

## English Literature: Pre-Course Assignment

### Naperville Central High School Communication Arts Department

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The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word *monster* as “a mythical creature that is part animal and part human, or combines elements of two or more animal forms, and is frequently of great size and ferocious appearance. Later, more generally: any imaginary creature that is large, ugly, and frightening. A person of repulsively unnatural character, or exhibiting such extreme cruelty or wickedness as to appear inhuman; a monstrous example of evil, a vice, etc.”

You will be engaged in a semester-long research project for which you will be creating your own definition of the word *monster* and then tracking evidence through class texts and research sources in order to be able to qualify, challenge, or defend your original definition. Your research project begins now; see the details below.

#### **Part One:**

In at least one well-developed paragraph of approximately one page, explain how you define the word *monster*, using specific examples from life, literature, and/or film as illustrations. You may use first person and past tense verbs since this is your personal definition as derived from your past experiences.

In addition to printing out your definition, please create a Google Slide that captures your definition in 7 words or less and includes a literal or symbolic image of your idea of a monster.

#### **Part Two:**

After creating your own definition of a monster, choose ONE extended text from the list below. You may do a little research and try to find a novel that supports your definition of the word *monster*, or you can choose any text from the list. **You may NOT choose a novel you have read in one of your other English courses at Central**; be prepared to provide me with a list of your previous teachers and courses on the first day of class. Be sure to bring your annotated text with you on the first day of the semester.

- *A Tale of Two Cities* - Charles Dickens
  - **Note: This is NOT an option if you are enrolled in 1st semester Honors Senior Rhetoric.**
- *Wuthering Heights* - Emily Bronte
- *Jane Eyre* - Charlotte Bronte
- *The Picture of Dorian Gray* - Oscar Wilde
- *Gulliver's Travels* - Jonathan Swift
- *Atonement* - Ian McEwan
- *To the Lighthouse* - Virginia Woolf
- *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* - Robert Louis Stevenson
- *Never Let Me Go* - Kazuo Ishiguro
- *White Teeth* - Zadie Smith

**Pre-reading:**

Briefly research the author and time period in which the text was written.

**During Reading:**

Annotate for the following topics:

- a. \*\*\*Examples of monsters/monstrous traits\*\*\*
- b. Stylistic Devices (word choice- linked to tone/mood, organization, repetition)
- c. Literary Elements (symbols, motifs, themes, characterization, figurative language, etc.)
- d. Societal values revealed in the texts

**Post Reading:**

In a 1-2 page response, analyze how your definition of the word *monster* was supported and/or contrasted by examples from your extended text. Include a minimum of three direct quotes in your response; be sure each quote is introduced with context, tagged or blended, documented correctly, and followed up with at least 3-5 sentences of analysis. Use third person and present tense verbs.

I look forward to meeting you and sharing in the observations you made while completing this pre-course assignment. Don't forget to bring your **book, Google Slide, and print outs of your two responses to the first day of class**. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me via e-mail.

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