

English III – Summer Reading Assignment #1 - 2009

Text: *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote
ISBN: 0-679-74558-0

Directions: As you read the book *In Cold Blood* this summer, please follow the directions listed below.

1. Review all of the accompanying material before you begin reading.
2. Be an active reader. Do not ignore difficult vocabulary. Look up words you do not understand.
3. Refer to the questions and take notes in your text as you read to help you when you answer the guide questions.
4. Answer the guide questions on loose-leaf paper in complete sentences. Be prepared to turn in your question responses on the first day of school.
5. Your answers will be graded and returned to you during the first week of school.
6. Bring your text to use during our class discussion during the first week of school.
7. You will have a test and an in-class timed writing assignment on the book during the first week of school.

Study Guide – *In Cold Blood*

In Cold Blood, published in 1965, was an instant critical and commercial success. Truman Capote received literary recognition that led to his celebrity status as an author. Capote stated that he had invented a new genre of literature which he called the “nonfiction novel.” He used documentary methods to merge journalism and fiction to create a new style of writing that he referred to as “reportage.”

In Cold Blood tells the story of the murders of the Clutter family of Holcomb, Kansas in 1959. The four parts of this nonfiction novel are told in painstaking detail. Part 1- The Last to See Them Alive describes the family, their place in the community and their last day’s activities in parallel with the activities of the murderers as they close in on Holcomb. The section ends with the discovery of the bodies of the Clutter family. The second section, Part 2 – Persons Unknown, recounts the aftermath of the murders as the criminals make their getaway and the town confronts the fact that its peaceful existence is at an end. The detectives from the Kansas Bureau of Investigation are introduced as a

dedicated, intense group of men, determined to solve the crime. The third division, Part 3 – The Answer, explains how the murderers chose their victims and follows the two men as they travel. In this section of the book, the KBI closes in on the murderers' identities and they are finally captured. The final section of the book, Part 4 – The Corner, tells of the trial and the murderers' executions.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

DIRECTIONS: Answer the questions in complete sentences. Do not copy the questions. Do not copy from the text, unless you are using a short quote to illustrate a point. If so, be certain to use quotation marks. Please skip one line between each numbered answer to make it easier for the teacher to grade.

1. Why does Capote start the book with such a detailed description of Holcomb, Kansas?
2. What kind of man is Herbert Clutter? How does Capote's description of Herb's last day of life reveal his character?
3. What aspects of the descriptions of Bonnie, Nancy and Kenyon make them sympathetic characters?
4. How does Capote build suspense in Part 1, despite the fact that the reader already knows the Clutters will be murdered?
5. The killers approach Holcomb as the Clutters go about their daily business. As Dick and Perry approach Holcomb, what information does Capote give that shows the two men intend to leave no one alive at the Clutter ranch?
6. Compare and contrast Dick and Perry. How are they similar to each other? How are they different?
7. Capote does not describe the murders. Why?
8. How does Holcomb respond to the news about the deaths of the Clutters?
9. Why is Herb Clutter's experience with the insurance agent an example of irony?
10. There is no traditional protagonist in *In Cold Blood*. Capote chooses to focus on whoever is of importance at the moment in the plot of the story. However, Alvin Dewey is, and remains, of critical importance to the plot. Who is Dewey and why does he remain an important character until the novel ends?
11. After the murders, Dick and Perry decide they must stay together. Why? How do the two men get money to continue traveling? Why can't they hold onto the money they get?

12. Perry's father: Tex John Smith writes a biography of Perry. Why does Capote reproduce the letter in full for the reader? What important insight does the reader gain from the letter from Perry's father?
13. Perry admits to Dick that he is surprised that he could actually commit the murders of the Clutters. What lie had Perry told Dick about another murder he supposedly committed?
14. It is obvious at this point in the story that Capote is sympathetic to Perry. Why might Capote sympathize with Perry? Do you feel any sympathy for him? Explain.
15. Who finally identifies Perry and Dick as the murderers? How did this person know they had committed the crimes?
16. Where are Perry and Dick when they are finally captured? Why do the two men think they are being questioned? What does this naïve attitude show about the men's characters?
17. Why is the chapter where Perry confesses the climax of the novel? What information is finally revealed about the motive for the murders and the actual events on the night the Clutters died? Which of the two men actually did the murders?
18. How is Dick planning on escaping from the prison?
19. During the trial, the judge stops the psychologist from elaborating after he states that he is not sure if Perry could tell right from wrong during the crime. Capote, as the narrator, goes on to describe Perry's psychological state. What does Capote decide is wrong with Perry? How does Capote's judgment of Perry's mental state show him to be sympathetic to Perry?
20. How does Capote feel about the death penalty?
21. Who is Lowell Lee Andrews? Why is his situation a parallel to the cases of Perry and Dick?
22. After five years, Perry and Dick are hanged. Through whose eyes does the reader experience the executions?
23. What role does "dreaming" play in the novel both figuratively and literally? Think of Perry's dreams about the parrot and finding gold in Mexico, and of Dewey's nightmares. How reliable is what Capote tells the reader about these dreams?
24. What did Dewey expect to feel when it was all over? How does his conversation with Susan Kidwell at the graveyard reveal his depression?
25. Do you think Dick and Perry were sane? Did the psychiatric analysis of them and descriptions of other cold-blooded killers surprise or frighten you? Did this book make you think differently about violent crime or the death penalty?

