

2015 AP English Literature and Composition Summer Reading Assignment

Required Books:

***How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster AND your choice of either *Beloved* by Toni Morrison OR *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri**

You will be required to read TWO works this summer, and I highly recommend that you purchase your own copy of each of these texts (both available online or at local booksellers) – it is useful to be able to take notes in your own copy of the book.

AP Lit is considered a college class. Thus, this course will provide you with the intellectual challenges and workload consistent with a typical undergraduate university English literature course, beginning with your summer reading assignment. The texts that you are assigned to read this summer are typically read at the college level, so they will be advanced in content as well as reading level and may include controversial content.

Assignments:

1. *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster
 - a. This text is an easy-to-read introduction to the patterns of symbolic meaning in literary texts and is a helpful secondary source for AP English. I suggest reading it before you read your novel of choice, as it may help to make some parts of the novel more meaningful to you.
 - b. Answer the provided journal questions (attached). Your answers will let you practice your literary analysis and they will help me get to know you and your literary tastes. Whenever I ask for an example from literature, you may use short stories, novels, plays, or films. ***Your responses should NOT be superficial, but in-depth with specific responses***
 - c. Type your journal responses using MLA format – including the correct heading (your name, class name, etc.) and citations for quotes. If you are unsure how to follow MLA guidelines visit the following website for help: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>. Please label your journal responses.
2. Choose ONE of the following novels to read: *Beloved* by Toni Morrison OR *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri.
 - a. As you read the novel, **annotate** your copy (see some annotation tips below) and keep in mind what you've read in *How to Read Literature like a Professor*. Pay attention to how you can apply what you've read from Foster's book to heighten your understanding and enrich your reading of the novel. While the number of

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annotations may vary amongst students and chapters, ***your annotations should reflect high level of engagement with the text***. These annotations will facilitate your understanding, essay writing, and class discussions.

- b. Choose THREE chapters from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* that you think apply to your novel, and analyze your novel using the literary techniques you learned about in Foster's book. Discuss the application to your novel by using specific textual evidence from both books to support your interpretation.
 - i. Avoid listing or just "pointing out" information – you should ***analyze and look for the larger meaning created via the use of literary techniques*** (why or how is it important to the overall understanding or meaning of the novel?)
 - ii. You may organize your analysis in any way you choose, but it should be typed and formatted following MLA format.

Grading Rubric – journal, annotations, novel analysis:

"A" 90-100% - This grade will be awarded to students who follow the directions as outlined above with great care. Their writing will reflect organization, structure, and depth of thought and analysis. Students receiving this grade will also turn in work that is neat and organized in its presentation and that is free of excessive and distracting errors in its technical merit.

"B" 80-89% - This grade will be awarded to students who follow the directions as given above, but may include students who have difficulty producing writing that reflects the organization, structure, and depth of thought found in the "A" grading range. Responses at this level may have slight, but not distracting problems in the area of technical merit.

"C" 70-79% - This grade will be awarded to students who have minor issues in following the directions as outlined above, but who still manage to give attention to and respond to all required reflection prompts. These students may show more significant issues in organization, structure, or analytical depth than those receiving the "B" grade, or may have frequent and repeated problems with the technical merit of their assignment.

"D" 60-69% - This grade will be given to students who fail to complete all required responses or who do not produce focused or coherent responses to the required prompts. Students receiving this grade may also have major and distracting errors in organization, structure, depth of thought, command of language, or technical merit.

"F" 59% or below – This grade will be given to students who submit responses that are mostly incomplete, completely unfocused or incoherent in relation to the required prompts, or that display little to no skill in organization, depth of analysis, command of language, or technical merit.

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Annotating Your Novel: Below are some tips for annotating your novel

- Highlight or underline notable words, phrases, and/or sentences and write questions, comments, connections, and reactions in the margins.
 - Questions-ask about something you don't understand.
 - Comments-note instances of interesting word choice, imagery, character motivations, and literary devices, etc. that might suggest an author's purpose or theme.
 - Connections-make text-text connections (ways the book relates to another book, a movie, television show, an article, etc.), text-self connections (ways the book relates to you), text-world connections (ways the book relates to things that exist in our society)
 - Reactions-this can be something you think is funny or interesting, something you agree with or disagree with.

- Write any insights or ideas about the novel on the title page or inside covers of the book.

****If you have any questions you may come see Ms. Madden in room 404 before school is out or you may reach me by email anytime now or over the summer at maddena@leonschools.net.****

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How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster – Journal Questions:

Your answers will let you practice your literary analysis and they will help me get to know you and your literary tastes. Whenever I ask for an example from literature, you may use short stories, novels, plays, or films. Your responses should NOT be superficial, but in-depth with specific responses.

Introduction – How'd He Do That?

1. How do memory, symbol, and pattern affect the reading of literature?
2. How does the recognition of patterns make it easier to read complicated literature?
3. Discuss a time when your appreciation of a literary work was enhanced by understanding symbol or pattern.

Chapter 1 – Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not)

1. List FIVE aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to something you have read (or viewed) in the form used on pages 3-5.
2. What is Foster's overall point about journeys or trips in literature?

Chapter 2 – Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion

1. What does "communion" mean?
2. For what reason does Foster suggest that authors often include meal scenes?
3. What does a *failed* meal suggest in literature?

Chapter 3 – Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires

1. What are the essentials of the vampire story and what do they represent?
2. Apply this to a literary work you have read or viewed.

