

Summer Reading Assignment

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AP Language/IB HL 1/Gifted 10

By carefully reading the summer reading novel and completing this packet over the summer, **which you need to bring to class on the first day of school**, you will be prepared to discuss the story in the fall, to take a summer reading quiz and to write an in-class essay using your novel and packet as the basis for your responses. As you read the novel in preparation for the unit, you will first need to understand some of the basic elements of the story.

You must print this packet out and bring it to class on the first day of school. On the first day, your teacher will give you the information you need to submit this packet to turnitin.com. Therefore, save a copy of your completed work!

***A Hero of Our Time* Author: Mikhail Lermontov Original Publication Year: 1840**

Translators: Vladimir and Dmitri Nabokov

SECTION 1: Background Information

Paul Foote, translator of the Penguin Classics version of the novel, writes in his Introduction that *A Hero of Our Time* is a "serious socio-historico-psychological novel." Knowing the historical and social aspects of this novel are important to a reader's full understanding of its larger meaning and placement in a time period.

Instructions: Find **three** reputable sources to research **each** of the terms **Byronic Hero**, **Superfluous Man**, and **the Decembrists**. Summarize the definitions and information you gather below. Please include proper MLA citation format and cite **all** your sources:

Author's Last Name, First Name Middle Name. "Article or Specific Page Title." Title of Entire Web Site. Day Abbreviated Month. Year Web Page Was Last Revised. Sponsoring Organization. Day Abbreviated Month. Year You Read It <URL>.

Example:

Arnett, Bill. "Jupiter." The Nine Planets. 2 Sept. 2004. 16 Nov. 2004 <<http://www.nineplanets.org/>>.

BYRONIC HERO:

BYRONIC HEROES ARE INTELLIGENT, BUT SELF-DESTRUCTIVE IN THEIR TENDENCIES. THEY USUALLY WANDER AROUND, SEARCHING FOR A DISTRACTION FROM THE TORMENT OF BOREDOM THAT IS A COMMON AILMENT OF BYRONIC HEROES. THE BYRONIC HERO GENERALLY HAS A MARKED DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEIR OUTSIDE DEMEANOR AND THEIR INNER FEELINGS. THIS GENERALLY TAKES THE FORM OF THEIR ACTIONS CONVEYING A DIFFERENT MESSAGE THAN THEIR WORDS, WHICH SERVE AS A FOIL FOR THEIR INNER FEELINGS, THOUGH NOT ALWAYS IN A SUCCESSFUL MANNER.

SOURCES:

"The Byronic Hero." *American Renaissance & American Romanticism*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Aug. 2014.
<[HTTP://COURSESITE.UHCL.EDU/HSB/WHITEC/LITR/4232/RESEARCH/TERMSTHEMES/BYRONIC.HTM](http://COURSESITE.UHCL.EDU/HSB/WHITEC/LITR/4232/RESEARCH/TERMSTHEMES/BYRONIC.HTM)>.

Poole, Gabriel. *The Byronic Hero, Theatricality, and Leadership*. Vol. 38. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2010. Liverpool University Press, 21 June 2010. Web. 10 Aug. 2014. <[HTTP://LIVERPOOL.METAPRESS.COM/CONTENT/L564P02465504611/](http://liverpool.metapress.com/content/L564P02465504611/)>.

Thorslev, Peter L., Jr. *The Byronic Hero: Types and Prototypes*. N.p.: U of Minnesota, 1962. University of Minnesota Press. Web. 10 Aug. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctttsh8q>>.

