

US I H- Summer Reading 2010

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl

Harriet Jacobs

Directions: For this summer assignment you will be required to first read the book. It is a primary source and should be evaluated as such. It is a difficult tale, but identifies the ills of American history through the experiences of a slave. Your assignment is as follows:

1. Read the book-not the Spark Notes or internet summaries!
2. As you read, take notes to answer the questions below. **TYPE OUT THE QUESTIONS AND YOUR RESPONSES**- 12 pt font double spaced. BRING THEM TO CLASS THE FIRST FEW DAYS AND SAVE THEM ON YOUR COMPUTER AS YOU WILL BE SUBMITTING THEM TO TURNITIN.COM in Sept. You may use the first person on these responses when prompted for your opinion. Come to school prepared to discuss them the first few days. This will count as a homework assignment and a participation grade.
3. The first few days of school you will have an in class writing assignment based on the book. So come to class prepared to write!

Enjoy the summer and happy reading!

-Ms. Bobo

Response questions- remember to type out questions and well developed answers. Well developed= a few sentences!

Childhood and Early Adolescence: Facing her Slave Identity

1. What were Harriet's feelings about her life before she was six years old and after?
2. What might have motivated Harriet's mistress to bequeathing Harriet as a slave to her five-year-old niece?
3. What might be some of the reasons that Dr. Flint was so attracted to Harriet?
4. What kind of woman is Harriet's grandmother and what effect does she have on the family?
5. What effect does slavery have on the lives of the slave holders and why?

Early Adulthood: Taking Control of Her Destiny

1. Why does Harriet have a sexual relationship with Mr. Sands and not have a relationship with the freed slave whom she loves?
2. Do you think that Harriet's grandmother's judgment about Harriet's morals is fair?
3. Why does Harriet need her grandmother's approval so much?
4. How does the practice of slavery violate Christian principles?
5. Why does Harriet work so hard for her masters?
6. What is the key factor that resolves Harriet to escape from Mr. Flint's plantation?

Escape & Hiding

1. Who are all of the people who assist Harriet in her hiding?
2. What could motivate a white southern person to hide a run-away slave?
3. What motivated Dr. Flint to search for Harriet so vigorously?
4. Why does Mr. Sands buy Harriet's children? Do you think that he will free them or keep them as slaves?
5. What must it have been like for Harriet to hide so long in the confined space in her grandmother's shed?
6. How does Harriet show her strong love for her children during the time of her hiding?
7. Why do you think it was important to Phillip to provide a funeral and burial for Aunt Nancy?

Freedom and Life as a Fugitive

1. Who are the people who support Harriet while she is in Philadelphia and New York?
2. Why is it important to Harriet that she pay her own way to New York?
3. In what condition does Harriet find her daughter?
4. Why hasn't Mr. Sands freed Ellen?
5. What are some of the ways that Harriet's life in New York is different from her life in North Carolina?
6. Why do you think that the hotel staff and black servants treated Harriet so meanly when she traveled with the Bruce family to Albany?
7. Compare and contrast the plight of the poor in England with that of the slave in America. Do you agree with Harriet's judgment about which group has the worst situation?
8. What does Harriet's attempt to run an anti-slavery reading room in Rochester say about her character?
9. Until Mrs. Bruce purchases her freedom, Harriet still feels endangered in New York. Why is she not more protected by society in this northern state? Why are her owners in North Carolina so eager to reclaim her?

