

Modern European History

Mr. Fisher

* Mandatory Summer Reading *

**PICK ONE OF THESE TWO BOOKS AND
COMPLETE THE APPROPRIATE ASSIGNMENT.
IT IS DUE ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.**

ALL ANSWERS MUST BE TYPED AND DOUBLE-SPACED.

Girl with a Pearl Earring

by Tracy Chevalier, 233 pages

Girl with a Pearl Earring takes place during a chaotic era in Dutch history and presents an in-depth look into the world of art and a grand master's life and soul. The focal point of this novel is the woman behind Dutch master Vermeer's painting, "Girl with a Pearl Earring," known as the Dutch Mona Lisa.

ASSIGNMENT:

Answer the following questions. For questions 1-5, all answers should be a minimum of 2 paragraphs. For instructions on how to answer question 5, see below:

1. Do you think Griet was typical of other 17th century girls her age? In what ways? How did she differ?
2. Peering into 17th-century Delft shows a small, self-sufficient city. Describe the features of the town that made it distinctive, and that made it come to life for you.
3. What major events were happening elsewhere in Europe at that time? **DO THE RESEARCH!**
4. How is Delft different from or similar to your town or city? Are the social structures the same or different? Cite specific examples.
5. Discuss the ways in which *religion* influenced Griet's relationship with Vermeer. His wife? Maria Thins?
6. After reading the book, research Johannes Vermeer and his paintings. Choose one painting and write a typed, double-spaced, 2-page story of that painting's origin as you imagine it.

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The Battle: A Novel

by Patrick Rambaud (Author), Will Hobson (Translator), 320 pages

The Battle is a realistic and gripping novel about the battle of Aspern-Essling (1809), one of Napoleon's first major defeats. The book excels in exposing the realities of war, and focuses on a group of soldiers during the two days of barbaric fighting that resulted in 40,000 dead. A subplot features Henri Beyle, better known as Stendhal, waiting in Vienna for news of the battle and fantasizing about Anna Krauss, an attractive blonde Austrian.

ASSIGNMENT:

Answer the following questions. Questions 1-4, answers should be a minimum of 2 paragraphs. For instructions on how to answer question 5, see below.

1. The novel vividly illustrates the brutality of early 19th century warfare. Apart from the carnage of the battle itself, what other horrific events occurred during this period of conflict? Were there also acts of heroism and opportunities for honor presented in the novel? List them.
2. Describe the geography of Aspern and Essling as depicted in the novel. In what ways did the geography affect military strategy? Explain why it was crucial that the French keep their pontoon bridges across the Danube intact.
3. Describe the intense jealousy and hatred between Napoleon's generals and marshals, including Bessieres, Massena, Berthier, Boudet, and Napoleon himself. In what ways were these men influenced by their feelings for one another? Do you think their military judgment was shaped by their personal relationships? Cite specific examples from the reading.
4. How is Louis-Francois Lejeune, colonel of the engineers, affected by his romantic interest in an Austrian woman? Do his feelings affect his military judgment and his duty? Explain.
5. The novel is presented entirely from the French point of view. After reading it, write a typed, double-spaced, 2-page description of the battle as you imagine it from the point of view of an Austrian soldier. Make sure to include specific details about the brutality of the fighting, your feelings about the French enemy, your superior officers, your fellow soldiers, and your hopes for the future.