

AP Humanities

Instructions for students who will be in the AP Humanities class in the fall

This packet contains the reading tasks that students in AP Humanities will respond to while reading *The Poisonwood Bible*. If you are signed up for the class, you should download the questions. You are not required to read this book over the summer; however, we recommend starting to read it as it is relatively long. The questions will be helpful as you read.

MRHS has copies of the book which may be available later in the summer. Or, you may choose to buy your own book or a Kindle edition with audible.

The *Poisonwood Bible* can be purchased as a Kindle book with audible for around \$20.00 from Amazon. A paperback will cost \$13.00 a used book can be had for \$5.00.

The Poisonwood Bible book notes -Barbara Kingsolver

The Poisonwood Bible tells the story of an American missionary family that travels to Africa in the mid twentieth century. Although the family is purely fictional, the historical events described in the book are real. As you follow the narrative, you will first meet the Price family and learn of their lives in Kilanga as told by Orleanna, the mother and her four daughters: Ruth May, Adah, Leah, and Rachel. As the women of the Price family take turns telling their versions of the story, you will see their personalities, beliefs and ideocracies.

1. As you picture each of the daughters, choose a quote to describe her and briefly explain how the words you choose captures her character. Also describe Orleanna and Nathan with a quote and an explanation. These notes will stretch through the beginning of the book.
2. The plot of the story develops in the middle of the book. Plot events will be shown as episodes. The **Christianity** of Nathan Price opposes the **tribal beliefs** of the villagers causing friction. The **geographical setting** of the story and **historical allusions** provide more evidence of conflict as the tale is told. Choose four specific episodes that depict the character's struggles and describe them briefly. (Include page numbers.) Below is an example of how you can approach this question. Although you cannot use this exact quote, you can use other quotes later in the book about the same topic.

EXAMPLE: In Book 2 "The Revelation" p. 180-181 or 222-223 depending on the edition.

Leah is witnessing the moment the Congo gains its independence from Belgium. Patrice Lumumba, the new Congolese prime minister is making a speech. "Ladies and Gentlemen of the Congo," he said, "who have fought for the independence won today, I salute you!.....We have known *les maisons magnifiques* for the whites in the cities, and the falling down houses for the Negroes."

Leah begins thinking about the point Patrice Lumumba is making. She can affirm his claim by her own observations about the living conditions of the Congolese people. She begins comparing the Underdown's quality of life with the Congolese's. The Underdowns had "soft red Persian rugs, chairs with matching ottomans, even a radio. She (Mrs. Underdown) had a real china tea set on the dark wooded sideboard. By contrast the Congolese have homes that are

“dusty run-down shacks...They make their homes out of sticks or tin or anything in the world they can find.” It is at this point that Leah begins changing her view of the world. She starts questioning whether the Belgians and later the Americans were ever the good guys.

3. At the end of the novel, describe how each of the original characters have changed, grown, matured or not from the person you identified at the start. Provide evidence to support your claims about the characters.

These notes can be typed or handwritten in a document that can be handed in eventually. Do not refer to study guides or other sources for information about the novel. Do not “share” or “work together” with other students.

The Poisonwood Bible is the first novel that we work on in September so the more of it you read over the summer, the lighter the load will be in September.