



ASHLAND UPDATES

We (or at least most of us) are in Ashland for **April 28-30th**. We will attend "Much Ado About Nothing," "Guys and Dolls," and "Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land."

Students need to bring their **one** piece of luggage to room 109 between 8:45-9:00am on Tuesday (4/28). Bedding and towels are not needed. Southern Oregon University provides these with the rooms. Additionally, students only need to bring enough money for dinner Tuesday and Thursday (\$10 each night).

A reminder list with phone numbers, an updated itinerary, packing list, and behavioral expectations was emailed last week. Copies are still available via the main page of my website. I have posted the updated packet under the title "Updated Ashland Materials".

We anticipate returning around 9:30pm on Thursday (4/30). I will have students call or text when we are 30 minutes away from West Sylvan. Please be prompt.



READING DISCUSSION #6

Thank you again to the fantastic adults who have volunteered their time to help facilitate during the 4th quarter. Thank you for your time and efforts.

During the 4th quarter, much like the third quarter, students have twenty minutes each day to read their discussion novel. Additionally, students should use whatever time **at home** necessary to fulfill the number of pages or chapters required for each discussion. Each student has a bookmark listing the dates of each discussion and the assigned pages. The bookmarks are also available via the "Reading" page of my web page.

The assignment sheets for the discussions are also available via the "READING" page of my web page. You will have to access the bookmarks (or ask the student) to determine what assignment the student must complete. Students are given the new assignment sheet two weeks (ish) ahead of time. I recommend using the assignment sheet as a second bookmark and completing the assignment as the novel is read. Directions are on each sheet, but



the "post discussion" part is completed after the discussion. I provide them with a prompt prior to each discussion.

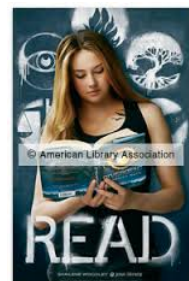
The remaining 4th quarter discussion meetings will be 5/1, 5/15, and 5/29.

The assignment for the discussion, #6, is due **Tuesday** (4/28) prior to our Ashland trip. The discussion is Friday (5/1). The assignment is due **before** we leave for Ashland for all students. I need to have time to evaluate and provide feedback on the assignment and I am fairly certain that none of the students want to complete academic work while on the trip. The post-discussion reflection is due **after** the discussion.

4th QUARTER JOBS:

Each group member has the same "back side" to their reading assignment. Each group member must come up with 2 generic and 2 specific questions; as well as list, explain, and evaluate 2 quotes from the assigned section of reading.

- **Summarizer**—summarizes the assigned section of reading and in written or cartoon panel form
- **Wordsmith**—lists and defines 10 meaningful words or phrase from the assigned section and reading and evaluates the word choice of the novel
- **Reflector**—lists and explains 3 connection for the novel: a text to self, text to text, and text to world
- **Story Mapper Map & Quotes and Questions**—provides a visual mapping of the settings for the assigned section of reading (sorry, due to page layout issues it saves it as two separate pages, but they are part of the same assignment)
- **Data Digger**—researches topics brought up in the assigned section of reading and presents the information to the group to help provide a context for the reading
- **Illustrator**—creates 3 drawings with captions for the assigned section of reading (one from the beginning, another from the middle, and the third from the end of the section)



BODY BIOGRAPHY

The culminating activity for the fourth quarter discussion novel is a body biography for a significant character in the novel. Discussion groups will apportion themselves into two groups: one group for



the protagonist and one group for the antagonist. Students are constantly and continually reminded (which, of course, means that most of them have forgotten) to take notes and document information on their character as they read. It is too difficult to comb through a 200+ page novel after reading to cull information on a character. It can be done, but it is much more difficult.

For the chosen character, students will be creating a **body biography**—a visual and written portrait illustrating several aspects of the character's life within the novel.

There are many possibilities for filling up the giant sheet of paper. I have listed several, but students are free to come up with their own creations. As always, the choices they make should be based on the text, for they will be verbally explaining (and thus, in a sense, defending) them at a showing of their work. Above all, their choices should be creative, analytical, and accurate.

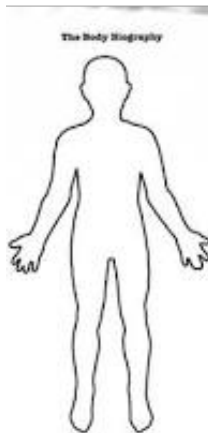
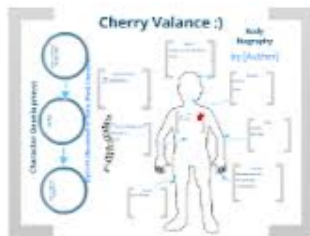
After completing the portrait, students will participate in a showing in which they will present their masterpiece to the class. This showing should accomplish these objectives:

- review significant events, choices, and changes involving your character
- communicate to others the full essence of your character by emphasizing the traits that comprise that person
- promote discussion of the character

Although I expect the biography to contain additional dimensions, the portrait **must** contain the following:

- a review of significant happenings in the novel (with regards to the character)
- visual symbols that represent meaningful images, objects, etc. for the character in the novel
- an original text presenting your view/interpretation of the character and his/her/its role in the novel
- the character's three most important lines/scenes from the novel.

