



Westminster Christian Academy

10th Grade Summer Reading

Honors Literature of Western Civilization

The Count of Monte Cristo by Alexandre Dumas

Read *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas (ISBN-13:978-0140449266 for the highly recommended 1,200 page version for voracious readers **OR** ISBN-13:978-0553213508 for the abridged version by Bantam Classics, 500 pages and perfectly acceptable).

Since this is a work of literature in translation, please only read one of those two editions so that we are able to work together from a shared text.

While reading consider what this text shares about the following question: What does it mean to be human? We will explore this essential question throughout the year.

Dumas' adventurous novel, inspired by a real-life case of wrongful imprisonment, explores deep human issues of love, suffering, and contentment and thorny moral questions about revenge, justice, and forgiveness.

Annotate for and consider these ideas while reading to prepare for class discussion and writing assignments:

1. CHARACTERS: What influences how characters develop/change throughout the novel?
2. CONTEXT: How do the historical context and the worldview of the time period affect the story?
3. CONFLICT: What are the major turning points of the plot and what drives them?

After you are finished reading, consider what **themes** (*see definition below*) have come to light through your understanding of the text. **Make a list of five themes** and be ready to discuss and write about them upon your return to school.

There will also be an objective test over the novel in the first week of school. I recommend not watching a movie version until after taking the test since the films are significantly different from the book on some essential plot points.

Theme: refers both to a truth about human life, which an author wants to emphasize in a piece of fiction (or drama), and to the idea that controls the climactic action in a story. A theme should not be confused with the subject of a literary work. A subject is a topic that acts as a foundation for a literary work, but **a theme is an opinion expressed on the subject.** This is NOT one word and should not be cliché.