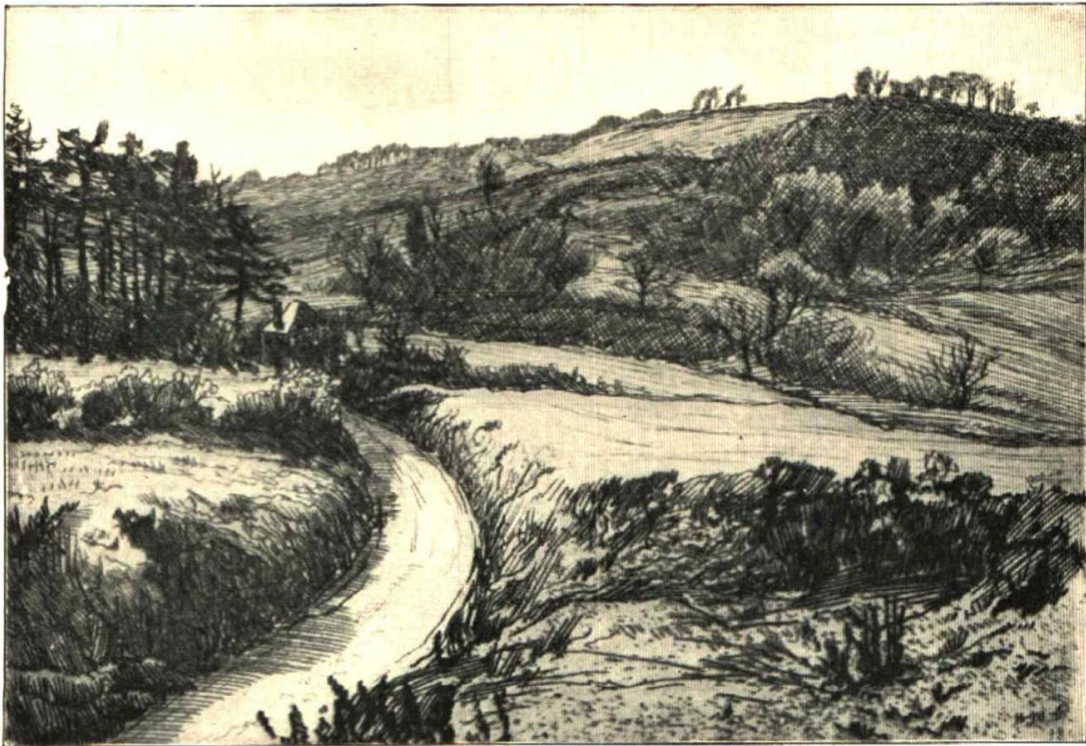


AP English Literature

Summer Reading 2022



The Woodlanders

Thomas Hardy

# AP English Literature Summer Reading Assignment 2022

This year's summer reading assignment for students enrolled in AP English Literature is to actively read and complete a series of journal entries on the novel *The Woodlanders* by the English novelist Thomas Hardy. This assignment will be the foundation for a series of assessments and a major portion of the first quarter grade. The journal will be a double test grade, and a conventional test on the book will also be given the day of journal collection.

A minimum of four test grades will be based on *The Woodlanders*—the journal entries, the book test, a modified Socratic seminar presentation, and at least one passage analysis essay—so it is of the highest importance that you put a strong effort into this assignment over the summer.

## ***The Woodlanders***

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) was born and raised in a small village in Dorset, in the south of England, and worked as an architect in London for a few years before returning to Dorset to pursue a career as a writer. Between 1871 and 1895 he published fourteen novels and several short story collections and became one of the preeminent fiction writers of Victorian England. He is especially remembered for his “Wessex” tales, a series of socially conscious novels set in the fictionalized rural landscape of Wessex in southwest England. These novels are known for portraying individuals struggling against their own passions within restrictive social circumstances, often with tragic results. After his last two novels caused a storm of controversy over their frank portrayal of sexuality, he retired from writing novels and focused on poetry for the remainder of his life, and was similarly successful in that genre.

*The Woodlanders* is Hardy's eleventh novel, first published serially in twelve monthly installments from May 1886 to April 1887 prior to publication in book form in 1887. Set in a secluded forest community, it tells the story of Grace Melbury, the daughter of a timber merchant who has long been expected to marry Giles Winterborne, a local countryman to whom she has been informally betrothed for some time. But when a local doctor takes an interest in her, Grace's father jumps at the opportunity for her to make a more socially advantageous match, with tumultuous consequences. Within this traditional romantic framework, *The Woodlanders* explores themes involving social class, gender, social upheaval, sexuality, and evolutionary survival.

