

How to Study for English

Reading Pop Quizzes

To best prepare for reading pop quizzes you should read, read, **READ!!!** Treat your reading homework just as you would any other assignment. Don't put it off until you climb into bed. If you enjoy reading in bed, great... get a for-fun book and do that. We are studying these books, not just reading them. The best studying DOES NOT take place as you are dozing off. Also, if you find that you have read a page or two and were totally blanking out – go back and re-read that section. You should also use some of the strategies below for active reading:

-  Use sticky notes or a piece of binder paper per chapter to record important ideas, events, and questions you have. Review your sticky notes/notes right before the bell rings in English.
-  Write down who, what, when, where, and why - as often as those elements change in a book. These are how teachers write quiz questions, so if you know that you'll do just fine. Also look for anything that is repeated (a statement, phrase, idea) as you'll probably be tested on that too.
-  Listen to the book on CD/YouTube/Audible as you read. This will help your mind not to wander while reading. The CDs are available for checkout at the Danville library, or it can be downloaded directly to your phone from iTunes.
-  If your teacher provides you with study questions, do a good job of answering them. (Don't just do them to get them done.)
-  Read Spark Notes (again, before and after reading the text). Reading these chapter summaries is not enough for a full understanding of the text, but it can aid in comprehension. (You should not use Spark Notes as a replacement for reading the text.)
-  Take the Spark Notes quizzes. Notice what's NOT there; it'll probably be a question! Teachers look at those quizzes and design theirs so that students can't read SN instead of the book.

Timed Writes

-  If your teacher gives you the prompts or the topics - make mini outlines ahead of time and mark pages in your books for quotes. Use a color-coding system to visually remember. (Ex: Quotes for topic #1 has red sticky notes, topic #2 has yellow stick notes, etc.)
-  If timed writes are especially hard for you, practice, practice, practice! Put your self in a quiet room, set a time for 50 minutes, and practice writing an essay.

Socratic Seminars, Fishbowls, and Graded Discussions

- One important way to prepare for a Socratic Seminar is to talk about the book with a friend (or even better – a group of friends) ahead of time.
- If you know the questions ahead of time – practice answering all the questions *aloud*. Also, find passages in the text that support your ideas and flag them with sticky notes.

- If you don't know the questions – try and guess at the questions and then write out or say possible answers. Again, find passages in the text that support your ideas.

Tests on an Entire Novel

- 📖 Studying for a novel test begins the **FIRST DAY** your class starts reading a novel. The **MOST** effective thing to do is stay caught up with your reading.
- 📖 At the end of each chapter pretend that you are your teacher and try to figure out what questions he/she is going to ask about this chapter. Record these questions and keep them safe... when you are studying for the novel test you should answer these questions as part of your review. (This will help you with pop quizzes, too!)
- 📖 Print and use all study materials your teacher posts on School Loop. Places to check out: Notes, Locker, and Assignment Calendar.
- 📖 Use the study guide. Many times teachers will provide the topics that the test will cover. Make sure you have a thorough understanding of each topic. (For example – a study guide may tell you to know all major characters, so be sure to use an **ACTIVE** study method – like making a character chart – to study all of the characters.)
- 📖 **Character Identifications** – Creating a grid is an effective way to review. Make a list of all the characters in the novel in the left column. In the right column make lists of the character's traits, the character's significant actions and their interactions with other characters.
- 📖 **Sequencing & Location IDs** – This information comes from the plot of the story. Make a plot timeline – include the who, when, and where of all important events.
- 📖 **Quote IDs:** Study key quotes. Most teachers emphasize certain quotes in a book that hold special symbolic, emotional, thematic, or dramatic significance. Be able to recognize these quotes and discuss who said them, where they are from, and what they mean. (It is extremely helpful to flag these passages with a sticky note as your teacher mentions them and when you notice a passage that seems/feels important.)

VOCABULARY QUIZZES

Instead of a simple flashcard, create a Vocab Square: *Write just the word on the other side of the vocab square to turn it into a flashcard!!* 😊



Part of Speech Adjective	Variations, Synonyms, Antonyms Synonyms: -trite -commonplace Variations: -banality (noun)
Vocab Word: banal	
Symbol/Logo/Icon 	Definition(s) repeating a worn out phrase
Your Sentence: His frequent use of clichés made his essay seem <u>banal</u> .	

