



"A conscience is that still small voice that people won't listen to." – Carlo Collodi

Welcome to Comparative Literature! This guide includes suggestions, comments, and questions to introduce you to the expectations and approach to the coursework. **Even though this may sound relatively easy to some of you, be forewarned—we will not be dealing with fairy tales as you know them or remember them from your childhood.**

There are notable characteristics that distinguish fairy tales from other stories:

- A fairy tale begins with "Once upon a time..."
- Fairy tales happen in the long ago.
- Fairy tales have fantasy and make-believe in them.
- Fairy tales have clearly defined good characters vs. evil characters.
- Royalty is usually present in a fairy tale, a beautiful princess/handsome prince.
- There may be magic with giants, elves, talking animals, witches or fairies.
- Fairy tales have a problem that needs to be solved.
- It often takes three tries to solve the problem.
- Fairy tales have happy endings – "they all lived happily ever after."
- Fairy tales usually teach a lesson or have a theme.



Though the above elements are essential, this course is asking you to look beyond these basic concepts. You will be required to examine and articulate the greater social, psychological, historical, and even political themes hidden within these stories. This might include gender roles, roles of parents, the function of dreams, roles within society and social order, sexuality, character representations, and so on. Ultimately, you will be asked to critically analyze these texts. What does this mean? How does one define the analytical process? Analysis is a creative act all by itself and there are many possible interpretations of a text. The success of your analysis will depend on how well and how carefully you use the text to support your interpretation. However, your interpretation must go beyond that. Your analysis will greatly and most heavily depend on how closely you read and scrutinize the materials. This should not be limited to the tales, but also include critical essays, articles, films, and documentaries.

This summer you will be receiving Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio*. Many of you have seen or been exposed to the movie versions of this story, especially from Disney. While it is acceptable to be familiar with this version, it will not fulfill

your knowledge of the text. In other words, you **MUST** read the book and you **MUST** read it critically. You are expected to consider and examine the greater themes of the tale and what those themes are really telling us about Colladi's world and, perhaps more importantly, about ourselves.

In order to prepare you for our first unit, "Resurrection, Reanimation and the Creator" it is extremely important that you complete the following assignments before you return in September.

Your Task:

1. **Read and Analyze** *Pinocchio* by Carlo Colladi. Keep in mind this is the **ORIGINAL** story-this is not the "Disney-fied" story most of you are probably familiar with. **Take detailed notes as you read!**
2. **View CRITICALLY** Walt Disney's *Pinocchio*. You can find this at your local library or look in your closet of old childhood movies. Your main goal is to look for **DIFFERENCES** between the novel and the Disney classic.

With this in mind, and after a critical reading/viewing of *Pinocchio*, you should be able to respond to the following questions:

- How does the Disney film differ from the original Collodi fairy tale? What changes did Disney make and why are these changes significant?
- What are the consequences of Pinocchio's decisions and actions, and what do they teach children?
- How are femininity and masculinity constructed in *Pinocchio*? Give some examples from both the novel and the film, and explain how your examples illustrate the roles expected of females and males.
- How are race, ethnicity, and class constructed in *Pinocchio*? Give some examples from both the novel and the film, and explain how your examples illustrate the roles expected of differing races and classes.
- What are some possible readings of the film? What "good" lessons does the film teach? Give examples and explain why.

Your responses need not be written down, rather they should aid you in a discussion of the material, promote a more in-depth understanding of *Pinocchio*, however it is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** that you use post-it notes throughout your reading to annotate your interaction with the text.

The analysis that you perform, and the interpretations/responses that you construct for *Pinocchio* will be a major factor in developing your overall comprehension of all course materials. Consider this a partial introduction to this class' requirements. Though this may sound like a daunting task, you should not feel intimidated. The reading should be fun, but **MUST** also be constructive.

It cannot be emphasized enough the importance of your summer work. This not only prepares you for the beginning of the school year, it also aids in your comprehension of the requirements for this course.

Good luck, enjoy, and I will see you Thursday, September 5th!!!

Mr. Ambrosio