

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
STOUGHTON HIGH SCHOOL
REQUIRED SUMMER READING LIST GRADE 12 HONORS

On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft – Stephen King

Native Son – Richard Wright

Madame Bovary – Gustave Flaubert (Bantam edition)

“Hedda Gabler” – Henrik Ibsen in Four Major Plays by Henrik Ibsen(Oxford World’s Classics edition)

Study Guide Questions: You will need notes on each text to help you prepare for a test on these works in September. These questions for each selection should help you focus on important ideas.

1. On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft: What motivates King to write in general and about his specific subject matter? Identify his childhood experiences that affected his sensitivity to the human condition? How does he manipulate his writing as a craft? What are his tangible points about writing effectively? About research? And, about the literary elements of all works?
2. Native Son: Explain how Bigger Thomas treats the women in the story. Consider Jan Erlone’s attitude toward Bigger and how it affects Bigger. Read carefully Max’s defense of Bigger at the trial. Do you agree or disagree with the main points? Be prepared to explain and defend your position.
3. Madame Bovary: Pick out two personality traits, two physical traits, and note the degree of the author’s objectivity in portraying each of the following characters: Emma Roualt, Charles Bovary, Madame Bovary the Elder, Rodolphe, Leon, Berthe, and Emma. What happens to Emma? Is it deserved? Does her life convey an anti-hero sort of meaning or some other significance? Why should we care about her? How is she self-deceived? Is her passion more convincing than her helplessness? What sort of paralysis pervades this novel? What forces overwhelm her?
4. Hedda Gabler: Why is this play a modern work? How is it a tragedy? What social conditions and principles are at work? What is their impact? Explain the characters’ feelings of alienation and actual societal alienation? Define Hedda Gabler’s social self and essential self.