

English 10 Honors, 2025-2026
Required Reading Assignment for Summer 2025
 Ms. Henry

Over the summer, please read and annotate* *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* by Leo Tolstoy and complete a written analysis of a key passage. See detailed directions below. DUE 9/8/25.

To digitally access the links in this doc, go to the CSH Jr./Sr. High School website. Click on "Departments" and then "English." On the "English" page, scroll down and click on "Summer Assignments" in the menu at the left. Find the English 10H assignment at the bottom of the summer reading letter. Click on it and make a copy of this document to save in your Google Drive.

Directions:

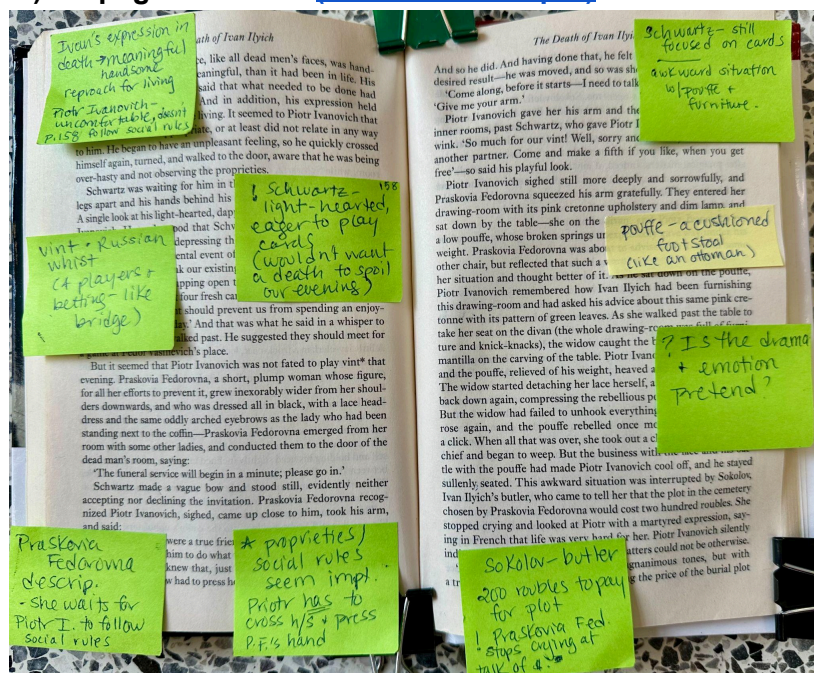
1. Read and annotate* *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* by Leo Tolstoy (pages 155-209 in *The Death of Ivan Ilyich and Other Stories*, Oxford World's Classics edition, translated by Nicolas Pasternak Slater).

As you read, keep an eye out for important passages, quotations, and situations that relate to the thematic topics in the novel. These include but are not limited to the following:

| | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|--------|
| class/society | isolation | suffering | spiritual life/ religion | family |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|--------|

**Use the method of annotation indicated below, please. I will be looking at and grading your notes in September. You will be evaluated on the quality and quantity of your annotations. (50 points)*

Sample Notes (A+) for pages 158-159 (click for link to pdf)



To successfully annotate a book for study, start with an overall survey of it. Make note of publication date (and place), chapter organization (are they titled? numbered? standardized in length?), and any index or glossary the book may have.

- **As you read, keep two lists on large post-its.**
 1. Inside the front cover, keep a list of major characters with brief descriptions. Add page citations of where the characters first appear/are described.
 2. Inside the back cover, keep a list of themes, motifs, allusions, images, key passages, etc. (all the basic English-teacher stuff). Add page citations to these notes, so you can find things later.
- **On the pages of the book, flag what might be helpful for discussion using smaller post-its. Use both symbols and notes to mark the book up. Consider these symbols:**
 - ? = I have a question (*Write your question next to or below the ?.*)
 - ! = That was interesting/surprising/disgusting (*Write the point next to or below the !.*)
 - ** = important passage (*Make a note regarding why you think this is an important passage.*)
 - ★ = important idea or thematic idea
- **Mark symbols; imagery; figurative language; interesting diction; tone and tone shifts; moments of significant character development; important conflicts; theme; ideas, words, and motifs you see repeated.** You can use the Notice and Note Signposts ([link to N & N bookmark](#)) to assist with these post-its, but **do not limit yourself to the Signposts.**
- **Mark unfamiliar words** (*Write the word on the post-it. Look up the definition, and add it to the post-it, a task you can do while reading or later on, depending on how essential it is that you understand the exact definition while reading.*)
- **On a large post-it—or several smaller post-its—at the end of each chapter,** write a 2-3 sentence summary and note how the literary and rhetorical techniques are being used by the author (the so *what?* factor). If the chapter does not have a title, write one that would be fitting.

Annotations Rubric GENERAL GUIDE ([Click here for actual rubric.](#))

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Excellent | It is evident that much thought has gone into the annotations; ideas are clearly marked and noted in a way that makes them easy to find and cite in a discussion or on a writing assignment. |
| Very good | Adequate annotations. Most key ideas are marked. The organization makes sense to the student. |
| Fair | Few annotations. Ideas will be difficult to find for discussion and writing. |
| Needs improvement | Few annotations. Minimal effort shown. |

Reading Tip: Bookmark the “Explanatory Notes” on pages 215-218 with a post-it. When you come to a superscript (number listed in the text), turn to the back to read the explanation.