SUPERFLUOUS MAN:

A SUPERFLUOUS MAN IS A SUBTYPE OF A BYRONIC HERO, EXCEPT WITH MORE OF A FOCUS ON THE CLASHING OF WESTERN AND SLAVIC CULTURES; AS SUCH, THE SUPERFLUOUS MAN IS VERY ALIENATED FROM THE PEOPLE AROUND HIM. WESTERN CULTURE IS VIEWED AS TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED, BUT SPIRITUALLY LACKING, AND, CONVERSELY, SLAVIC CULTURE IS VIEWED AS TECHNOLOGICALLY INFERIOR, BUT SPIRITUALLY ADVANCED. THE SUPERFLUOUS MAN'S INNER CONFLICT STEMS FROM HOW OPPOSITE THE TWO CULTURES THAT HE EMBODIES ARE.

SOURCES:

Hamren, Kelly L. "The Eternal Stranger: The Superfluous Man in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature." Liberty University, 5 Apr. 2011. Web. 11 Aug. 2014. <<http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/masters/180/>>.

Friedeberg, Frank F. *From the Heyday of the Superfluous Man to Chekhov : Essays on 19th Century Russian Literature*. Nottingham: Astra, 1994. *From the Heyday of the Superfluous Man to Chekhov : Essays on 19th Century Russian Literature / Frank F. Seeley*. Astra Press. Web. 11 Aug. 2014. <<http://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/2921824>>.

Gheith, Jehanne M. *The Superfluous Man and the Necessary Woman: A "Re-Vision"* 2nd ed. Vol. 55. N.p.: Wiley, 1996. *JSTOR*. Wiley. Web. 11 Aug. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/131838>>.

THE DECEMBRISTS:

THE DECEMBRISTS WERE A GROUP OF NOBLEMEN, MOSTLY YOUNG, WHO RECEIVED LIBERAL SCHOOLING, AND GREW UP IN A CONSERVATIVE RUSSIA. THIS IS SIMILAR TO THE CONCEPT OF THE SUPERFLUOUS MAN, WHO IS ALSO THE AMALGAMATION OF TWO DISTINCTLY OPPOSITE CULTURES. THE DECEMBRISTS WERE LOOKING FOR CHANGE WITHIN THE RUSSIAN STATE, BEING RELATIVELY STAGNANT AND AVOIDING CHANGE, AND WERE THE PEOPLE WHO INITIATED IN THE DECEMBRIST REVOLT OF 1825.

SOURCES:

Lincoln, W. Bruce. *A Re-examination of Some Historical Stereotypes: An Analysis of the Career Patterns and Backgrounds of the Decembrists*. N.p.: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1976. *JSTOR*. Franz Steiner Verlag. Web. 11 Aug. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41045313>>.

Gooding, John. *The Decembrists in the Soviet Union*. N.p.: Taylor & Francis, 1988. *JSTOR*. Taylor & Francis. Web. 11 Aug. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/151106>>.

