

**Honors English 10/Classics of American Literature
2019 Summer Reading Assignment
Mr. Mullaney**

I'm happy to have the opportunity to explore great American literature with you next year; this assignment will get us started. You are required to read the following two novels:

Washington Square (1880) by Henry James

Their Eyes Were Watching God (1937) by Zora Neale Hurston

(Note: Hurston's characters speak in the vernacular diction of their time and place—this can be a challenge, but it is a good one. It helps to attempt to hear the dialogue. Don't fret if you struggle a bit; that's natural when reading the book for the first time)

As you read both, have a pen or highlighter handy to mark up text and quotes that reveal important plot points, key elements of characterization and relevant themes. We will discuss your findings in September. While the novels present different times, settings and cultures, *both* include female protagonists who grapple with issues of identity and independence; be sensitive to these similarities and differences as you read—in fact, you will be explicitly asked about them below.

The written portion of your assignment includes a letter and a paragraph. Please follow the standard format for typed work: Times New Roman font, double-spaced, font size 12, one-inch margins all around.

Assignment 1- "Letter to Your Friend": Imagine that you are a friend to either Catherine Sloper, the main character of *Washington Square*, OR Janie Crawford, the main character of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Write a letter in which you express your concern and offer relationship advice. Note: if you select *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, you can offer advice about a specific relationship or suitor if you wish. Your letter, while imaginative, should reveal insight into the novel you choose; it should not address relationships in a broad, ambiguous manner or reflect merely on human nature in general. Refer to the novel directly with precise quotes. Feel free to assume the voice, tone and diction of the book in your letter. Be creative and have fun! The letter should be roughly one typed page.

Assignment 2- Analytical Paragraph: Compare and contrast the search for independence as it is undertaken by the protagonists of each book-- so show both similarities and differences. This is a challenging question. State a precise and clear insight in your topic sentence that unites the content of your paragraph. Again include precise plot references and quotes. Present your own insights; plagiarism (even paraphrased plagiarism) will result in a score of zero. I'm interested in what YOU think. The paragraph should be roughly 10 to 15 sentences.

Choose ONE of the following non-fiction books to read. You will be asked to identify it and answer relevant questions in September:

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou

In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass by Frederick Douglass

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin by Benjamin Franklin

1776 by David McCullough

Life on the Mississippi by Mark Twain