English Literature: Pre-Course Assignment
Naperville Central High School Communication Arts Department

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* and/or the idea of *monstrous behavior*, 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 ONE Google Slide** that captures your definition in 7 words or less and includes a literal or symbolic image of your idea of a monster. (If you would like to paint or draw your image, you can upload a screenshot of it onto your Google Slide.)

Part Two:

After creating your own definition of a monster, choose ONE extended text from the list below. You may wish to 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. Bring your annotated text with you on the first day of the semester.

- *A Tale of Two Cities* - Charles Dickens
- *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. Identify core societal values of that time period, conducting research if necessary.

During Reading:
Heavily annotate your text for the following topics to be prepared for future tasks related to the book and/or class:

       a.   ***Examples of figurative and literal 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.   Core values of the time period revealed in the text (think back to your pre-reading research)

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 **annotated novel, Google Slide, and a print out of your written response (part one) to the first day of class (day one of second semester)**. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me via e-mail.

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