English III – Summer Reading Assignment #2 - 2009

Text: *The World According to Garp* by John Irving
ISBN: 0-345-36676-X

Directions: As you read the book *In Cold Blood* this summer, please follow the directions listed below.

1. Review all of the accompanying material before you begin reading.
2. Be an active reader. Do not ignore difficult vocabulary. Look up words you do not understand.
3. Refer to the questions and take notes in your text as you read to help you when you answer the guide questions.
4. Answer the guide questions on loose-leaf paper in complete sentences. Be prepared to turn in your question responses on the first day of school.
5. Your answers will be graded and returned to you during the first week of school.
6. Bring your text to use during our class discussion during the first week of school.
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Study Guide – *The World According to Garp*

John Irving wrote three novels before *The World According to Garp*, yet even though all three were well-received by critics, he was unknown to the general reading public. All of that changed with the publication of *The World According to Garp*. The novel became an international best-seller when it was published in 1978. Irving's novel was especially popular on college campuses across the nation because of its youthful energy, and the fact that the author created several realistic and strong female characters.

Garp is an intricately plotted novel and its many themes are universal: love, sex, death art and gender roles. It is the tragicomic life story of T.S. Garp, son of a controversial feminist, Jenny Fields. *Garp's* world is filled with "lunacy and sorrow." Throughout the novel he struggles to protect the people he loves. His life is both hilarious and ultimately tragic.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

DIRECTIONS: Answer the questions in complete sentences. Do not copy the questions. Do not copy from the text, unless you are using a short quote to illustrate a point. If so, be certain to use quotation marks. Please skip one line between each numbered answer to make it easier for the teacher to grade.

1. Why is Jenny Fields an unusual type of woman for 1942?
2. For whom is T.S. Garp named? What does the T.S. stand for?
3. What near-death experience does Garp have at Steering School?
4. What does Bonkers do to Garp? How does Garp ultimately gain revenge for Bonkers act?
5. What are Garp's two strengths while he is at school?
6. Why does Garp want to become a "real writer"? How is Helen a part of his dream?
7. Why do Jenny and Garp travel to Vienna?
8. Who are the Ellen Jamesians? What does Garp feel uncomfortable around these women?
9. Who are the Fletchers? How does Helen think the Fletcher's marriage can be saved? What ends up happening as a result of Helen and Garp's intervention in the Fletcher's marriage?
10. Who is Roberta Muldoon? Why is it surprising that Garp becomes friends with Roberta?
11. Garp and Helen reverse the typical gender roles of a married couple to raise their family. What are Garp's responsibilities to the family? What are Helen's responsibilities?
12. How does Helen's affair with Michael Milton end with the death of Walt? Who is really to blame for Walt's death?
13. What book does Garp write that becomes a best-seller? Why is Helen so uncomfortable with the novel?
14. How does Jenny die? Why does Jenny's death mean that Garp must dress in women's clothes? How do you think Jenny would feel about her funeral?

15. Jenny called death “the great equalizer”. What does this mean in light of the deaths of Stewart, Walt, Jenny and Ernie?
16. What is the Under Toad? How does Garp feel that the Under Toad is out to get him?
17. Why does the family return to Steering to live, considering the problems Garp had there as a child?
18. Who is Mrs. Truckenmiller? Why does her need for a home present a personal crisis for Garp?
19. How does Garp die? Who murders Garp? Why is his death ironic?
20. Why is Garp’s death comfortable?
21. What happens to Pooh Percy after Garp’s murder?
22. Who write Garp’s biography? Why is it ironic that this character would end up writing Garp’s biography?
23. Which of Garp’s children becomes a success in medicine? Why would Garp’s mother, Jenny, be so proud of this child’s success?
24. Garp has been described as an “everyman” character. He is flawed like all human beings, but he does try to achieve a happy and successful life. What are the major flaws in Garp’s character that keep him from achieving his life goals?