

AP Literature can be a valuable experience that prepares you for college and beyond, offering the opportunity to delve into complex literary works, hone analytical skills, and potentially earn college credit. It also provides a broad introduction to various literary genres and styles, fostering a deeper appreciation for literature's impact on society and culture.

AP English Lit Students will be reading **three (3)** required novels that address the essential question:

“How are people transformed through their relationships with others?”

Required texts:

- 1) *Advocate: A Graphic Memoir of Family, Community, and the Fight for Environmental Justice* by Eddie Ahn

Once again, Holy Trinity is partnering with Molloy University in a program entitled COMMON READ. The College and AP students will be reading the same novel as Molloy’s incoming freshmen. Molloy has provided copies of the book for you which were distributed in your current English class. In the fall, we will have the opportunity to take part in a discussion with the author at Molloy!

- 2) *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin

- 3) *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston

(Currently, there are copies available for purchase in the Main Office -\$12.00)

AP English Summer Reading Assignments

Advocate: A Graphic Memoir of Family, Community, and the Fight for Environmental Justice by Eddie Ahn

Test on this novel will be Friday, September 12

The Awakening by Kate Chopin-- Follow the directions for annotations explained below. You must purchase a NEW copy of the book so that you can do your own annotating. No credit will be given if the book is not new. Put your name on the

binder of the book. Novels will be collected for a grade.

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston-- **Test in class during the second week of school.** Take notes as you read or use post-its so that you can review before the test. Focus on Janie's transformation and journey, plot and conflict developments, and thematic threads.

Books must be read by the first Monday of the school year.

***Late assignments will be penalized.**

Note: We hope that you will enjoy these novels. They are rich in meaning and quite good! We are looking forward to working with you in September!

The Awakening by Kate Chopin

Provided below is the Historical Background of the novel and two sets of quotations: 1-26 and 1-11. A few quotes overlap. Before you read each chapter, highlight the quotes from both sets if there are some included. As you read, take particular note of those you have highlighted. There are no quotes for some chapters.

Also, annotate the text with some observations as you read. There are many empty spots provided in the book, including the front and back cover pages. You are to compile 40 THOUGHTFUL responses (numbered 1-40) as you read. These can be comments on the quotes, characters, recurring themes, symbols, etc. You do not have to have a response for each chapter, but your 40 entries should cover the span of the novel. **Books will be collected the first week of school.** Your grade will reflect how well you have annotated the novel and the quality of your 40 responses. (These are all hand-written in the novel.)

Historical and Cultural Background of *The Awakening*.

The Awakening was written at the end of the nineteenth century. That was a time of tension between the old and the new, the traditional and the modern. The industrialization, urbanization and changing social norms of the turn of the century all contributed to the fact that life was changing. Like all epic turns in time, the citizens of the nineteenth century had mixed feelings about the progressions the twentieth century would hold.

There was a World's Exposition (Fair) in Chicago in 1904 that heralded the rise of the machine age. It, along with Darwin's theories of evolution taking hold of the public mind (for an examination of how they affected Chopin, see Bender), the Higher Criticism of the Bible (a field of study that maintained through scientific bow evidence that the Bible was made up of different manuscripts and not the divine word of God), and the continuing movements in women's suffrage, all contributed to a time when fundamental assumptions were being questioned and cast aside.

Louisiana had its own set of problems that added to the confused feelings. It was a state created out of three different cultures. It is American in many ways, but it is also southern, and Creole. The combination of these three cultural forces was very strong. The aftermath of the Civil War was still reverberating across the nation (Edna's father is a good example).

The Creole culture was very different from the others. It was Catholic in a Protestant country. The Creole women were very conservative, perhaps the most conservative group in the nation. They were frank and open in discussing their marriages and children, but could do so because their very moral nature did not allow any doubt as to their chastity. They were committed as a group to their husbands and children and had a deep personal and religious commitment to fidelity. Adele is a fine example of this type of woman. In addition to the cultural conflicts in Louisiana, there is also the fact that it was the only state in the nation that operates under a different legal system. The feminist movement of the late nineteenth century did not have much hope in the state. Under the Louisiana Code, patterned after the Napoleonic code of France, a woman belonged to her husband.