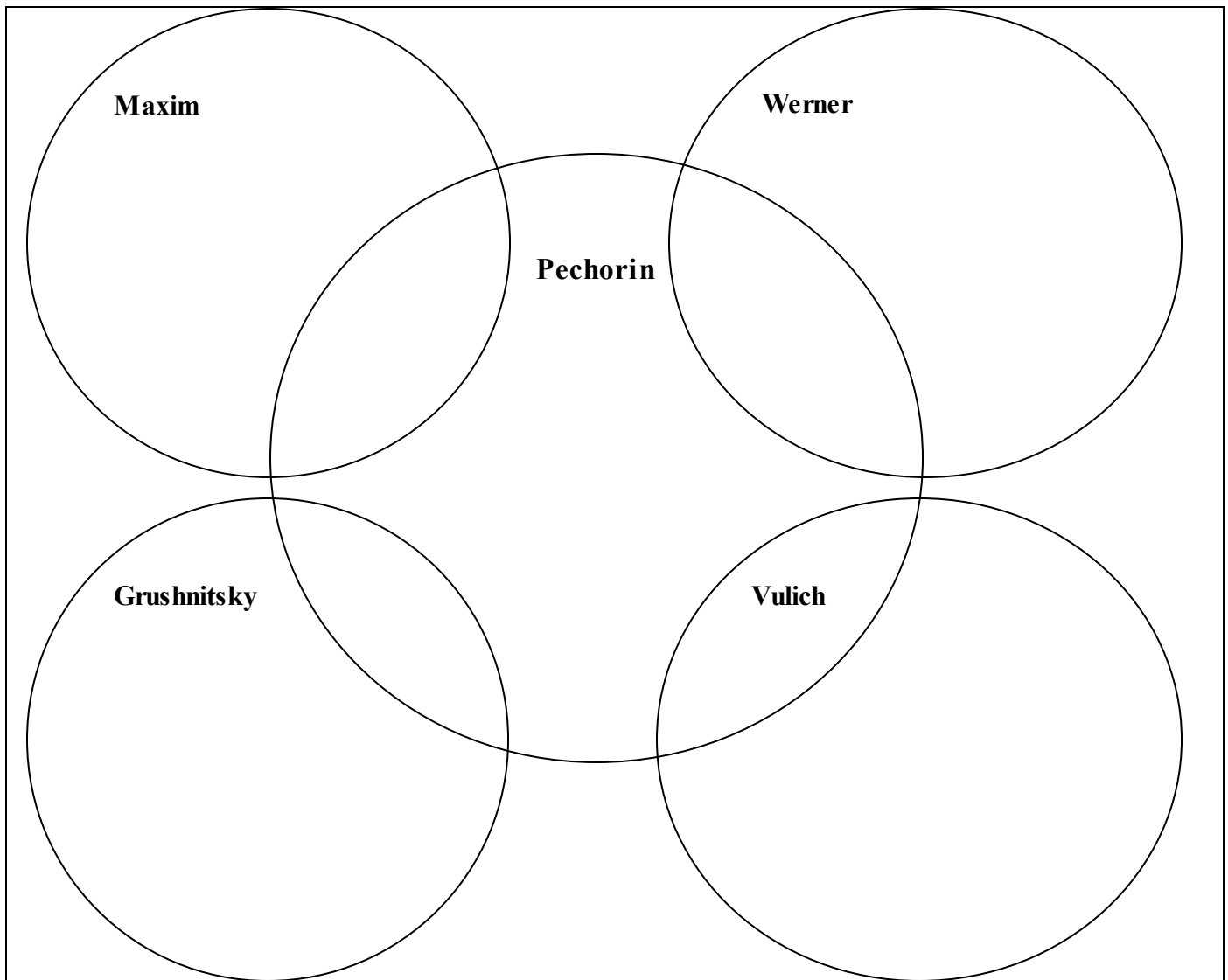
Rabow-Edling, Susanna. *The Decembrists and the Concept of a Civic Nation*. 2nd ed. Vol. 35. N.p.: Taylor & Francis, 2007. *Taylor & Francis*. Taylor & Francis. Web. 11 Aug. 2014.

<<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00905990701254391?journalCode=cnap20>>.

SECTION 2: Minor Characters

This novel focuses on Pechorin, but minor characters have an important role in the novel as well. In particular, the minor male characters illuminate certain characteristics of Pechorin through comparison and contrast. Minor characters who function in this way are called **Foil Characters**.

Instructions: Please examine the similarities and differences between Pechorin and Maxim, Grushnitsky, Werner, and Vulich. Aspects that they share with Pechorin should be written in the area of the circle that is shared between the two characters. Aspects that are unique to the character should be written in the area of the circle that is not shared. Of course, some traits may—and probably will—repeat.



SECTION 3: Lermontov's Structure

A Hero of Our Time has a sequence of parts that is different than the actual chronology of Pechorin's life. In other words, the novel does not progress in chronological order and instead jumps around in time. However, each section reveals or emphasizes unique qualities of Pechorin.

Instructions: State what each section uniquely illuminates about Pechorin and provide two concrete details that support each character trait. You may not repeat traits.