2. Find one significant passage in the novel that you believe is worthy of analysis. This may be a passage that reveals the novel's theme, defines a character, brings to light an important symbol, enhances or supports a theme of the work, significantly adds to the plot (for example, by building suspense or describing a climactic moment), etc. **Choose your passage based on your reading of the novel. Do not simply choose one because a classmate is using it or because a site like Spark Notes or Shmoop highlights.** In fact, you shouldn't be referring to those sites or similar sites. Your passage may be as long as an entire paragraph or two; sometimes a single sentence is not enough to provide for a thorough analysis. Your chosen passage may/may not include dialogue.

For your chosen passage, complete the following:

A. Type the passage using MLA format. The page number should appear in parentheses after the quotation. For example:

"Ivan Ilyich had been a colleague of the gentlemen now gathered here, and they had all liked him. He had been sick for several weeks, with an illness that was said to be incurable. His post had been kept open for him, but it was presumed that in the event of his death Alexeyev could be appointed in his place, while Alexeyev's post would be taken by either Vinnikov or Shtabel. So at the news of Ivan Ilyich's death, the first thought of each of the gentlemen present in the room was this: what effect might this death have on the transfer or promotion of these colleagues themselves or their acquaintances" (Tolstoy 155).

PLEASE DO NOT CHOOSE THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES. IF YOU DO, YOU WILL HAVE TO REWRITE YOUR RESPONSES BASED ON ANOTHER PASSAGE:

- "The life of Ivan Ilyich up to this point had been a most simple and ordinary one, and a most terrible one" (162).
- "In his actual work, and particularly in his investigations, Ivan Ilyich very soon acquired the knack of putting aside any considerations that fell outside the official aspects of a case, and setting out even the most complex case in such a way that only its formal aspects found expression on paper, rigorously excluding any personal views of his own and most importantly, observing every prescribed formality" (165-6).
- "'It's as if I had been going downhill, while imagining I was going uphill, and at exactly the same pace life was vanishing from under me. And now it's all done with--get away with you and die!'" (202).
- "'Perhaps I didn't live as I should have done?' the thought suddenly occurred to him. 'But how can it have been wrong, when I did everything properly?' he said to himself, instantly dismissing as completely impossible this one and only solution to the whole riddle of life and death" (202).
- "Suddenly a force of some kind struck him on his chest, on his side, stifling his breath even more strongly, and he fell into the hole, and there, at the bottom of the hole, a light was shining. . . . At that same time the little schoolboy had crept quietly into the room and approached his bed. The dying man was still crying desperately and thrashing his arms about" (208).

B. **Write a 3-5 paragraph analysis** (typed, double-spaced, 12-point Calibri or Times New Roman, with an MLA heading and header– [click here for header/heading instructions](#)) in which you analyze the passage (**50 points**). Title your paper "*The Death of Ivan Illyich* Close Reading." I will use [this rubric](#) to grade your paper. Be sure to include the following information:

- Identify the speaker and the person(s) to whom he/she is speaking or explain that the passage provides narrator description, commentary, etc.
- Explain the context of the passage. In other words, what leads up to and follows after the chosen passage? How does this moment connect to those before and after it?
- Explain what is happening in this passage and why it is significant to the novel. Consider the questions that follow. Be as thorough as possible, but understand that it's likely that not all of the following will apply to your passage:
 - o How does the passage reveal or relate to a theme of the story?
 - o How does it develop the personality of one or more characters?
 - o How does it drive the plot?

- o Which literary elements and techniques are at work in this quotation and why are they important? How does Dostoyevsky use them to enhance the theme, advance the plot, characterize individuals, etc.?
 - Some literary elements to consider are characterization, setting, theme, conflict, and point of view.
 - Some literary techniques to consider are irony, imagery, metaphor, simile, narrative pace, diction, and syntax.
- Incorporate textual references in your analysis by carefully embedding them in your text. Refer to this [document on embedding quotations](#) for assistance.

Use this [assignment checklist](#) before you submit your completed assignment to turnitin.com via the Canvas assignment that will be available in September. Assignments that include plagiarism or use of AI (for example, Chat GPT) will receive zeros.

Submit a printed, stapled copy of your assignment in class on the due date. Attach page 5 to the BACK of your printed assignment. Be sure to sign the honor pledge.

I look forward to seeing you in September and engaging in meaningful conversation about your reading. Enjoy the summer!

NOTE: Make sure you complete this assignment using the Oxford World Classics edition (with Slater's translation).

Name _____ (Please print.)
English 10 Honors Summer Assignment, Ms. Henry

Honor Code Pledge: My name signed below verifies that I have completed this assignment on my own and have followed the directions listed above. I have neither given nor received help on the assignment from any source.

Student's Signature: _____

Please complete this form and staple this page to the back of your written assignment.