

11th Grade Summer Reading Assignment: 2020-2021

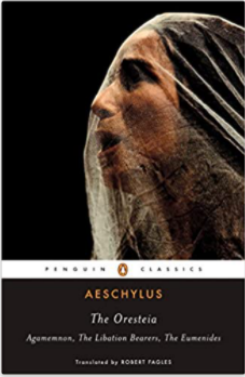
The following is your summer reading assignment for English next year, with me, Mr. Ruedi. Please feel free to contact me this summer if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached by e-mail at hruedi@uplifteducation.org.

Read both of the following texts before school next year.

Summer Reading Texts:

The Oresteia by Aeschylus (Robert Fagles translation required)

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The Oresteia: Agamemnon; The Libation Bearers; The Eumenides Paperback – February 7, 1984

by Aeschylus (Author), Robert Fagles (Editor, Translator, Introduction), & 1 more

★★★★☆ 342 ratings

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In the *Oresteia* Aeschylus addressed the bloody chain of murder and revenge within the royal family of Argos. As they move from darkness to light, from rage to self-governance, from primitive ritual to civilized institution, their spirit of struggle and regeneration becomes an everlasting song of celebration. In *Agamemnon*, a king's decision to sacrifice his daughter and turn the tide of war inflicts lasting damage on his family, culminating in a terrible act of retribution; *The Libation Bearers* deals with the aftermath of Clytemnestra's regicide, as her son Orestes sets out to avenge his father's death; and in *The Eumenides*, Orestes is tormented by supernatural powers that can never be appeased. Forming an elegant and subtle discourse on the emergence of Athenian democracy out of a period of chaos and

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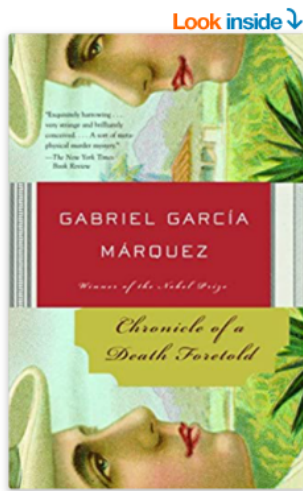
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Read the play *The Oresteia/The Oresteian Trilogy* in its entirety. This means you are reading three plays that all make up *The Oresteia: Agamemnon, The Libation Bearers, and The Eumenides*. We will be discussing and analyzing each play in class. **You will have a graded discussion and a reading test first quarter over this text.** I recommend annotating the text. Marking and annotating allows the active reader to ask questions, comment on meaning, and **mark events and passages he or she wants to revisit.**

Pre-Reading before *The Oresteia*:

The Oresteia trilogy was written by Greek playwright Aeschylus in 5th century BCE. The trilogy tells the cursed story of the house of Atreus and the way the curse affects each family member. The first play, *Agamemnon*, follows the return of King Agamemnon to his home after the Trojan War. He expects to find a 'welcome home party' waiting for him, but instead his wife and her new lover murder him upon his arrival. The second play, *The Libation Bearers*, follows Agamemnon's death and the consequences inherited by his children. His son Orestes feels compelled to avenge his father's death by killing his own mother. His mother's ghost commands terrible creatures called harpies to haunt her son until vengeance is paid for her death. The third play *The Eumenides* tells the story of Orestes handling the harpies and going to trial for killing his mother. The goddess Athena organizes the trial and plays a significant role in it. The trilogy deals heavily with conflicting understandings of justice and the nature of law.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold by Gabriel Garcia Marquez



Chronicle of a Death Foretold Paperback – October 7, 2003

by Gabriel García Márquez (Author), Gregory Rabassa (Translator)

★★★★☆ 1,247 ratings

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A man returns to the town where a baffling murder took place 27 years earlier, determined to get to the bottom of the story. Just hours after marrying the beautiful Angela Vicario, everyone agrees, Bayardo San Roman returned his bride in disgrace to her parents. Her distraught family forced her to name her first lover; and her twin brothers announced their intention to murder Santiago Nasar for dishonoring their sister.

Yet if everyone knew the murder was going to happen, why did no one intervene to stop it? The more that is learned, the less is understood, and as the story races to its inexplicable conclusion, an entire society—not just a pair of murderers—is put on trial.

Reading Assignment:

At the start of next year, you will respond to two essay questions (TEST GRADE) paralleling and analyzing major themes and elements in both works.

As you read, annotate:

- a. Read and annotate very carefully because we will be discussing and analyzing both novels in class. ***You will be able to use your annotated texts for a graded discussion first quarter.***
- b. Marking and annotating a text is like having a conversation with a book—it allows the reader to ask questions, comment on meaning, and mark passages to revisit.

How to Annotate:

- Make brief notes on the page or on a sticky note marking important plot events, narrative shifts, or themes, images, and details that form a pattern throughout the text (motif).
- Circle words that are unfamiliar or unusual—try to figure out the word's meaning through contextual clues and supplement with a dictionary.

