

English 10 Honors/Pre-AP/Gifted

Summer Reading Assignment: *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd

**Assignment:** As you read the novel, you are to keep a reading journal. In the journal, you will record quotations which seem significant to you, and then write comments in which you analyze the significance of the quote. Look for quotes that reflect the time period, or help develop the presentation of theme (author's message), or motifs (recurring image or symbol). You may choose to address several of the following themes/motifs:

- the political setting
- the universal need for love
- the quest for social equality
- betrayal
- self-identity
- the Black Madonna
- the bees
- the box of secret treasures of Lily's mother
- the wailing wall

In addition to focusing on these topics, you can choose a quote that:

- reveals a significant trait of a character
- contributes to the tone (author's attitude toward subject matter) of the novel

Or, you can:

- make a connection to something in your own life or experience (This reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_)
- ask a question
- make a prediction
- make a comparison to today's attitudes and culture

What you should not do is watch the movie version instead of reading the novel. We are interested in your own interpretation of the book, written in your own words. If there is evidence of plagiarism, you will receive a grade of 0 for this assignment.

**Requirements:**

- Must have at least 14 entries.
- Entries must be drawn from all parts of the novel. You must have one from the last chapter commenting on the relevance of the ending.
- Quotations must include a context (say what's happening at that point in the story), as well as the chapter and page number.
- Commentary must focus on interpretation or analysis; **no summary.**

- **A printout of the assignment must be handed in on the first day of class; late work will not receive credit.**
- The assignment must be available as a Word or text document; this will be submitted to Turnitin.com during the first week of class to check for plagiarism. This means the assignment must be typed.

**Example:** Below are a few sample entries to use as a guide. To create your journal, you can use the Word template provided or, if you don't have Word, create a similar document in the program you use.

Passage	Commentary
<p>Chapter 1 pg 1- “The bees came the summer of 1964, the summer I turned fourteen and my life went spinning off into a whole new orbit, and I mean <i>whole new orbit</i>. Looking back on it now, I want to say they showed up like the angel Gabriel appearing to the Virgin Mary, setting events in motion I could never have guessed.”</p>	<p>This paragraph indicates the setting, the summer of 1964, when the author was a 14 year old girl. She is religious (as per the biblical allusions) and something profound happened to her that put her in a “whole new orbit.” I wonder what the bees had to do with this profound change in her life.</p>
<p>Chapter 1 pg 2- “Rosaleen had worked for us since my mother died. My daddy—who I called T. Ray because “Daddy” never fit him—had pulled her out of the peach orchard, where she’d worked as one of his pickers...Rosaleen had never had a child herself, so for the last ten years I’d been her pet guinea pig.”</p>	<p>Lily was not close to her father and since her mother’s death she had been reared by a childless black woman, a former peach picker, who used Lily as her “pet guinea pig” for the last ten years. I wonder how this affected Lily’s view of black people.</p>
<p>Chapter 1 pg 19-This is the moment Lily is telling her father what she remembers of her mother’s last moments. “I wanted so much to grab on his leg, to feel him reach down and lift me to his chest, but I couldn’t move, and neither did he.”</p>	<p>This quote shows Lily’s need to be loved. Even though her father has been distant and even cruel, she still longs for his love. Both of her parents are absent—her mother physically and her father emotionally.</p>
<p>Chapter 8 pg 156-Lily wants to accompany Zach on his honey deliveries. “August knocked over her sweet tea, a thing so unlike her. You did not associate spills with August. With May for sure, but not August.”</p>	<p>This passage reveals the fact that August is extremely nervous with the idea of Lily going out in public with Zack. August’s usually calm and controlled demeanor is shaken by Lily’s request. This may foreshadow something negative happening if Lily does go with Zack.</p>