A word or a description of the trait from "Bela"	Two quotations/concrete details that support the trait
1. Empathic in a vain way, only using other people or things to entertain himself.	<p>1. "I have an unfortunate disposition:... if I am a cause of unhappiness for others, I am no less unhappy myself."</p> <p>Page: 47</p> <p>2. "Then I began to be bored... Soon after, I was transferred to the Caucasus... I hoped that boredom did not exist amid Chechen bullets."</p> <p>Page: 48</p>

A word or a description of the trait from "Maxim Maximych"	Two quotations/concrete details that support the trait
1. Disdainful	<p>1. "Really, I have nothing to tell... And now I must say good-bye, time for me to leave, I am in a hurry. Thanks for not forgetting me"</p> <p>Page: 63</p> <p>2. "Pechorin made a sign with his hand which might have been interpreted as, ['] most likely never! And besides what for? [']"</p> <p>Page: 64</p>

A word or a description of the trait from "Taman"	Two quotations/concrete details that support the trait
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<p>1. Inquisitive</p>	<p>1. "I raised myself and glanced through the window... I got up, put on my beshmet, buckled my dagger on, and as softly as possible stepped out"</p> <p>Page: 71</p> <p>2. "[T]here is something I've found out about you. I've found out that you went down to the shore last night'... 'You've seen much, but you know little'"</p> <p>Page: 77</p>
<p>A word or a description of the trait from "Princess Mary"</p>	<p>Two quotations/concrete details that support the trait</p>
<p>1. Patient and calculating</p>	<p>1. "'We have the beginning of a plot! The denouement of this comedy will be our concern. Fate is obviously taking care of my not being bored'"</p> <p>Page: 93</p> <p>2. "O vanity! you are the lever by means of which Archimedes wished to lift the earth... I concealed my discovery. I do not wish to force a confession from him, I want him to choose me for a confidant himself—and it is then that I shall enjoy myself!"</p> <p>Page: 99</p>
<p>A word or a description of the trait from "The Fatalist"</p>	<p>Two quotations/concrete details that support the trait</p>

1. Committed to his observations	<p>1. "I seemed to decipher the imprint of death upon his pale face... 'Tonight you will die,' I said to him."</p> <p>Page: 167</p> <p>2. "'[I]t seemed to me that you must certainly die tonight'"</p> <p>Page: 168</p>
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SECTION 4: Female Characters

The minor female characters in the novel and Pechorin's treatment of them are important to the analysis of Pechorin's character. This characterization is especially evident when juxtaposed with the other male character's views of the women and with their admiration of Pechorin.

Brainstorming:

<p>Pechorin's view of female characters: Pechorin can views women as being objects to distract him from his boredom, and people who cannot resist "the influence of a strong organism" (102); according to Pechorin this does not apply to all women, but "it is not [women's] department" (102) to have a will of their own. Pechorin believes that the only way to make a woman believe something is to "bring them to a point where they will convince their own selves". Women "[are flowers] whose best fragrance emanates to meet the first ray of the sun. It should be plucked that very minute and after inhaling one's fill of it, one should throw it away." (116).</p>	<p>How female characters view themselves: Female characters depicted in <i>A Hero of Our Time</i> view themselves as enslaved by the charisma of Pechorin, and, because of that, see themselves as weak, because they have little say over how Pechorin uses them. Most of the women Pechorin "enslaves" in this way "sacrifice [themselves]" (156) for Pechorin's happiness. However, women do not feel bad about their sacrifice, believing that at some time, Pechorin will "appreciate [their] sacrifice" (156).</p>
<p>Other male characters' view of women: Other male characters in <i>A Hero of Our Time</i> view women as delicate flowers, paying more attention to their physical attributes than their mental attributes, immediately assuming that women are unstable mentally, and require support. Consequently, they "like [shadows], [follow women] everywhere" (106). Contrary to Pechorin, who views women as an common resource to distract him from his boredom, the men around</p>	<p>Other male characters' view of Pechorin: Other male characters view Pechorin with a mix of jealousy and confusion. Pechorin can make women fall in love with him with little effort, almost to the degree where he does not know "[w]hat [they] love [him] for so much" (114), and this is a cause of the jealousy that other men have towards Pechorin. Maxim Maximych, after Bela's death, notes that "before [Bela's] death, she did not remember [him] once, and yet, it seems, [he] had</p>

