**Dual Credit English IV Independent Reading Requirements**

**Mr. Pace**

**2-3 pages**

**Essay (50 points)**

Like your choice of reading book, you are free within bounds when it comes to choosing a topic for the essay on your outside reading book. These assignments are designed to give you ample practice writing well-organized essays in which you argue a certain approach to a piece of literature. While your choice of argument is up to you, the following are some guidelines for a strong essay.

Your introductory paragraph should present your general idea and grab the reader’s attention while leading up to a thesis statement that posits a clear argument and is specific enough you can stay focused on supporting it throughout the body of your paper. The body of your essay has the sole purpose of supporting your claim about the text, and each paragraph should begin with a clear topic sentence indicating what the paragraph is about and how it supports your thesis. The remainder of the paragraph should develop the particular topic (and only that one topic). There are many approaches to writing a conclusion, and some room for creativity, but a strong conclusion should reinforce how you have proven your point and leave your readers with something to think about. It is often tempting to add other readings you think are profound or interesting into your essay, but if they don’t support your thesis it is better to leave them out; you should always keep to your point. Also, you are arguing about a text, not summarizing it, so you can assume your reader is familiar with it. A safe rule of thumb is to think that your reader has read the text but not for some time, so you should provide only what little summary is necessary to remind the reader of the details relevant to your argument, not the plot of the work as a whole. Be sure to cite all sources (should you choose to use any) and quotations from your text.

**Journal (40 points)**

For your outside reading, I would like you to complete a “triple-entry” journal for each book. Put a quotation from the text in the left column, discuss the significance to the story in the middle, and interpret it in the right. The focus should be on your analysis of the passage/book; do not merely summarize the plot. Since all books are divided differently in terms of chapter breaks, etc., you should have at least 15 entries, divided relatively evenly throughout the book, and each response should be roughly ½ a page.

**Presentation/Web Space (30 points)**

When your essays and journals are due, you will give a short presentation (5-7 minutes) summarizing your book and your argument. In addition, and as a visual aid, you will make a page for your book on your website, including the following information:

1. A cover photo
2. A brief summary in your own words (no more than 3 paragraphs; no fewer than 2)
3. Some major themes (and a photo, meme, video clip or other visual reflecting one of them)
4. Your favorite quote and interpretation/significance (your interpretation/explanation should be written on the site so anyone who views it will know why it stood out to you)
5. A brief overview of your argument (upload your essay, as well)

In addition to a visual aid, your website will serve as a portfolio of some of your work at the year’s end.