

Summer Reading Requirement 2010



**Sophomores
English 10/Regents**

You must read...

***Rebecca* by Daphne DuMaurier**

AND

Choose ONE (1) of the following also to read:

The Bean Trees

Pigs in Heaven

***The Poisonwood Bible* (an O'Neill favorite!)**

All by Barbara Kingsolver

In both cases, be prepared to discuss, write and analyze aspects of the novels. See reverse for guiding questions.

Guiding Questions

Rebecca:

Compare/contrast the two Mrs. de Winters

Characterize the relationship between Mr. de Winters and the protagonist.

Describe Beatrice.

Be able to explain the true history of the first Mrs. de Winters.

Why is Mrs. Danvers loyal to Mrs. de Winters?

How is this a Romantic novel? A Gothic novel?

Know all characters, conflicts, setting, plot, and themes.

The Bean Trees

1. *The Bean Trees* deals with the theme of being an outsider. In what ways are various characters outsiders? What does this suggest about what it takes to be an insider? How does feeling like an outsider affect one's life?
2. How and why do the characters change, especially Lou Ann, Taylor, and Turtle?
3. In many ways, the novel is "the education of Taylor Greer." What does she learn about human suffering? about love?
4. Analyze the "women's world" in which *The Bean Trees* takes place.
5. Explain how the struggles faced by the characters in the novel are inspiring.
6. Compare the adventurous character of Taylor to the character of Lou Ann, who is terrified of life.
7. Discuss the ways in which Taylor is a heroic character.
8. One of the novel's themes is the importance of community. Why is community valued?
9. Kingsolver is a poet. Analyze selected passages of description as poetic prose, paying attention to such elements as metaphor, simile, and imagery.
10. Compare the settings of Pittman County, Kentucky, and Tucson, Arizona, as Kingsolver describes them. How do these descriptions portray the moods of these places?
11. How is language important in *The Bean Trees*?

Pigs in Heaven

1. When Annawake first meets Taylor, she states the book's central problem this way: "There's the child's best interest and the tribe's best interest, and I'm trying to think of both things." What is Turtle's best interest -- in Taylor's view? in the tribe's view? in your view? Did the book change the way you might respond to such a case if you read about it in the newspaper? Do you think the events of the novel relate at all to the complexities of interethnic adoptions in general? Particularly in a racist society?
2. What motivates Taylor when she runs away? What motivates Annawake's pursuit of Taylor? How do you feel about these two women? In what ways are they similar? How do they change, and why?
3. In explaining why it's important for the tribe to get Turtle back, Annawake tells Alice, "We've been through a holocaust as devastating as what happened to the Jews, and we need to keep what's left of our family together" (Chp. 27, "Family Stories"). How does the novel go about

demonstrating the validity of this comparison? How do you feel about it? How should people living today deal with histories of oppression?

4. The title, *Pigs in Heaven*, refers to the Cherokee legend about the six bad boys that got turned into pigs before their mother's eyes. Annawake tells this story -- in two entirely different ways -- on page 87 and again on page 313. How does this story, in its two versions, demonstrate the book's theme, and Annawake's growth? In what other ways do pigs enter the story, as symbols of renegade individualism and community spirit?
5. How -- physically and spiritually -- does poverty affect people's lives? How does poverty affect Taylor? Does this novel offer a judgment on poor people? On our society's attitudes towards poor people?
6. The novel is divided into three sections: Spring, Summer, and Fall, written in English and Cherokee. What significance for you is there in the fact that the novel is structured according to the cycles of nature, ending during harvest, just short of winter?

The Poisonwood Bible

1. What are the implications of the novel's title phrase, the poisonwood bible, particularly in connection with the main characters' lives and the novel's main themes? How important are the circumstances in which the phrase comes into being?

2. How does Kingsolver differentiate among the Price sisters, particularly in terms of their voices? What does each sister reveal about herself and the other three, their relationships, their mother and father, and their lives in Africa? What is the effect of our learning about events and people through the sisters' eyes?

3. What do we learn about cultural, social, religious, and other differences between Africa and America? To what degree do Orleanna and her daughters come to an understanding of those differences? Do you agree with what you take to be Kingsolver's message concerning such differences?

4. Why do you suppose that Reverend Nathan Price is not given a voice of his own? Do we learn from his wife and daughters enough information to formulate an adequate explanation for his beliefs and behavior? Does such an explanation matter?

5. What differences and similarities are there among Nathan Price's relationship with his family, Tata Ndu's relationship with his people, and the relationship of the Belgian and American authorities with the Congo? Are the novel's political details--both imagined and historical--appropriate?

6. How does Kingsolver present the double themes of captivity and freedom and of love and betrayal? What kinds of captivity and freedom does she explore? What kinds of love and betrayal? What are the causes and consequences of each kind of captivity, freedom, love, and betrayal?

For either pair you read:

Explain how each protagonist overcomes adversity (and identify the type of adversity experienced in each novel).