime genre?
3. What effect is achieved through the *simile* that likens Dick’s confidence to a “*kite that needed reeling in*”?
4. What does Susan Kidwell find most disturbing about her visit to the funeral parlor? Why?
5. What is significant about the way Dick gains the store clerk’s confidence when he attempts to pay with a check? How is this ironic?
6. What conclusion does Alvin Dewey draw about the murderers when he studies the crime scene photos once again? What leads him to his conclusion?
7. What does Perry’s behavior at the beach and swimming pool reveal about his character?
8. Why does Capote include the lengthy letter written by Perry’s father? What *theme* does the letter reinforce?
9. What is Perry’s sister’s motivation for suggesting that “*we all were very adaptable*” in her letter?
10. How are police investigators able to determine the order in which the Clutter family members were murdered?
11. How are Dick and Perry planning to return to the United States? What does their plan reveal about their state of mind following the Clutter murders?

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Answer

1. What event in the opening pages of the section “*Answer*” turns the investigation around?
2. Why might Dick’s father propose that Dick “*wasn’t the same boy*” after he injured his head in a car accident?
3. According to Mr. Hickock, what was unusual about Dick when he returned from his alleged trip to Fort Scott? Why is this observation significant?
4. What incident occurs on the road from Mexico to the United States that Perry calls a “*goddam miracle*”?
5. What does the nickname Perry has given himself reveal about his character and his self-image?
6. According to Mrs. Johnson, what *paradox* exists in Perry’s character?
7. How is investigator Dewey able to conceal a possible breakthrough in the case from the general public? Why does he consider it to be so important to keep new details of the case hidden?
8. Why is Perry disturbed by a newspaper account he reads when he and Dick arrive in Miami, Florida?
9. To what extent does Dick’s sexuality contribute to his status as a societal outsider? What is Perry’s reaction to Dick’s sexuality?
10. What *tone* characterizes Perry’s attitude when he is being interrogated by police after being apprehended in Las Vegas?



11. According to Perry, what is his only regret about the night of the murders?

The Corner

1. What is Mrs. Meier’s first impression of Perry Smith?
2. What changes does Perry want to make to his initial statement to police? What is his motivation for making the changes? What does this suggest about his character?
3. What is significant about Perry’s reaction to the letter written by Don Cullivan?
4. What is the symbolic significance of the *big yellow bird*?
5. According to Dick’s written statement composed in prison for his psychiatrist, what ultimately was Dick’s motivation for invading the Clutter place?
6. For what purpose does Capote include Dr. Jones’s lengthy report, even though it was not admitted into evidence during the trial?
7. Why does Perry go on a hunger strike? Why does he eventually change his mind and end his hunger strike?
8. What strategy does Dick pursue in order to appeal his conviction?
9. What effect is achieved by the *alliteration* in the closing sentence?