

Senior Gifted Honors: 2020 - 2021

You are to read two novels for summer reading: **In the Lake of the Woods**, by Tim O'Brien, and **The Plague**, by Albert Camus. After reading, you are to choose one of the two options pertaining to the free response prompts for each novel. The Friday after Labor Day, **September 11<sup>th</sup>**, **two typed essays**, one per novel, will be handed in to the teacher. **NO ESSAYS WILL BE ACCEPTED LATE!**

**In the Lake of the Woods**

Choose one of the prompts below; your essay should be typed MLA style, and you should use quotations from the novel to support your answer.

Many works of literature contain a character who intentionally deceives others. The character's dishonesty may be intended either to help or hurt. Such a character, for example, may choose to mislead others for personal safety, to spare someone's feelings, or to carry out a crime. In a well-written essay, analyze the motives for that character's deception and discuss how the deception contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

**Or**

Many works of literature not readily identified with the mystery or detective story genre nonetheless involve the investigation of a mystery. In these works, the solution to the mystery may be less important than the knowledge gained in the process of its investigation. Using, **In the Lake of the Woods**, write an essay in which you identify the mystery and explain how the investigation illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. Again, use quotations from the text to support your answer.

**The Plague**

A symbol is an object, action, or event that represents something or that creates a range of associations beyond itself. In literary works, a symbol can express an idea, clarify meaning, or enlarge literal meaning. Using **The Plague**, focus on one symbol and write an essay analyzing how that symbol functions in the work and what it reveals about the characters or themes of the work.

**Or**

Morally ambiguous characters – characters whose behavior discourages readers from identifying them as purely good or purely evil – are at the heart of many works of literature. Using **The Plague**, choose a morally ambiguous character who plays a pivotal role. Write an essay in which you explain how the character can be viewed as morally ambiguous and why his or her moral ambiguity is significant to the work as a whole.