Summer Reading Writing Assignment

Using your two summer reading texts, you will write an essay response to one of the following prompts in your first week back to school:

- What questions about power and gender roles has your study of two works of literature raised? Discuss the relationship between power and gender roles in two of the works you have studied.
- In what ways does the concept “freedom of choice” inform your reading in any two works you have studied?
- Compare how two works in your study have explored the themes of judgment and punishment, or disguise and deceit, or love and friendship, and with what effect.
- Explore the ways in which “chance” or “coincidence” is used in any two works of literature you have studied.
- What can a writer accomplish through the use of repetition? Respond with reference to two works you have studied.
- “Some works of literature are universal and timeless; others seem specific to one place and/or time.” In what ways do two works in your study explore this range of possibilities?
- Using two of the works you have studied, discuss how and to what effect writers have used exaggeration as a literary device.
- “Chronological order is the most convincing way to convey a story or an idea.” Comparing two of the works you have studied, agree or disagree with this statement.
- “Art is on the side of the oppressed.” Evaluate the means by which two works in your study either confirm or raise questions about the validity of this assertion.
- Some writers present a world view that is pessimistic and disorderly, while others present a world of hope and possibility. How, and to what extent, do writers reflect these views in two of the works you have studied?
- “It is the role of literature to challenge and confront the conventional values of a society.” In what ways, and to what extent, have conventional values been challenged in two works you have studied?
- “Memory feeds imagination.” To what effect has memory been used in two works you have studied?
- Repeated references to objects, actions or other features of literary works often lead to such aspects becoming symbolic in that work. Explain the ways at least two of the works you have studied have employed such symbolism.
- “To learn something often involves losing something.” Considering two works you have studied, explore the relationship between learning and sacrifice and the ways different works have chosen to incorporate such a relationship.

The Oresteia: Supplementary Support Materials

Character List:

Clytaemestra (pronounced kleye-tem-es-tra): Clytaemestra is the only character to appear in all three plays of the trilogy. She dominates the action of *Agamemnon* but has smaller roles in the other two plays. Many critics consider Clytaemestra the most impressive and fascinating woman in Greek tragedy. Her most important characteristic, as pointed out by the watchman in *Agamemnon*, is her "male strength of heart." She is proud, efficient, shrewd, and strong, and all these traits come into play when, practically unaided and without arousing suspicion, she plans and carries out a plot to commit murder. Indeed, Clytaemestra is so confident and so superior to those around her, including *Agamemnon*, that she often alludes to her plans more or less openly without fear of being detected. Clytaemestra is by far the strongest character in the play. This is most clearly demonstrated when, at various points, she forces *Agamemnon*, *Aegisthus*, and the Elders of Argos to bend to her will.

Orestes (pronounced or-es-tees): Orestes is the central figure of the trilogy. He is the main character of the second and third plays, and, though he does not appear in *Agamemnon*, he is mentioned frequently and his return home is predicted. Orestes' most important characteristic is his belief in the justice of his cause and his determination to carry out the command of *Apollo* despite the moral and emotional qualms he occasionally feels. After the slaying of Clytaemestra, Orestes is embittered and on the verge of madness, but he never doubts that he has done the right thing. Even years of torment by the *Furies* in *The Eumenides* do not weaken this belief. Thus, though his dilemma is real and frightening, Orestes is a one-dimensional character who cannot arouse real empathy. That *Aeschylus* intended this is shown in *The Eumenides*, where Orestes is turned into a human symbol in the great moral conflict that is fought out on stage between *Apollo*, as representative of *Zeus*, and the *Furies*, as representative of the primitive, pre-Olympian religion.

Electra: Electra does not have anything near the importance given her by other playwrights; *Aeschylus* uses her mainly to provide information for Orestes and to help strengthen his resolution by her presence. She has no real part in the plot to kill Clytaemestra and *Aegisthus*, and disappears early in *The Libation Bearers*, the only play of the trilogy in which she appears.

Agamemnon: *Agamemnon* is a powerful king, a great conqueror and leader of men, but as characterized by *Aeschylus* he has certain crucial weaknesses that lead to his downfall. *Agamemnon* is complacent, egotistical, and shallow. In his dramatic confrontation with Clytaemestra, *Agamemnon* blusters a bit and echoes some conventional religious sentiments, but he is easily trapped by her wily use of his own defects as weapons against him. Clytaemestra murders *Agamemnon* to avenge *Iphigenia* but would not have succeeded if his other sins — the desecration of the Trojan temples and his sacrilegious insolence in walking on the tapestry — had not aroused the wrath of the gods against him.

Aegisthus (pronounced ay-gis-thus): *Aegisthus* appears briefly in *Agamemnon*. Through an old enemy of *Agamemnon* and an accomplice in his murder, *Aegisthus* seems at base to be an ordinary man with no special attributes. He has common sense and some political ability but is no match for Clytaemestra, the woman whom he aids and eventually marries. It's clear that Clytaemestra is the real ruler of Argos, though she pays *Aegisthus* some deference for the sake of appearances since he is a man and therefore officially the king.

Apollo: God of the sun and prophecy. He appears as the defender of Orestes in *The Eumenides*.

Athene: Goddess of wisdom and war and patroness of Athens. In *The Eumenides*, she establishes the new court, casts the deciding vote at the trial of Orestes, and afterward placates the Furies.

Cassandra: The prophetess daughter of the king of Troy, she is the concubine of Agamemnon in Agamemnon. Her curse is that her prophecies are true, but no one believes her.

Cilissa: The former nurse of Orestes

A Herald: Announces the return of the army in Agamemnon.

Hermes: The messenger god and patron of travelers, a mute character in *The Eumenides*.

Pylades: The companion of Orestes

A Watchman Speaks the prologue of Agamemnon.

The Elders of Argos The chorus in Agamemnon.

Captive Serving Women The chorus in *The Libation Bearers*.

The Furies The chorus in *The Eumenides*. Ancient creatures, three goddesses of vengeance and retribution who punished men for crimes against the natural order. They were particularly concerned with homicide, unfilial conduct, offenses against the gods, and perjury.