The project is due on Monday, June 8. The final discussion takes place the Friday, May 29. Students will have a little over a week to finish putting on the butcher paper words, imagery, and so forth.



WRITING

VOCABULARY #14

Students should be reviewing the lists for **five minutes each day**. Repeated exposure to the words or stems will help in the long-term retention of the meaning and lead to greater success. Students should also be organizing the stems into antonyms, synonyms, and similar groupings (body parts, numbers, etc.).

Students will work on the sentences and list (flashcards) for vocabulary #14 Monday and Tuesday (4/27-28). As usual, the class will review several of the trickier sentences prior to the assignments being due at the beginning of class on Friday (5/1). I will try to provide sufficient time for students to finish the vocabulary assignment prior to our departure for Ashland. The quiz is the following **Thursday** (5/7).

FLASH FICTION

Upon the conclusion of testing, students will be creating flash fiction stories.

Flash fiction is a style of fictional literature or fiction of extreme brevity. There is no widely accepted definition of the length of the category. Some self-described markets for flash fiction impose caps as low as fifty or three hundred words, while others consider stories as long as a thousand words to be flash fiction.

One of the first known usages of the term "flash fiction" in reference to the literary style was the 1992 anthology *Flash Fiction: Seventy-Two Very Short Stories*. Editor James Thomas stated that the editors' definition of a "flash fiction" was a story that would fit on two facing pages of a typical digest-sized literary magazine. In China the style is frequently called a "smoke long" or "palm-sized" story, with the comparison being that the story should be finished before the reader could finish smoking a cigarette.

Other names for flash fiction include *micro fiction*, *micro narrative*, *micro-story*, *postcard fiction*, *short short*, *short short story*, and *sudden fiction*, though distinctions are sometimes drawn among some of these terms; for example, sometimes 1000 words is considered the cutoff between "flash fiction" and the slightly longer short story "sudden fiction". The terms "micro fiction" and "micro narrative" are sometimes defined as below 300 words. The term "short short story" was the most common term until about 2000, when it was overtaken by "flash fiction".

Access to the Internet has enhanced an awareness of flash fiction, with websites and zines such as Flash Fiction Online being devoted entirely to the style.



Unlike a vignette, flash fiction often contains the classic story elements: protagonist, conflict, obstacles or complications, and resolution. However, unlike a traditional short story, the limited word length often forces some of these elements to remain unwritten – that is, hinted at or implied in the written storyline. Different readers thus may have different interpretations. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash_fiction)



HISTORY COMMUNITY OWNED LANDFILL

Students will assume various roles as citizens in our fictional town of Midtown. It has been proposed that the community build a landfill that can be used for the city's trash as well as other communities wishing to pay to dump their garbage.



The remaining students will be assigned roles as opponents or proponents of the landfill proposal. The scene is a town meeting where the city council intends to decide the fate of this proposal. The debate that follows encourages students to enter into the exchange of ideas as well as to discussing the realities of waste disposal in the modern age. It encourages students to develop communication skills as well as team building skills. The debate ends with a decision by the city council to endorse or reject the landfill proposal.

STORYLINE

Smarter Balanced testing, preparing for Ashland, and trying to continue and maintain our "normal" classroom tasks has overwhelmed our Storyline.



Rather than continuing to delve deeper into the Middle Ages or Manifest Destiny, we will be wrapping up our Storyline with a little sharing.

We will be moving on the Renaissance and Reformation (7th graders) and the Civil War (8th graders) after we return from Ashland.

CURRENT EVENT #14

Current event #14 focuses on articles and news items from Oceania. In addition to the individual news quiz on **Friday**, May 8, students will take an individual quiz on the nations and significant bodies of water of Oceania. Students have been given a map and list of items to be identified.



Presentations take place (4/27-5/6). Students who are assigned to present Monday and Tuesday will present on their

assigned day of the week during this coming week (4/27 and 4/28). Students who have been assigned Wednesdays will present next Monday (5/4). Students who have been assigned Thursdays will present next Tuesday (5/5). Students who have been assigned Friday should try to present Friday (5/1), but if they are in Ashland then they are allowed to present Monday or Tuesday (5/4-5) of the following week.



I informed students that finding significant news items from Oceania might be difficult. If they cannot find a meaningful news item from Oceania, then students are free to find a significant current event from anywhere in the world. Make-up and missing presentations occur Wednesday (5/6), and we will update and review the most interesting and significant on Thursday (5/7).