## **The Text**

The first thing you need to do is acquire a copy of the book. The most common editions are available here:

[The Woodlanders \(Oxford World's Classics\): Hardy, Thomas, Kramer, Dale, Boumelha, Penny: 9780199538539: Amazon.com: Books](#)

[The Woodlanders \(Penguin Classics\): Thomas Hardy, Patricia Ingham: 9780140435474: Amazon.com: Books](#)

You need to get the right translation because that's the one that will be on assessments, and when we read the book together as a class you'll be lost if you don't have that specific version. You need the physical book. (If there's a hardship or some sort of issue with that requirement, please contact me as soon as possible.)

### **The Reading and Journals**

The assignment is as follows: read the entire main novel, and while reading the novel, complete four journal entries in response to the following chapter groupings:

*Journal Entry 1:* Chapters 1 - 8

*Journal Entry 2:* Chapters 9 - 16

*Journal Entry 3:* Chapters 17-24

*Journal Entry 4:* Chapters 25 - 32

*Journal Entry 5:* Chapters 33 - 40

*Journal Entry 6:* Chapters 41 - 48

Students often want to know "how long" the entries should be, and I usually resist answering that question, because I'll be looking for quality more than quantity; long

entries aren't necessarily "good" and short ones aren't necessarily "bad." But a more practical way of answering that question would be that I'm concerned with the *quantity of quality* writing, and typically most strong journal entries are about 4 pages, double-spaced. See the "do" and "do not" section at the end for more information about journal expectations.

These four journal entries will be collected in early September, most likely the second full week of school. I'll provide the exact due date shortly before the start of school.

Some specifics about the reading and journal entries:

- Do not read plot summaries (Spark Notes, etc.) while reading. I want you to have an authentic reading experience and to think for yourself, not be told what to think by someone else. We'll be looking at secondary sources during the unit.
- The journal entries are to be completed WHILE you're reading *The Woodlanders*, not after. Their purpose is to facilitate reflection and active reading, and if you read the whole book and then do all four journal entries together then they won't be effective in fulfilling that purpose.
- You can either type or handwrite the entries. If you type, then double space with an appropriate font, size 12; if you handwrite then you have to be legible.
- Grammar, mechanics, sentence structure, and all matters concerning readability and effective composition matter. I'll be looking for both quality of content and quality of composition.
- Make sure your journal entries are interesting, lively and responsive reflections of the readings. See the following for more specifics.

## Journal Entries: Do / Do Not

What constitutes a good journal entry? Simply put, I want the journals to be interesting, lively, well-written discussions that evince engagement with the text. There are various ways to accomplish that. Below is a list of what to do and not to do when writing journal entries.

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DO NOT: Summarize the plot as an end in itself.

DO: Provide context for your insights about the readings by providing some plot specifics to clarify what part of the text you're referencing.

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DO NOT: Pretend to love the book because you think that's what an English teacher wants to read; or, conversely, complain and blame whatever struggles you're having with the reading on what you imagine to be the author's ineptitude.

DO: Provide an honest and thoughtful reflection of the experience of reading the book. Regardless of whether you're finding it a joy or a struggle, read and write with an open mind and the aim of deepening understanding and appreciation.

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DO NOT: Get bogged down in endless specifics without connecting those specifics to any larger point, or write in broad generalizations without much in the way of specifics.

DO: Balance broad generalizations with specific illustrative detail.

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DO NOT: Go off on tangents about life or your own experiences without a clear connection to the reading.

DO: Write germane tangents about life or yourself that relate clearly to the reading, if you feel it's appropriate and interesting; and make sure to make the connection to the book clear.

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DO NOT: Stick quotations from the novel into the entry without regard for grammatical integrity or context.

DO: Weave direct quotations from the reading into your own writing, and make sure you elaborate on the significance of the quotation and properly explain the context.

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DO NOT: Write the entry as one long block of text with no paragraphing, or—and this is even worse—randomly indent once in a while to provide the appearance of paragraphing.

DO: Use paragraphing as an organizational tool, to indicate a shift in topic.

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DO NOT: Write mechanically, with every sentence the same length.

DO: Vary the sentence structure to help make your writing more readable.

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DO NOT: Try to make the entries sound academic by using unnecessarily complex language.

DO: Write clearly, naturally, and with the aim of making authentic, sensible insights about the readings.

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DO NOT: Write boring journal entries. I will be reading every word of these, and I don't want to be bored.

DO: Write interesting, lively responses to the readings.

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If you have other questions about this assignment, please email me at [morganj@lincolnps.org](mailto:morganj@lincolnps.org).

That's it...enjoy the summer!



Hardy's birthplace in Dorset, a lovely spot for summer reading!