

English IV

Summer Reading 2009-20010

The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold (novel)

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini (novel)

They Poured Fire on us From the Sky (nonfiction)
by Deng, Deng, and Ajak

- Please read the three assigned/choice literary works prior to our first class. Assigned work is due on the day of your first English class for 2009-20010. No exceptions.
- The first chapter of *The Lovely Bones* may be difficult; Sebold has taken a grim, media-exploited subject (rape and murder) and fashioned from it a story that is both tragic and full of light. The description of the crime is chilling but never vulgar. Do see me immediately if reading this will be an issue for you. I respect that, and, together, we will select a different novel.
- You will be completing typed notes for the novels – a set each for *The Lovely Bones* and *The Kite Runner*.
- For your work of nonfiction, you will be completing a personal response and an activity board. You are welcome to view any related YouTube video /documentary as you research.
- Be prepared for quizzes, writing assignments, oral presentations, and examinations during the first weeks of school.

A Word of Caution

Most of the summer reading novels can be considered “classics.” As such, there is material available on the internet and in book form, including *Cliffs Notes*, *E-Notes* and *Sparknotes*.

I recommend you avoid these “learning aids.” They are, of course, no substitute for reading the novel. In past years, some students have found these sources simply too tempting to resist. They start out visiting them just to “get ideas” and end up plagiarizing, either intentionally or unintentionally. **Any material taken from another source and not acknowledged as such constitutes plagiarism.** A plagiarized paper/notebook receives a 0 grade and is reported to the Assistant Principal. The student may be placed on disciplinary probation as plagiarism is a serious form of cheating. Don’t risk it.

Assignment

The Lovely Bones and The Kite Runner

In order to prepare for the assignments, you are to keep a **reading notebook** as well as **highlight quotations and make notes in your novel**. Areas to cover in your notes are listed below. Your class discussions, quizzes/tests, and essays will be based on these notes.

- ❑ For all citations from the novel, indicate page numbers in parentheses.
- ❑ I will also see highlighted quotations in your novel as well as signs of active reading (note taking in the text).
- ❑ Your typed notes must reveal citations/analysis from chapter one through to the final chapter. If you draw only from the first few chapters, you will receive a zero.

I will peruse your notes carefully in class as you prepare for all *related* assignments.

Include in your notes:

1. **Setting:** note important settings, the mood or atmosphere they create, and why they are important in the novel.
2. **Characters:** List and describe the major characters, especially those details of appearance, behavior, attitude, etc. that set them apart from the others. List significant minor characters. Note important relationships among the characters, especially conflicts. Highlight relevant quotations in your book.
3. **Point of View:** Identify the point of view (first or third person, limited or omniscient). How does the author's choice of this point of view both advance and limit the novel? What does the point of view allow you to know and not know as you read?
4. **Theme:** Note three major themes you found in the novel, and give specific examples and quotations that illustrate this theme. (Remember that a theme is not just a one-word, abstract noun like "love." You need to state what the author is saying about "love" in order to have a theme.)
5. **Quotations:** Present six significant quotations, and note why each one is important both to you personally and to the world of the novel. These must be drawn from different parts of the novel.
6. **Objects/Actions (possible symbols)** List and note significance.

**Assignment: *They Poured Fire on Us from the Sky*
by Benson Deng, Alephonsion Deng, and Benjamin Ajak**

Across Sudan, between 1987 and 1989, tens of thousands of young boys took flight from the massacres of Sudan’s civil war. They became known as the Lost Boys.

“[T]ender and lyrical... one of the most riveting stories ever told of African childhoods – and a stirring tale of courage... Anyone interested in Africa, its children or the human will to survive should read this book.” – Emily Wax, *Washington Post*

“In the same way that the *Diary of Anne Frank* will forever keep the plight of the children of the Holocaust alive, this book speaks on behalf of the millions of children in Africa who are victims of genocides and witnesses to its atrocities. – *North County Times*

“The book is at once an important addition to the contemporary dialogue on world affairs and a surprisingly lyrical account of coming of age under adverse conditions ... [This] is no mere historical document; it is a wise and sophisticated examination of the arbitrary cruelties and joys of being alive.” - *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

Note: There are difficult scenes in each of this memoir which might focus on a particular tragic or violent moment. If reading such a scene is difficult for you, just move on to the next chapter. You will find it very easy to pick up the thread of this non-fiction read. Also, *They Poured Fire on Us from the Sky* is written with the use of multiple narrators; sometimes four of the “lost boys” narratives are interwoven as you follow their search for family, peace, and food/security. Some of you will enjoy the multiple voices; others of you may find this disconcerting.

Activity #1: Teaching Boards:

Objective: To develop one detailed poster board (no larger than a 27 x 24 inch display board) from which you will teach information about the historical, geographical, and cultural background relevant to this memoir. The information while detailed is bulleted and factual: it should reveal a comprehensive grasp of the situations which lead to the horrors detailed in your chosen memoir. Use the colors of the Sudanese flag and spacing to more effectively demonstrate key points of information. Include a map of the country; on this map, do indicate the key areas/villages/cities/ of the journey of these lost boys.

Keep your board focused on:

Map

Relevant Historical Facts

Issues

Images

Recommendation:

Prior to reading your chosen memoir, I would suggest that you research relevant and fairly recent historical information on the tragic situations in the Sudan. **You are learning about the situation between the North and the South of the Sudan in the**

late 80's; you are not focused on the Darfur in Western Sudan which erupted in the late 90's. You want to be able to explain simply what caused the horrors that lie behind these memoirs.

www.teacheroz.com

Go to Non-Western Cultures: Africa

Specific Countries/Places: Sudan

However, do note that *teacheroz* has not been updated since 2006 so you may want to proceed with the following approach to securing information.

www.teacheroz.com:

This is the best site for learning about the issues behind the Sudanese Civil War of the 1980's which led to tens of thousands of young boys (almost all orphaned) to take flight from certain massacre. They traveled without clothes, food, or water for thousands of miles to Ethiopia, back to the Sudan, and then on to refugee camps in Kenya. In 2001, the US finally agreed to let 3,600 of them emigrate from the refugee camps to America. The authors now live near San Diego, CA.

When you go to the web site, do click on the link for "The Alliance of the Lost Boys"; this will give you a brief history of the genocide through which they lived. Do also click on the link for BBC News , August 31, 2004; this link follows them and their stories as they arrive in a whole new world. The history links are quite obvious as you search for the causes of their dangerous and tragic flight from their homeland.

Activity #2: Reactive Reading Diary for Your Chosen Memoir

You are to complete a reading diary creating a diary entry every three or four chapters. This is to be typed and handed in on the first day of class: cover sheet/Times New Roman/12 point font.

Entitle Each Entry by Date/Time/Chapter Titles

Entry Itself: (Two Paragraph minimum)

In paragraph format, present your deepest reactions on a feeling level to the situations or people you are encountering.

What questions arise as you read about these people/situations?

What statements are made that spark a strong reaction in you? Include these.

How are you personally being challenged especially by the end of the memoir?

What do you now know and/or understand after keeping this journal and completing the teaching boards that you did not know before?