Article 1388 established the absolute control of the male over the family. Article 1124 equated married women with babies and the mentally ill, all three were deemed incompetent to make a contract.

Elsewhere in the country things were changing. The Industrial Revolution transformed handicrafts, which women had always done in their homes, into a machine-powered, mass-produced industry. This meant that lower-class women could earn wages as factory workers. This was the beginning of their independence, even though the conditions were hazardous, the pay low, and their income was legally controlled by their husbands or fathers. Middle and upper-class women were still expected to stay at home as idle, decorative symbols of their husbands' wealth. They were, as Virginia Woolf termed it, expected to be angels in the house. They were pregnant frequently due to the restrictions on birth control, they cared for their homes, husbands, and children, played music, sang, or drew to enhance the charm of their homes and to reflect well on their husbands. Wives were possessions, cared for and displayed, who often brought a dowry or inherited wealth to a marriage. They were expected to subordinate their needs to their husband's wishes; in short, they were expected to be Adele.

There were other women who would not stand for this type of role: Lucretia Coffin Mott, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, chief among them. They held the first women's rights convention in July of 1848 (two years before Chopin was born) in Seneca Falls New York. They adopted a Declaration of Sentiments patterned after the Declaration of Independence and focused on getting the vote. Suffragists were branded the “shrieking sisterhood,” labeled unfeminine, and more accused of immorality. Not very different from the reception *The Awakening* received upon publication, as we shall see. The suffrage movement and the abolitionist movement grew apace during the Civil War. After the war the abolitionists surged ahead with an 1868 amendment to the Constitution allowing the vote regardless of race, creed, or color. Not sex. Suffragists pushed on until 1870 when the 15th Amendment allowed the right to vote regardless of color or creed but not gender (that would not come until 1920). Keep this in mind. Not only would Kate Chopin be aware of these changes and use them in the creation of the world of *The Awakening*, but the people who read the novel would also know the changing state of women.

The reception *The Awakening* received indicates the climate of the time. Its

publication cast a shadow over Kate Chopin and she only managed to publish three more short stories before her death. Contemporary critics were predominately hostile toward the subject matter, but praised the artistry of the writing. Still, despite Willa Cather, a friend of Chopin, being a strong voice of support, newspapers and magazines of the day were filled with such comments as "it is not a healthy book," "sex fiction," "the purport of the story can hardly be described in language fit for publication," "we are well satisfied when Mrs. Pontellier deliberately swims out to her death," "an essentially vulgar story," and "unhealthy introspective and morbid." (Culley, 146-52). Chopin was hurt by such a response, both personally, and as a writer.

As the century drew to a close, it was marked by many changes, personified by the 1904 World's Fair, industry, sexual equality, even the size of the country. Change was everywhere and the population was struggling to come to terms with those developments. In many ways *The Awakening* encapsulates this struggle and speaks to the painful process that was in store for the country and its women.

Quotes from "The Awakening" by Kate Chopin

Quote 1: "Mr. Pontellier wore eye-glasses. He was a man of forty, of medium height and rather slender build; he stooped a little. His hair was brown and straight, parted on one side. His beard was neatly and closely trimmed." Chapter 1

Quote 2: "...looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of personal property which has suffered some damage." Chapter 1

Quote 3: "He reproached his wife with her inattention, her habitual neglect of the children. If it was not a mother's place to look after children, whose on earth was it?" Chapter 3

Quote 4: "The mother-women seemed to prevail that summer at Grand Isle. It was easy to know them, fluttering about with extended, protecting wings when any

harm, real or imaginary, threatened their precious brood. They were women who idolized their children, worshiped their husbands, and esteemed it a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals and grow wings as ministering angels." Chapter 4

