

**Summer 2018 Reading:
*A Tale of Two Cities***



“He knew enough of the world to know that there is nothing in it better than the faithful service of the heart” (bk. 2; chp. 6).

Directions: read Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities* and respond via one of the essay topics below. Your essay should 3 pages in length (MLA). *Remember:* do not summarize the book; rather, analyze and evaluate themes, worldviews, moral lessons, political statements, etc. Your essay should include at least 2 outside sources. Rely heavily upon the text and use it to back up your statements. In-text citations and a Works Cited page are a must. No 1st person point of view. Your thesis should make a clear statement, be debatable, and preview your main points.

Please also complete the form below to verify your completion of the reading.

Due date: Friday, August 17th 2018

Essay Topics:

1. Resurrection. Dickens uses the theme of resurrection frequently, relating it to both people and societies. He stresses the injustice of pre-Revolutionary France, where peasants could be executed without trial at the whim of an aristocrat. That society is now dead but France will be resurrected as a new sort of nation. Similarly, at the end of the novel Sydney Carton is spiritually resurrected after dying to save Darnay.
2. Sacrifice. Sacrifice is a major element of the novel. Miss Pross sacrifices her own happiness to give Lucie every chance in life, for example; Dickens stresses the extent of her selflessness. Carton makes the ultimate sacrifice; he voluntarily gives his life by impersonating the condemned Darnay and being executed in his place. His motivation is to make Darnay's wife Lucie, whom he loves, happy.
3. Violence and revolution. Dickens shows clear sympathy with many of the aims of the French revolutionaries and portrays the degeneracy of the aristocracy vividly; for example in one scene an aristocrat kills a child with the wheel of his carriage and casually throws the parents a coin to compensate for their loss. However he also illustrates the indiscriminate violence unleashed by the revolution itself, and uses the unjust death sentence imposed on Darnay, a virtuous man, to show this.
4. Light and darkness. Light and dark are used as metaphors for good & evil. Arrests happen at night. Dark blood on snow slowly spreads a stain, as evil spreads through the Revolution. Madame Lafarge is followed by dark shadows.
5. Duality. The novel is built around opposing pairs. The two cities of the title are stable but corrupt and socially divided London, and Paris with the high ideals and violent reality of the Revolution. Lucie and Madame Lafarge represent good & evil women. Carton and Darnay have a very close physical resemblance but Darnay is highly moralistic and worthy, while Carton (until he rises above himself) is dissipated and lazy.

Student: I have read my summer reading assignment in its entirety.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent: I verify that my child completed his or her summer reading assignment in its entirety.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