Chapter 4 – If It's Square, It's a Sonnet

1. Visually speaking, why is a sonnet roughly "square"?
2. Select two sonnets and show which form they are.
3. Discuss how their content reflects the form. (Submit copies of the sonnets, marked to show your analysis).

Chapter 5 – Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?

1. Define "intertextuality".
2. Discuss three examples that have helped you in reading specific works.

Chapter 6 – When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare

1. Discuss a work that you are familiar with that alludes to or reflects Shakespeare.
2. Show how the author uses this connection *thematically*.
3. Re-read pages 44-46 carefully. In these pages, Foster shows how Fugard reflects Shakespeare through both plot and theme. In your discussion, focus on theme.

Chapter 7 – . . . Or the Bible

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1. Why is the Bible so often alluded to in literature?
2. What are some of the ways that writers allude to the Bible?
3. What's the benefit of knowing/understanding Biblical allusions in literature?

Chapter 8 – Hansel and Gretel

1. Think of a work of literature that reflects a fairy tale. Discuss the parallels.
2. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation?

Chapter 9 – It's Greek to Me

1. What does Foster mean by the term "myth"?
2. What are some of the ways that writers allude to mythology?
3. Write a free verse poem derived or inspired by characters or situations from Greek mythology.

Chapter 10 – It's More Than Just Rain or Snow

1. How can weather be symbolic in literature?
2. What are some of the common "meanings" of various types of weather?
3. Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work, not in terms of plot.

Interlude – Did He Mean That?

1. What are the reasons Foster provides that lead him to believe that most writers DO NOT accidentally create the symbols, allusions, and patterns we find when we read critically?
2. Whether we believe a writer intended to do something or not, what's the benefit or noticing that it happened anyway?

Chapter 11 – . . . More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence

1. Present examples of the two kinds of violence found in literature. Show how the effects are different.

Chapter 12 – Is That a Symbol?

1. What's the difference between symbolism and allegory?
2. What, besides objects, can be symbolic?
3. How should a reader approach symbolism in a text?

Chapter 13 – It's All Political

1. Assume that Foster is right and "it is all political." Use his criteria to show that a novel you've read before (or a movie you've seen) is political.

Chapter 14 – Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too

1. Apply the criteria on page 119-120 to a major character in a significant literary work.
2. Try to choose a character that will have many matches. This is a particularly apt tool for analyzing film – for example, *Star Wars*, *Cool Hand Luke*, *Excalibur*, *Malcolm X*, *Braveheart*, *Spartacus*, *Harry Potter*, and *Gladiator*.

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Chapter 15 – Flights of Fancy

1. Select a literary work in which flight signifies escape or freedom. Explain in detail.

Chapter 16 – It's All About Sex . . .

1. What are some of the things that symbolize sex and/or gender?
2. Why does sexual symbolism exist/occur in literature?

Chapter 17 – . . . Except Sex

1. When writers write directly about sex, what are they really writing about?
2. Why don't writers usually write actual sex scenes?
3. Choose a novel or movie in which sex is *suggested* but not described, and discuss how the relationship is suggested and how this implication affects the theme or develops characterization.

Chapter 18 – If She Comes Up, It's Baptism

1. Think of a "baptism scene" from a literary work or movie.
2. How was the character different after the experience? Discuss.

Chapter 19 – Geography Matters . . .

1. Discuss at least four different aspects of a specific literary work that Foster would classify under "geography".

Chapter 20 – . . . So Does Season

1. Find a poem (or a song) that mentions a specific season.
2. Then discuss how the poet uses the season in a meaningful, traditional, or unusual way. (Submit a copy of the poem or song with your analysis)

Interlude – One Story

1. Write your own definition for archetype.
2. Identify an archetypal story and apply it to a literary work with which you are familiar.

Chapter 21 – Marked for Greatness

1. Figure out Harry Potter's scar.
2. If you aren't familiar with Harry Potter, select another character with a physical imperfection and analyze its implications for characterization.

Chapter 22 – He's Blind for a Reason, You Know

1. What can physical blindness mirror?
2. What is often the irony behind a blind character?
3. How are darkness and lightness related to sight?

Chapter 23 – It's Never Just Heart Disease. . .

1. What are some of the symbolic possibilities associated with the heart? Why?

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Chapter 24 – . . . And Rarely Just Illness

1. Recall two characters who died of a disease in a literary work.
2. Consider how these deaths reflect the “principles governing the use of disease in literature” (215-217).
3. Discuss the effectiveness of the death as related to plot, theme, or symbolism.

Chapter 25 – Don’t Read with *Your* Eyes

1. Choose a scene or episode from a novel, play, or epic written before the twentieth century.
2. Contrast how it could be viewed by a reader from the twentieth-first century with how it might be viewed by a reader from that time period. Focus on assumptions that the author makes, assumptions that would not make it in this century.

Chapter 26 – Is He Serious? And Other Ironies

1. What does Foster mean when he says, “Irony trumps everything”?
2. How can you tell if something is ironic?
3. What does Foster mean when he says, “Irony doesn’t work for everyone”?

Chapter 27 – A Test Case

1. Read “The Garden Party by Katherine Mansfield, the short story starting on page 245.
2. Complete the exercise on pages 265-266, *following the directions exactly*.
3. Then, compare your writing with the three examples. How did you do?
4. What does the essay that follows comparing Laura with Persephone add to your appreciation of Mansfield’s story?
5. NOTE: Appropriate responses should be around 500 words.