

Eleventh Grade Honors Language Arts: Summer Reading Assignment 2023

Required Novel: *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez

"It is November 25, 1960, and three beautiful sisters have been found near their wrecked Jeep at the bottom of a 150-foot cliff on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. The official state newspaper reports their deaths as accidental. It does not mention that a fourth sister lives. Nor does it explain that the sisters were among the leading opponents of Gen. Rafael Leonidas Trujillo's dictatorship. It doesn't have to. Everybody knows of Las Mariposas."

—"The Butterflies."

"A fascinating and powerful picture of a family and a nation's history."

—*The Dallas Morning News*

"...it is first and foremost a great story, richly, gracefully told. It is earnest fiction, it is the lie that tells the truth of political oppression, but also of love, heartbreak, poverty, and the sorrow of separation and dehumanization suffered by those unjustly incarcerated."

—Anjanette Delgado *New York Journal of Books*

Assignment: You will select **2 prompts** (one from each category), and develop a thoughtful and thorough multi-paragraph response to each. Each response should be 400-600 words and reflect creative thinking and careful attention to detail.

****Please submit a copy of your work before the FIRST FULL DAY OF SCHOOL IN SEPTEMBER. You will submit your writing on Canvas, and that assignment will be run through Turnitin.com./AI Checker. Only submit YOUR original work.****

Response 1: Select from one of the following prompts. Include properly-formatted direct textual evidence to support your claims.

- A. This novel has been called polyphonic in that it contains many voices rather than a single narrator. Identify and analyze Alvarez's purpose and the impact of using multiple narrators. How does she differentiate the four voices of the sisters while creating a cohesive whole? How do these multiple voices connect with the themes of the novel?
- B. Select one of the four sisters and trace her evolution throughout the novel. How does your chosen character change personally and in relation to her family? What motivates/forces the change? What events radicalize each sister or prevent her from joining the revolution? What personal commitments and feelings complicate their political activism?
- C. Alvarez chose to write this narrative from the point of view of the Mirabal sisters, therefore, not including any male voices. For this prompt, explore two of the male characters—whether Señor Mirabal or the Mirabal sisters' husbands, friends, or fellow

revolutionaries—and discover their significance to the story and the underground rebellion as represented in the text.

Response 2: Select one of the following prompts. Properly-formatted direct textual evidence is required for Choice 1 only.

- A. Expanding on the question of historical fiction, choose one scene from the novel and research its historical veracity. **Find, read, and cite** one credible source that addresses your scene. Compare the two versions of the event. What does Alvarez alter or highlight in her version and for what purpose? Whether or not it is historically accurate, how effective is Alvarez in her quest to write “the truth according to character”?
- B. Create a dialogue in which you put one of the sisters in the novel in conversation with a character from a text previously read for school. Why would these characters meet and what would they discuss? Who would initiate the conversation and why? (Does one character have a lesson or advice to share? Do the characters have similar personalities or roles or obstacles within their respective stories? Would the characters conflict if they shared a story? etc.)
Within the dialogue, you must . . .
- Have a clear purpose in your selection of characters, and find a way to communicate that purpose within the dialogue.
 - Develop each character’s personality and role through their individual dialogue.

NOTES: You are NOT required to buy a copy of the text, but if you do, please annotate as you read and bring your copy during the opening weeks in September. If you borrow a copy or read online, you should create careful notes. These notes will be beneficial as you craft your responses and during our opening unit which begins with *In the Time of the Butterflies*.

Friendly reminders for your responses:

- 400-600 words per response
- Multiple paragraphs
- MLA Format
- Precise claim/argument/purpose
- Evidence from the text including **properly-cited quotes** (where required)
- Varied word choice
- Thorough editing
- Submitted on the first full day of school

Enjoy reading!

Each response will be assessed on the following 9 Point Rubric.

	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point
Focus and Content	Substantial, specific, and/or illustrative content demonstrating strong development and sophisticated ideas.	Sufficiently developed content with adequate elaboration or explanation.	Superficial and/or minimal content.
Style and Organization	Precise use of variety of words and sentence structures to create consistent writer's voice and tone; sophisticated arrangement of content with effective transitions	Use of variety of words and sentence structures to create writer's voice and tone; functional arrangement of content with limited transitions	Minimal variety in word choice and sentences; arrangement of content may be unclear.
Conventions	Evident control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation. MLA format.	Primary control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation. MLA format.	Limited control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation. MLA format.