

# Summer Reading Assignment: English 10

## *for incoming 10<sup>th</sup> graders*

### Assignment:

- 1) **Read and thoroughly annotate** the play *12 Angry Men* by Sherman L. Sergel (adapted from the television show by Reginald Rose). A copy of the printed text has been provided for you. You must also read the attached information that provides background information about courts, juries, etc.
- 2) Take **thorough and detailed notes** on **separate paper** as you read. Your notes must be **handwritten**. They can be bullet pointed, but they must be **organized** and **specific**. A list of suggested topics for note-taking is provided below.
- 3) When you return in September, you will take a **quiz** on the text. You **may use your notes** as you take the quiz, but you will **not** be permitted to use the annotated text.

This Summer Reading Assignment will count as your **first three grades of English 10**.

Suggestions for note-taking:

- ❖ **Setting:** Time period, season, location, etc.
- ❖ **Plot:** You should know the rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution of the story.
- ❖ **Conflict:** Recognize various conflicts and identify them as internal or external. Notice if they are resolved by the resolution (or not).
- ❖ **Characters/Characterization:** Notice the personality, physicality, and perception of each character. Know the protagonist and antagonist. Know what they each stand for, how they interact with each other, and whether they are static or dynamic.
- ❖ **Literary Elements:** As with most literature, other literary elements will be present throughout the text as well. Make note of them, especially ones that contribute to the central idea.
- ❖ **Critical Thinking Questions:**
  - While the author may in fact celebrate the “trial by a jury of your peers” system we employ as the foundation of our judicial process in the United States, he also points out many of its weaknesses. What are they?
  - In *Twelve Angry Men* race is a factor. How so? What other biases do the jurors face?
  - Our constitution guarantees rights to its citizens. What constitutional rights are discussed in the play, and how do those rights play into the verdict?
  - Try to figure out what is meant by the word *angry* in the title.

## **Introduction to the Play**

The title *Twelve Angry Men* is a reference to the twelve members of a jury. A jury was, at the time that the play was written (1954), made up of twelve men. Women were not, at that time, allowed to sit on juries in many states. This became a right for women in Georgia first in 1953, and then was granted to more and more women until finally, in 1971, a Supreme Court ruling made it legal for all women in every state in America.

*Twelve Angry Men* is a courtroom drama that takes place almost entirely in the jury room as the twelve members of the jury deliberate the fate of the defendant. We do not see the trial itself, which is an unusual choice, as most courtroom dramas revolve around the highs and lows of the lawyers and defendants.

## **American Court System**

1. The accused is deemed innocent until and unless proven “guilty beyond a reasonable doubt;”
2. The burden of proof is on the prosecutor;
3. In most cases, the verdict has to be unanimously reached. The majority of a jury is not sufficient to find a defendant guilty of a felony;
4. A trial does not aim to discover who committed a particular crime, but rather to establish the innocence or guilt of the accused;
5. The system is valuable, but not infallible, and can be quite precarious.

## **Jury System and Jurors**

1. Who can be a jury member?
  - A jury is made up of 12 adults.
  - The jury is chosen at random from the local Electoral Register.
  - Jury service is usually compulsory, however there are certain categories of people who can't be selected including: judges, lawyers, ministers of religion, prisoners, Members of Parliament, members of the armed forces, members of the medical profession, police and probation officers, anyone on bail or who has been on probation within the last five years, anyone sentenced to prison, detention centre, youth custody or community service within the last 10 years, or anyone with past contact with the accused.
2. How long does jury duty last?
  - It lasts for around two weeks. However, if at the end of this time the trial is still going, you will be required to stay on.
3. How are jurors chosen?
  - Anyone eligible for jury service has their name in a central pool of potential jurors. You will receive notice when your name is randomly selected from that pool. Jurors are required to present themselves at the courthouse, at which time the judge will excuse anyone for whom it would be a hardship to serve as a juror. Then the lawyers for the state and the accused have the right to question potential jurors to eliminate those who might sway the case one way or the other. For example, the lawyer of a young aboriginal youth might not want someone with racist beliefs sitting on the jury, so that person may be excused.

#### 4. What are the juror restrictions?

- Jurors are not permitted to discuss the case with anyone outside of the jury. They may not read newspapers or go online to look up information about the case, or watch newscasts about it. They are expressly forbidden from using social media to learn about the case. In the case of large, sensational trials, the jury may be “sequestered,” which means that the jury members are not permitted to go home, but are kept all together in a hotel, with guards preventing them from contacting others without supervision, until the case is over.

#### Important Vocabulary

**PREMEDITATED HOMICIDE:** murder committed after some consideration, planning, or thoughtfulness before the act

**TESTIMONY:** a formal written or spoken statement given in court

**DELIBERATE:** to consider long and carefully

**HUNG JURY:** A jury that is unable to come to a unanimous decision in a trial

**SLUM:** a squalid heavily populated urban residential area marked by poverty and substandard housing

**CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE:** evidence that provides some allusion to a fact but does not prove it directly

**FABLE:** a made-up story

**PRECEDE:** to come before something else

**MOTIVE:** reason for committing an act

**IGNORANT:** lacking knowledge or awareness in general; uneducated or unsophisticated

**SANCTIMONIOUS:** making a show of being morally superior to other people

**SADIST:** one who gains pleasure from inflicting pain upon others

**INFALLIBLE:** incapable of making mistakes or being wrong

**PREJUDICE:** preconceived opinion formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge; bias

**SIFT:** to examine thoroughly so as to put aside the nonessential and get directly to what's important