Use
dictionary
thesaurus
and/or
Google to
find.

When creating your own sentence:

1. Make sure you are using the word correctly (check with a parent, teacher, or friend who is good at vocab).
 2. Create a sentence that has context clues. (If the word is “sad” the sentence should not be: “My brother is sad.” The sentence should be: “After my brother’s goldfish died, his tear stained cheeks showed that he was very sad.”)
 3. Create a sentence that has meaning to you personally – this will REALLY help you remember the word. The more personal, the better – an inside joke, a reference to your favorite TV show, a good memory, etc.
- ? Review your vocab squares DAILY. Make sure you not only memorize the definitions, but that you also practice USING the word. Create sentences using each form of the word. Have others quiz you, too.
 - ? Create quizzes for yourself (that are similar in format to the quizzes your teacher uses).
 - ? Many MV students have the same weekly vocab lists. Identify a friend who is on the same list as you are and text with him/her... but make sure you use AT LEAST one vocab word per text. Make a game of it by trying to CORRECTLY use as many vocab words as possible in one text.
 - ? Make a game of reviewing the words. Play Pictionary or charades! :)

General Tips and Tricks

You should also...

- 🟡 Take detailed notes during class. If you have a hard time remembering what your teacher says, then write everything he/she say down.
- 🟡 Pay attention and take an active role during class discussion.
- 🟡 Watch the film version of the book (both before and after reading the text).
- 🟡 **STUDY!!** This seems like a no-brainer, but many students do not actually study. This means that before a test (not the day before, but three-five days before) review your notes and any other materials you used in class. Do this for about 20 minutes or so each night and the night before the test do it for about an hour or so. DO NOT simply stare at your materials. Instead, do something active (see the next page for some ideas).
- 🟡 Form a study group with well-chosen people. You will be held more accountable to get your studying done and the people in your group will be able to help you in areas you’re weaker in. Working with a group of people allows you to cover more material (and it’s usually more fun!).

Study Methods

- ✓ Write out (or clearly say) answers to study questions. Note: If your test is written – you should write the answers. If your test is oral – you should say the answers.
- ✓ Answer the faux-test questions you wrote while reading the novel (see the Pop Quiz section).
- ✓ Write a brief summary of each chapter. (Try the GIST method: 20 words or less.)
- ✓ Have someone quiz you based on a study guide you create.
- ✓ Rewrite or retype your notes.

- ✓ Star possible test questions in your notes and classwork/homework. Write out the correct answer to each question.
- ✓ Get together with a classmate and compare your notes. Add in and/or correct information you may have missed.
- ✓ Create a character map (visually show how the characters relate to one another).
- ✓ Cover up all the info on your character chart (except the characters' name) and then write the important information about each character.
- ✓ Refer to your timeline and write one important event per flashcard and shuffle them. Then, put the flashcards in chronological order.
- ✓ Fold a piece of paper vertically. On the left side, write possible test questions. On the right side, write the correct answer. Then, cover the right side with a clean sheet of paper and answer the questions. Identify which ones you got wrong, study those areas more, and then try again. Do this until you get all the answers correct.
- ✓ Talk to someone who hasn't read the book and have him/her ask you questions (great job for a parent/guardian! 😊).
- ✓ Reread chapters that your teacher heavily emphasized.
- ✓ Reread chapters that were especially confusing to you.
- ✓ Identify what type of learner you are (auditory, visual, or kinesthetic) and do a Google search to identify additional study techniques that work for your learning style. (If you don't know kind of learner you are you can find tons of free tests by doing a quick Google search.)

Last Thoughts...

- Each person learns differently, so try out different combinations of study methods until you find the perfect combination for you
- No matter which methods you choose, there is no easy way to earn a good grade. You must work hard if you want to earn a high grade.
- Use your English teacher as a resource – she is here to help!
- Turn off your phone, iPod, Facebook, Twitter, TV, whatever it is that easily distracts you and **FOCUS**. This is the only way to *effectively* learn tough material.
- What you **SHOULDN'T EVER DO TO STUDY**: Simply stare at the book, your notes, etc.