Quote 5: "The voice of the sea is seductive; never ceasing, whispering, clearing, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander for a spell in the abysses of solitude; to lose itself in mazes of inward contemplation. The voice of the sea speaks to the soul. The touch of the sea is sensuous, enfolding the body in its soft, close embrace." Chapter 6

Quote 6: "Her marriage to Leonce Pontellier was purely an accident, in this respect resembling many other marriages which masquerade as the decrees of Fate. It was in the midst of her secret great passion that she met him. He fell in love, as men are in the habit of doing, and pressed his suit with an earnestness and ardor which left nothing to be desired." Chapter 6

Quote 7: "The very first chords which Mademoiselle Reisz struck upon the piano sent a keen tremor down Mrs. Pontellier's spinal column. It was not the first time she had heard an artist at the piano. Perhaps it was the first time she was ready, perhaps the first time her being was tempered to take an impress of the abiding truth... She saw no pictures of solitude, of hope, of longing, or of despair. But the very passions themselves were aroused within her soul, swaying it, lashing it, as the waves daily beat upon her splendid body. She trembled, she was choking, and the tears blinded her." Chapter 9

Quote 8: "A feeling of exultation overtook her, as if some power of significant import had been given her to control the working of her body and her soul. She grew daring and reckless, overestimating her strength. She wanted to swim far out, where no woman had swum before." Chapter 10

Quote 9: "That she was seeing with different eyes and making the acquaintance of new conditions in herself that colored and changed her environment, she did not

yet suspect." Chapter 14

Quote 10: "For the first time, she recognized the symptoms of infatuation which she had felt incipiently as a child, as a girl in her early teens, and later as a young woman. The recognition did not lessen the reality, the poignancy of the revelation by any suggestion or promise of instability. The past was nothing to her, offered no lesson which she was willing to heed. The future was a mystery which she never attempted to penetrate. The present alone was significant; was hers, to torture her as it was doing then with the biting conviction that she had lost that which she had held, she had been denied that which her impassioned, newly awakened being demanded. Chapter 15

Quote 11: "I would give up the unessential; I would give my money, I would give my life for my children; but I wouldn't give myself. I can't make it more clear; it's only something which I am beginning to comprehend, which is revealing itself to me." Chapter 16

Quote 12: "She was seeking herself and finding herself in just such sweet, half-darkness which met her moods. But the voices were not soothing that came to her from the darkness and the sky above and the stars. They jeered and sounded mournful notes without promise, devoid even of hope." Chapter 17

Quote 13: "It sometimes entered Mr. Pontellier's mind to wonder if his wife were not growing a little unbalanced mentally. He could see plainly that she was not - herself. That is, he could not see that she was becoming herself and daily casting aside that fictitious self which we would assume like a garment with which to appear before the world." Chapter 19

Quote 14: "Courageous, ma foi! The brave soul. The soul that dares and defies." Chapter 21

Quote 15: "Woman, my dear friend, is a very peculiar and delicate organism - a sensitive and highly organized woman, such as I know Mrs. Pontellier to be, is especially peculiar. It would require an inspired psychologist to deal successfully with them. And when ordinary fellows like you and me attempt to cope with their idiosyncrasies the result is bungling. Most women are moody and whimsical. This is some passing whim of your wife, due to some cause or cause which you and I needn't try to fathom." Chapter 22

Quote 16: "A feeling that was unfamiliar, but very delicious came over her."

Chapter 24

Quote 17: "Her husband seemed to her now like a person whom she had married without love as an excuse." Chapter 25

Quote 18: "Conditions would some way adjust themselves, she felt; but whatever came, she had resolved never again to belong to another than herself." Chapter 26

Quote 19: "There was something in her attitude, in her whole appearance when she leaned her head against the high-backed chair and spread her arms, which suggested the regal woman, the one who rules, who looks on, who stands alone."

Chapter 30

Quote 20: "He did not answer, except to continue to caress her. He did not say good night until she had become supple to his gentle, seductive entreaties."

