

**Summer Reading Assignment 2010**  
**Prospective Students – English 131**

Get Peter Carey's *The True History of the Kelly Gang* promptly.

Mr. Carey researched extensively to develop this historical fiction about one of Australia's most famous outlaws. Ned Kelly is given his own voice to explain to his daughter how and why he became the man hunted across Australia. But Carey, like most novelists, also creates this character to investigate how all people become the people that they become.

Broken into thirteen parcels, the story traces Ned from his early memories to his ultimate fate. The arc of this story (rising action, climax, denouement, etc.) is only part of your interest as a reader. Each parcel introduces or develops one of the several themes that most interest Ned Kelly and, of course, Peter Carey.

Take notes as you read, stopping to jot things down after each paragraph, page, or chapter, as you prefer. If you don't usually take notes while you read, this is a great opportunity to develop a new life skill.

When you finish each third of the book, consider the questions below and decide which will be best to address given what you noticed and understood about the pages you've read. Answer each chosen question in a 2 page response.

Type each response in **MLA format**, and **title your essay after the Parcels and topic you've chosen**. Choose any of these topics, so that you will have written **three total responses** by the time you finish the novel. You may only choose **each topic once**.

- A. What is more responsible for a man's outcome, his family (and its history) or his environmental milieu?
- B. Trace the development of violence across a larger portion of the novel. How is violence alternately praised, vilified, sought, and avoided, and what does Carey seem to teach us about violence?
- C. Is Ned Kelly more directly influenced by those he admires or those he sees as opponents? Choose one character that is his greatest influence and answer this question specifically and thoroughly. You can answer this question twice – choose a character from the opposite pool for your second attempt.
- D. As a narrator, Ned begs forgiveness for the illiteracy of his presentation. Cite three specific passages in which Ned Kelly uses language worthy of a major literary author, and explain whether these artistic efforts of his are believable or not, and why.
- E. Ned Kelly speaks often of justice and injustices, of an opposition between the Law of Australia and England, and what he might call "the law of the people." Keeping your focus on the text and examples it provides, which side holds a greater moral justification for the way it responds to the other.
- F. Where does Ned's greatest sense of allegiance lie? What is Carey's apparent message about the value of allegiance, based on how Ned treats all people based on this allegiance.

These three total responses will be graded for accuracy, insight, style, and perceived effort.

This isn't a book report. Minimize plot summary (one-two sentences per response) but use quotes liberally (at least **three quotes** from your selected passage, with page numbers) to support your claims about the novel and what you've noticed about it or learned from it.

All rules of appropriate writing apply, so expect to earn vehement criticism (and lose points) for lack of sentence variation, inappropriate comments, imprecise diction (*stuff, things, etc.*), run-ons, fragments, etc. Enjoy the reading and enjoy responding fluently.

Your three essays, totaling six pages, are due Monday, August 23. Bring a hard copy to submit, but you should also retain an electronic copy to submit to [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com) after the start of the school year. With questions email either Mr. Reynolds ([reynoldsm@saintxfac.com](mailto:reynoldsm@saintxfac.com)) or Mr. Yochum ([yochumk@saintxfac.com](mailto:yochumk@saintxfac.com)).