



Modern Literature
12th Grade Summer Assignment

The summer assignment consists of two parts:

1. Read *Fathers and Children*. Please purchase the [Penguin Classics edition](#) translated by Rosemary Edmonds (ISBN: 978-0140441475). You must annotate your book.

2. Write short responses, no more than one full page, to two of the following prompts. The responses should be 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.

1. A critical controversy emerged in the wake of the publication of *Fathers and Children*—primarily surrounding the character Bazarov. The young radicals accused Turgenev of siding with the older liberals by using Bazarov to caricature their position. The older liberals, meanwhile, accused Turgenev of siding with the young radicals by presenting Bazarov in a heroic light. Turgenev himself seemed, at times, unsure of his attitude toward his own creation, writing in a letter to the poet Afanasy Fet, “God only knows whether I loved him or hated him!” What are we to make of Bazarov? In the words of Sir Isaiah Berlin, “What was Bazarov? How was he to be taken? Was he a positive or a negative figure? A hero or a devil?”

2. Consider the role of love in the novel. Are there different types of love? Does the novel hold up one kind of love as better, for both the individual and society? (You may also want to consider how Arkady, Katya, Nikolai, Fenichka, and Bazarov’s parents view romantic love, and how that differs from the view of romantic love held by Bazarov and Pavel.)

3. What does the novel say about the importance of memory for both the individual and society? Pay attention to which characters are capable or incapable of remembering, which characters scorn or cherish the past, and how attitudes toward the past affect the present and the future.

Your book and responses will be collected on the first day of class.

Please contact Mr. Gallagher at lgallagher@ascentclassical.org, or Mr. Richardson at brichardson@ascentclassical.org, if you have any questions.