

Tips for reading Haddon
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[updated: Thursday, May 13, 2010]

Course: UNIV 100
Title: Freshman Seminar (3 units)

“To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark.”
---Victor Hugo (1802-1885)

Preface

The purpose of this document is to assist students in progressing and comprehending the novel for this course, Mark Haddon’s “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time”. These tips are not exhaustive. Each student progresses differently, and each student comprehends differently—and more important, all approaches are valid from both an academic perspective and a literary perspective.

Tips

1. This book is 226 pages in length. Further, we need to start in about week 2, and we need to end before the end of the semester. We want to end well before the end of the semester, because time both in- and out-of-class will become compressed due to additional assignments in this course and in other courses. Also, we want to finish early enough so that we can reflect on the book and refer to it for our end-of-semester projects. So, let’s plan on finishing the book by Week 11 with a contingency of Week 12.

So, I’ve split up the reading by approximately 20 pages per week. This means that you need read about 5 pages every other day, or perhaps 10 pages on the weekend, and 10 pages throughout the week. You need to make a deliberate and committed choice. No matter which approach you take, you *cannot* fall behind in the reading. So allocate enough time for reading this fiction novel book in your time budget for the semester.

2. This book uses British English rather than American English. For example, some words do not take articles (“a” or “the”), such as university or hospital. Other words, such as “porridge” or “orange bash”, will need to be noted and looked up in a dictionary or other credible resource.
3. You should summarize the thesis of each chapter. Initially, this will probably be a single paragraph on paper. By the middle of the book or so, you will be able to do this in your head.

4. Be prepared for class. Assume that you will need to summarize a chapter, comment upon the book's narrative, critically analyze the author's position, or answer questions about various words (vocabulary).