



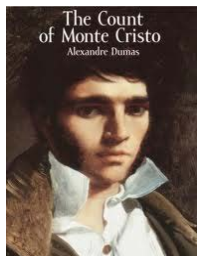
Honors Freshman English

Summer Reading Requirements 2011-2012

The RRHS English Department welcomes you to Rocky River High School! This summer's reading requirements are **George Orwell's *Animal Farm*** and **Alexandre Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo***. Along with reading both books, you will also be required to complete **two assignments** that are explained in this handout and be prepared for a multiple choice test on each text in the fall as well.

Course Overview: English 9 Honors lays a strong foundation for the rest of the Honors English courses at Rocky River High School. In addition to building the vocabulary (both literary and otherwise) and the skills to explore complex literature, 9H enables students to develop sophistication, maturity, and voice in their writing through regular writing assignments and intense grammar study. A rigorous course, 9H explores complex texts for both their intricate plots structures and their deeper socio-political and artistic purposes. Paving the way for the exploration of such novels and plays as *Les Miserables*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antigone*, and *The Odyssey*, this year's summer reading of both *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *Animal Farm* will begin to explore issues of characterization, theme, symbol, Romantic heroes, allegory, and how authors use their works to explore social injustice.

Alexandre Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo*



AT THE AGE OF NINETEEN, Edmond Dantès seems to have the perfect life. He is about to become the captain of a ship, he is engaged to a beautiful and kind young woman, Mercédès, and he is well liked by almost everyone who knows him. This perfect life, however, stirs up dangerous jealousy among some of Dantès's so-called "friends" and magistrates who conspire against him and have him arrested on his own wedding day. Dantès is sent to the infamous Château d'If, with the most dangerous political prisoners. While in prison, Dantès meets Abbé Faria, an Italian priest and intellectual, who has been jailed for his political views. Faria teaches Dantès much, turning him into a well-educated man. Faria also bequeaths to Dantès a large treasure hidden on the island of Monte Cristo, and he tells him how to find it should he ever escape. When Faria dies, Dantès hides himself in the abbé's shroud, thinking that he will be buried and then dig his way out. Instead, Dantès is thrown into the sea, and is able to cut himself loose and swim to freedom. What emerges from the water is a changed man, bent on revenge at all costs against those who wronged him.

The Count of Monte Cristo Assignment Details

After reading the novel you will compose **two letters** from Dantès's point of view to his beloved Mercédès. **The first letter** should be from Dantès's perspective at the beginning of the book (before he is imprisoned). At this stage, Dantès is feeling "on top of the world": beautiful fiancée, job promotion, popular, and upwardly mobile. The tone of your letter should reflect this confident attitude. **The second letter** should be told from Dantès's perspective after escaping from prison. He has lost everything important to him – the girl, the job, etc. The old Edmond Dantès "dies" as a consequence and from his ashes emerges one of his alter egos—The Count of Monte Cristo. What would Dantès (as the Count) have to say to Mercédès at this stage?

The tone of each letter should mimic Dantès's attitude toward life, Mercédès, and the world at that point in the novel. Be sure you include specific examples and details from the book to prove your reading and your understanding of why Dantès is how he is at these two points in the novel!

Your response should be typed, double-spaced, contain 1" margins, and contain the 4-line heading required by MLA format. The following is a link that will guide you in your formatting: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>. You must write at least two pages for each letter (250-300 words per letter).

Note: After your heading, you will begin the letter with "Dear Mercédès," or something similar, and from that point forward, will structure your assignment as a set of personal letters.

Due Date: Thursday, August 25

George Orwell's *Animal Farm*



Animal Farm is an **allegory** set on a British farm where barnyard animals successfully revolt against a human master who has exploited them. Following this "Revolution," the animals are left to establish their own society. Find out whether or not they're successful in this riveting political classic!

***Animal Farm* Assignment Details**

An allegory is a story that can be read on two distinct levels. Characters and events in an allegory are symbolic in that they represent more than their literal meaning, and they are used by the writer to convey a moral or philosophical message. Many of the characters in *Animal Farm* represent political leaders of the Russian Revolution. Your job is to figure out what each character symbolizes and what Orwell's moral and philosophical message is for his readers.

Complete the attached study guide which asks you to identify specific examples for how Orwell used allegory to tell the history of Soviet communism. Not only will you need to label who specific characters represent from Soviet Russia, you should also include the specific passages that Orwell uses to draw the comparisons. This study guide will later turn into a five paragraph essay. Thus, it is crucial that your examples are specific and your explanations are thorough.

Due Date: Thursday, August 25

Note: This study guide should be completed independently. There will be severe penalties for copying another student's work.

***The Count of Monte Cristo* and *Animal Farm* Tests**

The objective test portion of the assessment will be heavily character and theme-based. It will be multiple-choice in structure. Although these are summer reading titles, both books shall be addressed throughout the school year and tied in with other literary titles from the existing curriculum e.g. prison escape in Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* or lies/deception in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Animal Farm's* totalitarian government can be compared to Sophocles' *Antigone*, just to illustrate a few examples. Both tests will be administered on **Friday, August 26**.

If you have any questions about either assignment, please feel free to email us:

Mr. John McKenna: mckenna.john@rrcs.org

Mr. Michael Sislowski: sislowski.michael@rrcs.org

Names _____

Date _____

Animal Farm
Allegory Study Guide

An **allegory** can be read on two distinct levels. There will be the surface level of understanding (which for *Animal Farm* is the story of barnyard animals setting up their own government), but the story will also make sense on another level—the allegorical level (In *Animal Farm*, the characters and events of the stories parallel those of the Russian Revolution) Characters and events as seen on this allegorical level are used by the writer to convey a moral or philosophical message.

In preparation for our exploration of allegory in the fall, your job this summer is to figure out what each character symbolizes and to begin to predict what Orwell's moral and philosophical message might be.

Directions:

On another sheet of paper (Note, if you do this in a notebook, you will have it in your notes!) for each character, identify the personality from Soviet Russia that Orwell was working to represent. Provide a specific passage that demonstrates the likeness, including the *page number* of the example and give a brief explanation for how the example is proof of the comparison. Finally, predict, based on the character's portrayal (think about likeability, heroic or evil nature, influence, etc.) what Orwell might be saying about this idea or figure in the Revolution. Your answers should be readable, and in complete sentences.

Follow this basic format for your response:

Napoleon represents:

Passage/comparison: Page # _____

Your explanation:

What do you think Orwell is saying about this figure in the Revolution?

Characters and ideas to explore:

Napoleon

Snowball

The nine dogs

Squealer

Boxer

Old Major

Mr. Pilkington

Mr. Frederick

Mr. Jones