Chapter 31

Quote 21: "She writhed with a jealous pang. She wondered when he would come back. He had not said he would come back. She had been with him, had heard his voice and touched his hand. But some way he had seemed neared to her off there in Mexico." Chapter 34

Quote 22: "She put her hand up to his face and pressed his cheek against her own. The action was full of love and tenderness. He sought her lips again. Then he drew her down upon the sofa beside him and held her hand in both of his." Chapter 36

Quote 23: "Her seductive voice, together with his great love for her, had enthralled his sense, had deprived him of every impulse but the longing to hold her and keep her." Chapter 36

Quote 24: "I love you. Good-by - because I love you." Chapter 38

Quote 25: "The water of the Gulf stretched out before her, gleaming with the million lights of the sun. The voice of the sea is seductive, never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander in abysses of solitude. All along the white beach, up and down, there was no living thing in sight. A bird with a broken wing was beating the air above, reeling, fluttering, circling disabled down, down to the water." Chapter 39

Quote 26: "She looked into the distance, and the old terror flamed up for an instant, then sank again. Edna heard her father's voice and her sister Margaret's. She heard

the barking of an old dog that was chained to the sycamore tree. The spurs of the cavalry officer clanged as he walked across the porch. There was the hum of bees, and the musky odor of pinks filled the air." Chapter 39

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1. "‘You are burnt beyond recognition,’ he added, looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of personal property which has suffered some damage. She held up her hands, strong, shapely hands, and surveyed them critically, drawing up her lawn sleeves above the wrists. Looking at them reminded her of her rings, which she had given to her husband before leaving for the beach. She silently reached out to him, and he, understanding, took the rings from his vest pocket and dropped them into her open palm." (Ch. 1)
 2. "In short, Mrs. Pontellier was not a mother-woman. The mother-women seemed to prevail that summer at Grand Isle." (Ch. 4)
 3. "Her glance wandered from his face away toward the Gulf, whose sonorous murmur reached her like a loving but imperative treaty." (Ch. 5)
 4. "A certain light was beginning to dawn dimly within her – the light which, showing the way, forbids it." (Ch. 6)
 5. "At a very early period she had apprehended instinctively the dual life - the outward existence which conforms, the inward life which questions." (Ch. 7)
 6. "Edna was what she herself called very fond of music. Musical strains, well rendered, had a way of evoking pictures in her mind. She sometimes liked to sit in the room of mornings when Madame Ratignolle played or practiced. One piece which that lady played Edna had entitled 'Solitude.'... When she heard it there came before her imagination the figure of a man standing beside a desolate rock on the seashore. He was naked. His attitude was one of hopeless resignation as he looked toward a distant bird winging its flight away from him." (Ch.9)
 7. "She heard him moving about the room; every sound indicating impatience and irritation. Another time she would have gone in at his request. She would, through habit, have yielded to his desire; not with any sense of submission or obedience to his compelling wishes, but unthinkingly, as we walk, move, sit, stand, go through the daily treadmill of the life which has been portioned out to us." (Ch. 11)

8. "She completely abandoned her Tuesdays at home, and did not return the visits of those who had called upon her." (Ch. 19)
9. "The pigeon-house pleased her. It at once assumed the intimate character of a home, while she herself invested it with a charm which it reflected like a warm glow. There was with her a feeling of having descended in the social scale, with a corresponding sense of having risen in the spiritual." (Ch. 32)
10. "You have been a very, very, foolish boy, wasting your time dreaming of impossible things when you speak of Mr. Pontellier setting me free! I am no longer one of Mr. Pontellier's possessions to dispose of or not. I give myself where I choose. If he were to say, 'Here, Robert, take her and be happy, she is yours,' I should laugh at you both." (Ch. 36)
11. "The children appeared before her like antagonists who sought to drag her into the soul's slavery for the rest of her days. But she knew a way to elude them. She was not thinking of these things when she walked down to the beach." (Ch. 39)