<p>Pechorin see women as being rare, as they look at women as luxuries, almost putting a woman's value above their own; then, women are the ones controlling the men, because the men are so caught up in taking care of the women they do not realize that the women have complete power over what they do.</p>	<p>loved her like a father" (54). While Maxim was not one of Pechorin's rivals, Pechorin's go through the same process, where women can fall in love with Pechorin to such a degree that they do not consider the love of anyone around them. The awe that men have for Pechorin comes from the fact that Pechorin is always in control of the situation he is in. Even when faced with death, "nothing shows in [his] face... Only [his] eyes [shining] brighter than usual" (151).</p>
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Writing: Given the nature of Pechorin's treatment of women, why or how might the other men in the novel view Pechorin as "heroic"? Answer the question using details from the novel to support your analysis.

Pechorin is the essence of a Byronic hero. Typical of a Byronic hero, he is very intelligent, but self destructive in his tendencies. However, these are not the qualities that convince others that he is "heroic". Pechorin is the only character in the book that understands the rules of social interaction. With this, he can manipulate others as he pleases, and would otherwise live a very successful life, social interaction being a major part of human society. However, even with this knowledge, he refuses to follow the crowd and assimilate into society, just as a superfluous man would refuse. Pechorin "has nothing in common with [the] world" (68), thus choosing to reject it or be rejected by it. Critics of Pechorin's character—his treatment of women, his ability to manipulate—believe that calling Pechorin a hero "is wicked irony" (68), but "[p]eople have been fed enough sweetmeats... they need some bitter medicine, some caustic truths" (16). Pechorin is not the archetypal hero, but a realistic one.

SECTION 5: The Novel's Purpose

Instructions:

For Nabokov's translation: Read the "Introduction" to the novel (xi), Lermontov's "The Author's Introduction" (15), and the Narrator's "Introduction to Pechorin's Journal" in the middle of the book (67).

For Foote's translation: Read the "Introduction" to the novel (xiii), Lermontov's "Preface" (3), and the Narrator's "'Foreward" to Pechorin's Journal in the middle of the book (55).

Then, based on those three texts and any other relevant information, **explain** three reasons why this book was confrontational, revolutionary, controversial, or otherwise "radical."

Reason One:

Pechorin is cast as being "a hero of his time", which many people do not understand, believing it to be "wicked irony" (68). Pechorin's questionable actions, coupled with his lack of explanation for them, makes his character the perfect anti-hero, not the hero that many people imagine when reading the title of *A Hero of Our Time*.

Reason Two:

Pechorin's character is a picture of the typical Decembrist nobleman: he is young, well versed in both Slavic and Western culture, and, most importantly, is easily bored by stagnation. That is to say, "he has nothing in common with [his] world" (68), because he doesn't fit in to Western culture, nor does he fit in to Slavic culture, just like the Decembrists. The major premise of the Decembrist revolt is that the Russian leadership was too conservative to go through with changes, especially social changes. Lermontov's characterization of this frustration got him in trouble with the Tsar multiple times.

Reason Three:

Unlike most novels of the time, *A Hero of Our Time* is not an example to follow in the literary sense. "Lermontov's prose style in Russian is inelegant; it is dry and drab; it is the tool of an energetic, incredibly gifted, bitterly honest, but definitely inexperienced young man" (7). *A Hero of Our Time* focuses more on the speed of the narrative to drive the story instead of the descriptions that the words bring to mind.