



9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Hello,

My name is Kelly Kanetkar, and I will be teaching 9th grade English next year. The summer reading assignment for 9th grade is *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest Gaines. As you read, complete the assignments included in this study guide and be prepared to turn them in on the first day of class in August. There are four parts to the summer project; some will take more time than others, so be sure that you give yourself ample time to complete each part. You may reach me this summer either through email: kkanetkar@evansvilledayschool.org or via text: (340) 690-2385. Please do not wait until the week before school starts to ask me questions; get started early so that you are not rushed.

One of the English department's expectations is that you will annotate the books you read, including your summer reading book. I will grade your annotations (10 points), so be prepared to turn in your book on the first day of class. Here is a list of guidelines to help you with annotation:

- Write out important plot events at the end of each chapter. Remember you are only annotating significant elements or important facts.
- Mark words and phrases that describe each character's physical appearance, personality, weaknesses, strengths, motivations, etc.
- Mark descriptions of setting and abbreviations that might have a significant meaning.
- Mark unfamiliar words and define them in the margins.
- Mark any conflicts that take place. Write down if the conflict is man vs man, man vs nature, etc.
- Identify and explain any symbols or motifs that are present throughout the text; any themes or lessons that are learned.
- Write down any comments or questions in the margins of your text. At the end of each chapter, jot down a short summary and your feelings.
- Mark significant quotes and why they are significant.
- Mark and label literary devices.

I am looking forward to working with you next year! Have a great summer, and I hope you enjoy reading *A Lesson Before Dying*.

Sincerely,

Kelly Kanetkar

Part I: Vocabulary (2 Points Each)

For each of the following words, create an entry as per the example. Use a dictionary (or an online dictionary) to find the part of speech (noun, adjective, verb, etc.) and the best definition for the word as used in the text (because you will find multiple definitions for each word). Use a thesaurus (or an online thesaurus) to find a synonym and antonym for each word. Use your copy of *A Lesson Before Dying* to find the sentence where the word is used. Finally, demonstrate your understanding of the word by writing your own sentence using the word. You may type your answers.

EXAMPLE:

Tarpaulin - pg. 236	Part of Speech: Noun	Synonym: Canvas	Antonym: None
Complete Definition: A protective covering of canvas or other material waterproofed with tar, paint, or wax.			
Sentence from <i>A Lesson Before Dying</i>: The tarpaulin had been rolled back, and two men sat at the tail end of the truck, talking and smoking cigarettes (236).			
Own Example Sentence: We had to use a tarpaulin to cover the furniture before we painted the room.			

- Modicum
- Illegible
- Cynicism
- Antebellum
- Creole
- Mulatto
- Universality
- Mortuary
- Alabaster
- Brogans

Part II: Character Relationships (4 Points Each)

Identify whether each of the following relationships listed below is positive, negative, or both. Explain in at least TWO complete sentences how the relationship is positive, negative, or using specific examples from the text. Finally, include a quote that supports your answer. You may type your answers.

Relationship	Positive? Negative? Both?	Explain Why	Quote
Grant and Jefferson			
Grant and Tante Lou			
Grant and Reverend Ambrose			
Sheriff Guidy and African Americans			
Jefferson and Miss Emma			

Part III: Discussion Questions (5 Points Each)

Answer the following questions in complete sentences using textual evidence and cite using correct MLA citation format. Make sure to answer all parts of the question and include language from the question in your answer.

Please type your answers.

1. For what reason does Grant not attend the trial?
2. In Chapter Six, why does Pichot keep Grant waiting for “nearly two and a half hours” (47)? Why does Grant wait?
3. What are Mr. Antoine’s last words to Grant (66)? What does he mean by them?
4. Is Grant a hero, according to the definition he give Jefferson in Chapter 23 (pp. 191-192)? Is Jefferson a hero? Do any of the other characters qualify as heroes according to Grant’s definition?
5. “I want you to chip away at that myth by standing” (102). What does Grant mean by the word “standing?”
6. All the characters in *a Lesson Before Dying* are motivated by a single word: “Hog.” Jefferson’s attorney compares him to a hog; Miss Emma wants Grant to prove that her godson in not a hog; and Jefferson first eats the food she has sent him on his knees because “that’s how a old hog eat.” How are words used to both humiliate and to redeem the characters in the novel?
7. What is the “lesson” before dying for Grant? Jefferson? For the southern African-American community? For the southern white community?

Part IV: Creative Visual (25 Points)

Create a visual that encapsulates the title of the book: *A Lesson Before Dying*. It could be a collage, a book cover, a poster, etc. Be sure to create images that support your idea of the “lesson” as well as words or quotes. Consider your answers to number seven above as you create your visual. Be prepared to present your visual on the first day of class.