



British Literature
10th Grade Summer Assignment

The summer assignment consists of two parts:

1. Read Dante's *Purgatory*. Please purchase the [Modern Library edition](#) translated by Anthony Esolen (with the purple cover; ISBN: 978-0812971255). You must annotate your book.
2. Write an argumentative essay in response to one of the following prompts. The essay should be at least two full pages in length; double-spaced; Times New Roman, 12-point font; with one-inch margins. Avoid summarizing the plot; assume your reader already has a basic understanding of the characters and action. Use evidence from the text to support your position.
 - a. At the threshold of Purgatory, Dante encounters three steps: one "white marble scoured and cleaned so bright / I saw myself in it as in a glass"; another "scorched and rough-cut stone... / veined with cracks all over and across, / and darker than the darkest violet-brown"; and a third that "looked like a block of fiery porphyry, / red as the blood that spurts out of a vein" (9, 94-102). What do these steps mean? What do they say about the realm of Purgatory?
 - b. What is the role of art in *Purgatory*? How do the sculptures, songs, poems, etc. contribute to the journey up the mountain?
 - c. Examine Vergil's final words to Dante: "Lord of yourself I crown and miter you" (27, 142). What does it mean, that Dante is "Lord" of himself? How does he master himself? (You may also consider how Dante has changed from the beginning of *Inferno* to the end of *Purgatory*.)

Your book and essay will be collected on the first day of class. Late work will be penalized. Please contact Mr. Richardson at brichardson@ascentclassical.org if you have any questions.