

# Summer Reading Assignment English I Advanced

## *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

All of us are engaged in a continuous process of constructing meaning as we go through life. We often take this process for granted and simply assume that things are the way they are. One of the most powerful aspects of literature is its ability to help us see the world from a different point of view. There are varying points of view in the following poem “**A Martian Sends a Postcard Home**” by Craig Raine, the essay “**Body Rituals Among the Nacirema**” by Horace Miner, and novel *A Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon. First, consider the following poem and answer the questions below:

<p><b>A Martian Sends a Postcard Home Craig Raine, 1979</b></p> <p>Caxtons are mechanical birds with many wings and some are treasured for their markings--</p> <p>they cause the eyes to melt or the body to shriek without pain.</p> <p>I have never seen one fly, but sometimes they perch on the hand.</p> <p>Mist is when the sky is tired of flight and rests its soft machine on the ground:</p> <p>then the world is dim and bookish like engravings under tissue paper.</p> <p>Rain is when the earth is television. It has the properties of making colours darker.</p> <p>Model T is a room with the lock inside -- a key is turned to free the world</p> <p>for movement, so quick there is a film to watch for anything missed.</p>	<p>But time is tied to the wrist or kept in a box, ticking with impatience.</p> <p>In homes, a haunted apparatus sleeps, that snores when you pick it up.</p> <p>If the ghost cries, they carry it to their lips and soothe it to sleep</p> <p>with sounds. And yet, they wake it up deliberately, by tickling with a finger.</p> <p>Only the young are allowed to suffer openly. Adults go to a punishment room</p> <p>with water but nothing to eat. They lock the door and suffer the noises</p> <p>alone. No one is exempt and everyone's pain has a different smell.</p> <p>At night, when all the colours die, they hide in pairs</p> <p>and read about themselves -- in colour, with their eyelids shut.</p>
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1. What is a caxton? What does the bird description highlight about ‘caxtons’?

2. Choose two other phenomena described by the Martian, explain what they are and how describing them in a defamiliarized way can highlight different elements of them than we normally consider.

A.

B.

**Next, consider the essay. The following is a short sociological essay about the body rituals of the Nacirema, as you read it, answer the following questions:**

1. What do we learn about the Nacirema as a culture in the essay?

2. How are their body rituals both similar to and different from ours?

## **Assignment: Poetry Collection and Meta-Cognitive Statement 100 points**

Just as “A Martian Sends a Postcard Home” and “Body Rituals of the Nacirema” show us our culture, our worldview, and ourselves in a new light, so too does Christopher John Francis Boone in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. His unique perspective and view of the world creates both conflict and meaning for him, and engaging with that process can illuminate our understanding of the text, ourselves, and others. With this in mind, here is your assignment:

You will create a poetry portfolio of **10 poems about yourself and your life. 5 of the poems should be from your perspective and 5 companion poems that attempt to mimic Christopher’s perspective on the same subject.** The focus on the companion poems is to engage in the style and characterization that Christopher shares with us in the novel, so make sure to do your best to truly see and convey the things about you in a new and original light.

**Criteria and Hints:** -Choose 5 areas of life, people, interest, animals, etc. that you feel passionately about or that define you in some way-

- In your companion poems, strive to see what is interesting or valuable about those things in a new light -
- Consider the full range of human emotions- we are funny, sad, angry, intense, intelligent, silly, etc. about ourselves and our lives. Your poetry should reflect any and all important emotional aspects of your life. -
- Just as Christopher uses drawing and visual imagery to make meaning, so should you include any appropriate drawings, pictures, designs, and graphics to help develop the meaning of your poems. -

**Be creative!** An imaginative concept that is carefully developed with attention to detail and effort is a wonderful thing.

### **Meta-Cognitive Statement:**

In addition to your poems, you will need to compose a **typed, double-spaced 1-2 page meta-cognitive statement that discusses and explains your poetry.** Think and write about your creative process, your choices, what elements you focused on in your poems, what parallels you drew between the novel and your own poetry, what elements you tried to highlight in your companion pieces, what parts of your poetry were the most successful and why, what parts were the biggest challenges and why?

