



Walter Payton College Prep Math, Science, & World Language Academy

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Welcome to the Walter Payton College Prep English Department!

During the first six weeks of the 2012-2013 school year, we will read and analyze Homer's *The Odyssey*. In preparing this summer, we would like you to read *Mythology*, by Edith Hamilton. The book may be easily purchased in most bookstores as well as on-line. We will discuss *Mythology* throughout the first week of school, and the completion of the assignment (see below) will be your first grade for the course.

One of the most rewarding aspects of reading literary fiction is that it deepens our connection to and understanding of what it means to be human. The human experience, in general, is a complex one—one that will grow even more complex (and interesting) as we read more literary fiction. To that end, the most central question we will ask in response to what we read all year is, **“How does this text inform, enhance, deepen, or even challenge our current understanding of the human experience?”**

We will certainly want to contemplate this question when reading Hamilton's text, as she deliberately references the relationship between Greek mythology and the human experience in her introduction: "They [tales of Greek Mythology] throw an abundance of light upon what early Greeks were like--a matter, it would seem, of more importance to us, who are their descendents intellectually, artistically, and politically. Nothing we learn about them is alien to ourselves" (14). Furthermore, we hope that a sound understanding of Greek mythological tales will enrich our reading of *The Odyssey* this fall.

The summer assignment's requirements:

1). Carefully read all of Hamilton's *Mythology*, specifically focusing on instances when the characters or Gods/Goddesses behave in universally human ways. Annotate (underline, star, highlight, or respond) to the specific instances that you think reveal essential qualities of the human experience. Some important points to note as you are annotating:

- Avoid focusing on physical details about the characters or Gods/Goddesses unless they tell you something about the character's or God's/Goddess's personality or motivations.
- Try to find quotes that answer the question “Why?” Example: Why does the character or God/Goddess behave in the way that they do?

2). The book is divided up in to seven parts. Upon completing the book, identify the two most interesting instances from each part that capture characters or Gods/Goddesses behaving in universally human ways. **Copy down the exact sentence, passage, or quote that identifies this instance, and then explain how/why this instance reveals the essential qualities of the human experience.** In total, you should complete fourteen quotes/explanations.

These notes should be typed and brought to class the first day of school. As with most typed assignments, you should use 12 point font, preferably Times New Roman or Arial, and double spaced text. It is important that you establish a routine of typing and printing assignments for class; if you do not have a computer you need to go to a public library or a community club that has computers and printers that you might use. We will check for completion of the assignment, and will expect you to use your notes to participate in class discussions about the text throughout the first week of school.

We look forward to meeting you this September!

Sincerely,

Mr. David Adamji and Ms. Molly Spooner

