



Highland High School
Freshman Honors Summer Reading Assignment
Miss Conway

Your assignment is to read Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (in its entirety). Read it, know it, love it! While reading the novel, I encourage you to take notes on setting, characters, conflict, plot development, theme, point of view, and your own personal response to the novel. We will be having a large group discussion on the novel when you return to school. Below is a list of questions that I will be using to guide our discussion:

1. Explain how the tree in the novel's title is symbolic. In particular, how does the tree symbolize Francie's life?
2. What kind of father is Johnny Nolan? Use examples from the novel to support your answer.
3. The novel begins and ends with Saturdays in Francie's life. The first Saturday is a typical Saturday in Francie's life during her childhood, while the last is just before she leaves for college. Compare and contrast specific changes in her life as shown by her activities on these Saturdays.
4. In spite of poverty and other problems presented in the novel, there is also much humor. Explain which three incidents you found most humorous and why. In what way do the humorous incidents affect the quality of the novel?
5. Betty Smith suggests poverty and/or the fear of it can make people do cruel things. How does poverty or the fear of it influence the behavior of characters toward Francie?

Following our class discussion, you will take an objective test *and* an essay test. You will be able to use your notes for the essay test; therefore, I strongly encourage you to take good notes while you are reading. If you have any questions about the novel, please feel free to email me at cconway@bhprsd.org over the summer. Have a safe and enjoyable vacation. I look forward to seeing you in September!

While you are reading....

Here are some questions to think about while you are reading the novel. These questions will help to prepare you for the assessment you are required to complete when you return to school in September.

Setting

Where and when is the novel set?

Does the setting have an important influence on the action of the novel?

Point of view

From whose point of view is the story told?

How does this point of view affect that way that you see the story and the characters?

Main Characters

Who are the major characters in your novel?

Can you give a brief description of each?

Why is each character important to the novel?

Conflict

What is the major conflict or problem in the novel?

Are there any secondary or minor conflicts that also have to be resolved?

Plot Development

What are the most important events in the novel?

Can you sketch out a time line for this novel?

At what point is the main conflict or central problem resolved?

Theme

What observations about human nature or life in general is the author making?

How effectively does the author get his or her ideas across?

Personal Response

What do you think of the novel's....

~writing style?

~characters?

~theme?

Would you recommend this book to someone? Why or why not?

Quotations

List three important quotes from the novel. After each quotation, write one sentence explaining how the quote reveals something about the character or the theme of the book. Please include the page numbers for each quote.