AP Literature
2024 Summer Reading Assignment

Poetry
Counting Descent by Dr. Clint Smith

Click on the book to order
Click on this image to meet the poet

Follow Dr. Smith on social media

Official TED Speaker
Podcast Host

Click image to watch (optional)
Click to listen to episode 1 (optional)
Playlist of Poems

Watch Smith read his poems by clicking on the images. Record your initial first impression after watching it once, and a more thought-out and developed analysis of the ideas in the poem after you watch it a few times (a short paragraph).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poem title</th>
<th>Initial reaction</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>what the cicada said to the black boy</td>
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<td>Counting Descent</td>
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<td>When They Tell You the Brontosaurus Never Existed</td>
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<td>Aristotle (not in book)</td>
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<td>Why we shouldn’t forget that US presidents owned slaves (not in book)</td>
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After reading Dr. Smith’s book *Counting Descent*, read [this interview](#) for more insight on his work.

After reading *Counting Descent* in its entirety, answer the following questions. Each response should be a solid, well-written paragraph.

1. Which poem in *Counting Descent* did you connect with most and why?
2. To what extent does Smith depict contemporary African American lives? Why is it important for everyone to read about these experiences?
3. What makes “Counting Descent” (pages 21-22) the ideal title poem for the collection?
4. Beyond the thread of the “…to the black boy” poems, how else does Smith unify *Counting Descent* as a collection? Feel free to discuss voice, form, theme, motif, language, purpose, and/or anything else you find significant.
5. “There is a Lake Here” is written after Jamaal May’s poem “[There are Birds Here](#).” What inspirations from May does Smith incorporate into his poem? How does he make it his own?
6. What makes “There is a Lake Here” the ideal resolution to this collection?
Non Fiction

Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone- JK Rowling

Read and annotate