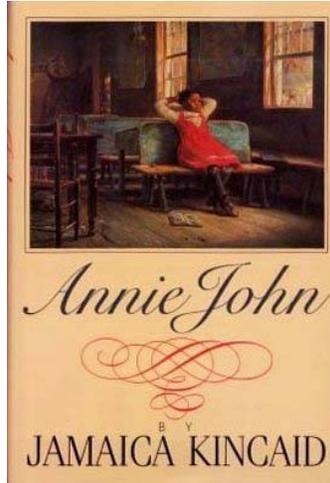


Honors 10 Summer Reading Assignment



Dear Incoming Sophomore,

Congratulations on your hard work and achievement after only one year in your high school career. This upcoming year is a great opportunity for you to further your goals and to continue to meet high standards in your future educational endeavors.

For summer reading, I am asking you to read Jamaica Kincaid's short novel, *Annie John*. Although you will find this book on many summer lists for middle school, do not be fooled by the size and reading level. It is filled with rich writing and important thematic issues.

While/after reading the book I am asking you to complete the two assignments below.

I. Dialectical Journal

What is a Dialectical Journal?

The term "Dialectic" means "using the process of question and answer to investigate the truth of a theory or opinion." The "dialectic" was the method the Greek philosopher, Socrates, used to teach his students how to be actively engaged in the struggle to obtain meaning from an unfamiliar and challenging work. A dialectical journal is a written conversation with yourself about a piece of literature that encourages the habit of reflective questioning. You will use a double-entry format to examine details of a passage and synthesize your understanding of the text.

It is a place to:

- Summarize and pose questions
- Write analysis and make connections
- Make inferences about characters, symbols, etc.
- Write analysis justifying an assertion
- Analyze elements of literature and author's craft

How should I set up my Dialectical Journal?

This is how you will set up each page:

Chapter #: Title goes here (the chapters are not titled, you will make this up)	
Text (Quotes)	Reactions and details
<p>Quote goes here – you may quote a phrase, sentence, or section of the text. Blend this quote into a sentence. Also include proper parenthetical documentation (page #)</p> <p>In this section, record quotes that contain unique examples of author’s style, figurative language, new vocabulary words, thematic moments, character and plot development, etc.</p>	<p>Your reaction goes here – be certain to work with author’s craft and literary elements.</p>

Example

Quote	Reaction
<p>At the very start of the book, the protagonist, Scout describes her hometown, “There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go . . . nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County. But it was a time of vague optimism for some of the people: Maycomb County had recently been told that it had nothing to fear but fear itself” (4).</p>	<p>Apparently Maycomb is a very slow, sleepy town that is pretty isolated from everything else. This seems to be especially true since they only have a “vague” notion of FDR’s speech (an allusion to the Great Depression of the 1930s – must be the era in which the story takes place) and there is “nothing” outside of Maycomb County. I wonder why they see the world this way – maybe people don’t travel because of the Depression or because that’s just not what people did. Also, knowing the book deals with racism, I can infer that this small town in the South is rather provincial and thus, narrow minded. This, I assume, will add to the conflict of the book.</p>

What else do I need to know?

- These passages should span the entire novel from the beginning to the end.
- You should choose 3 entries from each chapter.
- These journals must be typed and in MLA format.

II. ESSAY:

Choose one scene from *Annie John* that you feel truly encompasses the main idea of the entire book. Once you have chosen your scene, write about how that scene relates to the rest of the book. How are some of the novel's central themes illustrated in this scene? Your explanation of this scene will be your argument, and you will need to support it with evidence from the rest of the text.

You should choose from the thematic issues listed below.

Mother-Daughter Relationships

The mother-daughter relationship drives the plot in *Annie John* and is its primary theme. The difficulties and tensions in this relationship stem from Annie's inability to accept the fact that she is a separate self. Kincaid paints Annie's desire to remain united with her mother as an emotion shared by most girls of her age. Annie's classmates all commiserate with her essay about her fear of separation. Furthermore, the girls befriend one another in an effort to find substitutes for the maternal love that appears to be dissipating. As Annie ages, she finds herself caught between love and hatred for her mother, which drives her to be both a good student and a disobedient child. Again, the rationale behind her adolescent rebellion seems to be proffered as an explanation for a general psychological trend rather than merely a specific fictional phenomenon. The dynamics of mother-daughter relationships take up a prominent place in Jamaica Kincaid's work and have frequently appeared in her other novels such as *Lucy* and *The Autobiography of My Mother*.

Colonizers and Colonial Education

Antigua was colonized by the British until 1967 and remained a commonwealth in 1981. As *Annie John* takes place in the 1950s, it remains in the colonial period. Kincaid explores the colonial relationship particularly through her discussion of the school that Annie attends. It is run as a British institution and all the materials taught in the school deal with English literature, history, and culture. The girls dress in a formal British style and they are discouraged from engaging in local activities, such as calypso dancing in the playground. Annie's musing on the failure of the school to discuss the negative history of slavery and her delight in the imprisonment of Columbus highlight the ways in which the school teaches the students not to

question the history and social order that is being handed down to them. Annie excels in her school, which shows that she has learned all of the skills necessary to prove her intellectual and social worth in the colonial world. However, her spunky behavior behind the teachers' backs shows that her feisty Antiguan spirit still thrives within.

Gender Relations

Although Annie's father appears a gentle and reticent man, he serves as a testament to the unequal gender relations in Antigua. Annie's father is about thirty years older than his wife. He had numerous sexual affairs before marrying Annie's mother and the women with whom he slept frequently harass Annie's mother on the street. Now that he has his married life secured, he provides for the family while his wife takes care of his domestic and sexual needs. While as a man Annie's father could philander, Annie's mother interprets Annie's mere discussion with a group of boys as inappropriate sexual misconduct and calls her a "slut." With these two standards, it becomes clear that the behavior expected of men and women in Antigua are quite different. Although the women who curse at Annie's mother appear unfriendly, even Kincaid's depiction of them is sympathetic. They, after all, committed the same sexual act as Annie's father, but have been left in the difficult economic position of raising their children without a husband.

Things to think about:

- This book is not a “difficult” read. But with all literature, it does require time to fully appreciate and understand. Therefore, I highly recommend you DO NOT wait until the last minute to do this assignment.
- Journals and essay are due the first day back to school. Assignments must be complete to be accepted. There will be a **10 point deduction for each day late. Any assignment not turned in by the first Monday of school, will receive a zero.**
- As an honors student, I am hoping you have a natural curiosity and desire to learn. Enjoy the reading and the chance to showcase your insights on what you have read.
- I am always available for questions throughout the summer. If you have any questions or concerns, email me at tavaresm@northstonington.k12.ct.us
- Have a wonderful summer and I look forward to seeing you in the fall.

Best,
Mrs. Tavares