



James Joyce: *Dubliners*

AP English Literature and Composition

Summer Reading 2025

“There was no doubt about it: if you wanted to succeed you had to go away. You could do nothing in Dublin.”



AP English Literature Summer Reading Assignment

2024 - 2025

Students enrolled in AP English Literature for the 2024-2025 school year are required to actively read and complete a series of journal entries on the short story collection *Dubliners* by James Joyce. This assignment will comprise a major portion of the first quarter grade. The journal will comprise two test grades, and a conventional test on the

book will also be given the day of journal collection. Much of September will be devoted to study and discussion of *Dubliners*, and it will continually be referenced throughout the year. Your efforts on this assignment will have substantial consequences, so please put in your strongest effort.

Dubliners

James Joyce (1882 - 1941), the English-speaking world's most celebrated modernist writer, was born into a large Catholic family in Dublin, Ireland, before moving at the age of twenty-two to Continental Europe, where he lived for the remainder of his life, mostly in Zurich and Paris. He is renowned for four remarkable books: *Dubliners* (1914), a collection of 15 short stories; *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), his heavily autobiographical coming-of-age novel; and then *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939), his two radically experimental longer novels. Joyce revolutionized our understanding of what fiction could be, and is considered one of the greatest and most stylistically innovative of modernist writers. Despite living most of his adult life abroad, and associating with writers and artists from all over the world, his imagination fixated on his homeland: all of his major works are set in Ireland.

Dubliners was first published in 1914, although Joyce submitted it for publication almost nine years earlier. The stories form a unified attempt to present life as it was actually lived, to hold up a mirror to the city of Dublin, in all its unglorified and unromanticised reality. Each story is meant as a "slice of life" revealing some kind of sharply learned "epiphany" (sudden realization about the underlying truth). To anyone interested in Ireland, human nature, and/or the short story as an artistic medium, the collection is a deeply rewarding reading experience.

You are to complete five reflective journal entries while reading *Dubliners*, one on each of the following readings:

Journal Entry 1: “The Sisters”
 “An Encounter”
 “Araby”
 “Eveline”
 “After the Race”

Journal Entry 2: “Two Gallants”
 “The Boarding House”
 “A Little Cloud”
 “Counterparts”

Journal Entry 3: “Clay”
 “A Painful Case”
 “Ivy Day in the Committee Room”

Journal Entry 4: “A Mother”
 “Grace”

Journal Entry 5: “The Dead”

(The stories get progressively longer, hence less stories as the entries progress.)

Active Reading Strategies for *Dubliners*

- There is a logic to the sequence of the stories, so make sure to read them in order. They are not too difficult to read, but they will require patience and concentration.
- Do not read SparkNotes or any other such materials with *Dubliners*. I want you to have an original reading experience.
- Read with a pen or pencil in hand, making notes in the margins of the text when you are confused, amused, moved, or find some startling significance in a particular passage. Read wide-awake, actively and carefully.

Specifics about the Journal Entries

- The journal entries are to be completed as you read the stories, not afterwards. They are meant to help you read the novel actively.
- AI programs such as ChatGPT are not to be utilized on this assignment, and their use constitutes academic dishonesty. Just as I want you to have an original reading experience with the reading, I want you to have an original writing and thinking experience when writing the journal entries.
- You may type or handwrite the journal. If you type it, please sensibly format and double-space; if you handwrite it, make sure it is written neatly.
- Label the journal entries accurately, so I know which stories you are referring to. (For example: the fourth entry should be labeled: Entry 4: “A Mother” / “Grace”)

- The journal will be collected the second week of school and will comprise two test grades.
- Grammar and mechanics matter. I expect words to be spelled correctly, sentences properly punctuated, apostrophes properly used, etc. DO NOT write in fragments or run-on sentences.
- See the "Journal Entry Addendum" supplement on the last pages of this document.

In Summary

To make it clear what you have to do, here's the summer reading assignment simplified as far as possible:

- Read *Dubliners* and complete five accompanying journal entries while you are reading.

That's it...enjoy the summer!

Journal Entry Addendum

What constitutes a good journal entry? Simply put, I want the journals to be interesting, lively, well-written discussions that evince engagement with the text. There are various ways to accomplish that. Below is a list of what to do and not to do when writing journal entries.

DO NOT: Summarize the plot as an end in itself.

DO: Provide context for your insights about the readings by providing some plot specifics to clarify what part of the text you're referencing.

DO NOT: Pretend to love the book because you think that's what an English teacher wants to read; or, conversely, complain and blame whatever struggles you're having with the reading on what you imagine to be the author's ineptitude.

DO: Provide an honest and thoughtful reflection of the experience of reading the book; regardless of whether you're finding it a joy or a struggle, read and write with an open mind and the aim of deepening understanding and appreciation.

DO NOT: Get bogged down in endless specifics without connecting those specifics to any larger point, or write in broad generalizations without much in the way of specifics.

DO: Balance broad generalizations with specific illustrative detail.

DO NOT: Go off on tangents about life or your own experiences without a clear connection to the reading.

DO: Write germane tangents about life or yourself that relate clearly to the reading, if you feel it's appropriate and interesting; and make sure to make the connection to the book clear.

DO NOT: Stick quotes from the novel into the entry without regard for grammatical integrity or context.

DO: Weave direct quotes from the reading into your own writing, and make sure you elaborate on the significance of the quotation and properly explain the context.

DO NOT: Write the entry as one long block of text with no paragraphing, or—and this is even worse—randomly indent once in a while to provide the appearance of paragraphing.

DO: Use paragraphing as an organizational tool, to indicate a shift in topic.

DO NOT: Write mechanically, with every sentence the same length.

DO: Vary the sentence structure to help make your writing more readable.

DO NOT: Try to make the entries sound academic by using unnecessarily complex language.

DO: Write clearly, naturally, and with the aim of making authentic, sensible insights about the readings.

DO NOT: Use ChatGPT or any other AI software application for any of this. Writing is concentrated thinking, and having anyone or anything else do it for you instantly short-circuits any intellectual growth that should occur from the task.

DO: Write the entire journal yourself, using your own brain.

DO NOT: Write boring journal entries. I will be reading every word of these, and no reader wants to be bored.

DO: Write interesting, lively responses to the readings.

Please let me know if you have questions about the journal, or any questions about the AP Literature summer assignment.