**Think of your metacognitive statement as a space for you to clarify to yourself and share with me the often ambiguous and mysterious process of creativity.**

**Poetry Evaluation Rubric:**

	Excellent	Good	Acceptable	Needs Improvement
Number of Poems 10 points	-Completed all required poems	-Completed nearly all required poems	-completed most required poems	-completed some required poems
Use of syntax and diction to capture subject 25 points	-Powerful and effective diction and syntax to convey meaning -Defamiliarized poems use inventive and creative diction and syntax to convey meaning	-Precise and accurate diction and syntax used to convey meaning -Defamiliarized poems use creative diction to convey meaning	-Attempt to use accurate and meaningful syntax and diction to convey meaning -Defamiliarized poems attempt to use creative diction and syntax to convey meaning	-General, bland, vague diction and syntax used in poetry -Little to no creativity on display in diction and syntax
Use of imagery, graphics, design to create point of view 20 points	-Imagery contributes to overall meaning of the collection	-Imagery complements overall meaning of collection	-Imagery fits with overall meaning of collection	-Imagery distracts from overall meaning of collection
Metacognitive Statement 25 points	-Meta-cognitive statement illuminates creative process and meaning of collection -Meta-cognitive statement draws significant parallels between novel and poetry collection -Meta-cognitive uses correct grammar, spelling, and mechanics	-Meta-cognitive statements explains creative process and meaning of collection -Meta-cognitive statement draws some parallels between novel and poetry collection	-Meta-cognitive statement attempts to explain creative process and meaning of collection -Meta-cognitive statement attempts to draw parallels between novel and collection -MCS uses correct grammar, spelling, and mechanics	-Meta-cognitive statements fails to explain creative process and meaning of collection -Meta-cognitive statement makes little to no attempt to draw parallels between novel and collection -MCS contains numerous errors in spelling, grammar, and mechanics
Creativity, aesthetics, overall effort 20 points	-Collection is polished, aesthetically pleasing, and demonstrates superlative effort	-Collection is aesthetically pleasing and demonstrates clear effort	-Collections is somewhat aesthetically pleasing and demonstrates some effort	-Collection contains some noticeable mistakes, but demonstrates some effort

**This project is due the FIRST DAY OF CLASS AT THE START OF THE PERIOD. Any late assignments will receive a grade penalty according to district policy.**

## As You Read the Novel Guide

### **A Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon**

The disorienting nature of Christopher's narration provides a challenge for many readers. As such use the following guide to help you as you engage with the novel. Pay attention to the following themes and symbols as you read. Use sticky notes, highlighting, and annotation to find and question/react/interact with these topics as you read the novel.

**\*Additionally, these topics will form the basis of your first writing assignment.**

1. **Metaphors-** Christopher has virtually no ability to think metaphorically. Note the ways that this creates challenges for him and us in the text, as well as how this inability opens up new and interesting ways of understanding the world.

2. **Order and Chaos-** The world is confusing and disorienting for Christopher in many ways. How does he create order in life, and what does that reveal about his character? Make note of the events, passages, and places where Christopher tries to make sense of life and the things that happen to and around him. How successful is he? How does the murder investigation fit into his drive to find meaning, and what does he get out of it at the end? What can other characters, the reader, and people in general learn from the way that he puts order into his life?

3. **Animals-** the novel starts with the aforementioned "curious incident of the dog" and throughout the novel, animals serve both symbolic and concrete functions for Christopher and the text. What do animals mean for him, and how do they differ from people? Make note of important events, passages, and interactions with animals, as well as how they illuminate the meaning of the novel for Christopher and for us.

4. **Point of View-** the novel is a study in point of view. Make note of the point of view, as well as the ways that creates difficulty for us as readers as well as for Christopher as a narrator and protagonist. Note passages, sentences, phrases, and words that seem to convey Christopher's truly unique point of view, as well as how that point of view illuminates the meaning of the text as a whole for the reader.