

AP Literature and Composition Summer Reading

For questions about the assignment or more information:

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The following assignments are required for upcoming Pre-IB 10th grade students and 12th graders coming from an English 3 Honors class.

All books can be purchased very inexpensively at amazon.com or thriftbooks.com and may be found at the public library. It is not required that students own the text, although *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* may be a useful reference piece throughout the year.

Required Texts:

How to Read Literature Like a Professor- Thomas C. Foster (Part 1 Assignment)

ONE text chosen from the list on page 3 (Part 2 Assignment)

Assignments will be due within the first two weeks of school. You will submit a hard copy and to Turnitin.com after school begins. Make sure you have a saved copy of a USB or GoogleDrive.

Part 1: Reading and Recording

Assignment: Read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. After EACH chapter (there are 26!) summarize 2-3 main points and analyze those points in relation to a work you have read. While I realize that you may not have read a plethora of higher level reading selections, please try to choose works that have been studied in high school or at the very least are high school reading level. We will have in class discussions about what constitutes *literary merit*. If you are wondering if your reading selection is appropriate, consult the College Board's list of AP quality authors. **YOU MUST DEMONSTRATE VARIETY**; use multiple sources for your examples.

*Note: The sample provided incorporates the theme of Foster's chapter (the quester, quest etc.), provides a specific reference to the text, and connects the purpose of the quest as it is incorporated in the book. This is the *connection* that I am looking for you to recognize. Find this, avoid plot summary, and you are good to go.

Here is a sample for Chapter 1:

Chapter 1: Every trip is a Quest (Except when it's not)

Main Ideas:

- There is usually a quester, a place to go and a stated reason to go there
- The quester usually encounters numerous challenges and trials that help him/her on the journey
- The ultimate reason for the quest is to gain self-knowledge and understanding

Connection:

In *The Kite Runner*, Amir's quest is to return to this past to set right the wrong he did as a young child. His reason for returning to Afghanistan is to rescue Hassan's son Sohrab, who has been sold as a child prostitute to Amir and Hassan's childhood enemy. Amir faces many challenges, including restrictions imposed by the Taliban, and the physical and mental challenge of confronting Assef. Ultimately, having completed his journey, Amir gains valuable knowledge about himself and his relationship to his own past as well as the possibilities of the future.

Part 2: Reading and Annotating

Choose a text from page 4 to complete part 2

“Every Text is a lazy machine asking the reader to do some of its work.”

– Novelist Umberto Eco

If you are not buying your chosen book, you are still required to annotate by:

- using sticky notes directly in the book to record ideas, labels, passages, patterns etc. Be sure there is writing on the post its, not just as a marking place.
- using a google doc or notebook to record page numbers, quotes, key ideas, thoughts, vocabulary, comments. Make sure you keep careful track of all page numbers. This may take a little longer than in text annotations, but it’s an option.

Read the following tips and the Harvard guide (attached) about what it is to annotate.

Use a pen so you can make circles brackets and notes. If you like highlighters use one for key passages, but don’t get carried away and don’t only highlight.

Look for patterns and label them (motifs, diction, syntax, symbols, images, and behavior, whatever).

Mark passages that seem to jump out at you because they suggest an important idea or theme- or for any other reason (an arresting figure of speech or image an intriguing sentence pattern, a striking example of foreshadowing, a key moment in the plot, a bit of dialogue that reveals character, clues about the setting etc.).

Mark phrases, sentences, or passages that puzzle, intrigue please or displease you. Ask questions make comments talk back to the text.

At the ends of chapters or sections write a bulleted list of key plot events. This not only forces you think about what happened, see the novel as whole, and identify patterns, but you create a convenient record of the whole plot.

Circle words you want to learn or words that jump out at you for some reason. If you don’t want to stop reading, guess then look the word up and jot down the relevant meaning later.

Assignment:

Choose one of the texts listed to read and annotate. I will check your annotations for a grade when school begins.

After reading, complete the following:

1. Type a brief summary of the novel (4-6 sentences).

Answer the following questions after your summary. What did the author do to make the writing unique? What specific things did you notice about the way it was written? Why do you think this text is (or at least is considered) important? (2-3 pages max, MLA format: Times New Roman 12 pt, double spaced, etc.)

2. Significant Passages

Select at least 3 of the most influential, significant, or interesting passages or quotes:

A. If you use a quote write the sentence (or sentences), complete with page number. If you've chosen a passage please include the page and paragraph where it begins as well as ends.

B. Answer: What about this quote or passage is significant to the text as a whole?

Text List:

Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

John Steinbeck's *The Pearl, Of Mice and Men*

Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth*

Chaim Potok's *The Chosen*

Sandra Cisneros *A House on Mango Street*

William Shakespeare *Othello*

J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*

Anything by Ernest Hemingway

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah*

Julia Alvarez, *In the Time of the Butterflies*

Rudolpho Ananya, *Bless Me, Ultima*

Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*,

Tracy Chevalier, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*

Junto Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Woo*

James Dickey, *Deliverance*

Annie Dillard, *An American Childhood*

E. L. Doctorow, *Ragtime*

Antony Doerr, *All the Light We Cannot See*

Michael Dorris, *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*

Clyde Edgerton, *Floatplane, Notebooks*

Louise Erdrich, *Love Medicine, The Beat Queen, Tracks, Round House*

Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

Charles Frazier, *Cold Mountain*

Athol Fugard, *Master Harold...And the Boys*

Ernest Gaines, *A Gathering of Old Men, A Lesson Before Dying*

Khaled Hosseini, *And the Mountains Echoed*

Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*

Barbara Kingsolver, *Pigs in Heaven, The Bean Trees*

Ian McEwan, *Atonement*

Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon, Sula*

Zadie Smith, *White Teeth, On Beauty*

Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club, The Bonesetter's Daughter*

Interrogating Texts: 6 Reading Habits to Develop in Your First Year at Harvard

Critical reading--active engagement and interaction with texts--is essential to your academic success at Harvard, and to your intellectual growth. Research has shown that students who read deliberately retain more information and retain it longer. Your college reading assignments will probably be more substantial and more sophisticated than those you are used to from high school. The amount of reading will almost certainly be greater. College students rarely have the luxury of successive re-readings of material, either, given the pace of life in and out of the classroom.

While the strategies below are (for the sake of clarity) listed sequentially, you can probably do most of them simultaneously. They may feel awkward at first, and you may have to deploy them very consciously, especially if you are not used to doing anything more than moving your eyes across the page. But they will quickly become habits, and you will notice the difference—in what you “see” in a reading, and in the confidence with which you approach your texts.

1. **Previewing: Look “around” the text before you start reading.**

You’ve probably engaged in one version of previewing in the past, when you’ve tried to determine how long an assigned reading is (and how much time and energy, as a result, it will demand from you). But you can learn a great deal more about the organization and purpose of a text by taking note of features other than its length.

Previewing enables you to develop a set of *expectations about the scope and aim* of the text. These very preliminary impressions offer you a way to focus your reading. For instance:

What does the presence of *headnotes*, an *abstract*, or other *prefatory material* tell you?

Is the *author* known to you already? If so, how does his (or her) *reputation* or *credentials* influence your perception of what you are about to read? If the author is unfamiliar or unknown, does an editor introduce him or her (by supplying brief biographical information, an assessment of the author’s work, concerns, and importance)?

How does the disposition or *layout of a text* prepare you for reading? Is the material broken into parts--subtopics, sections, or the like? Are there long and unbroken blocks of text or smaller paragraphs or “chunks” and what does this suggest? How might the parts of a text guide you toward understanding the line of inquiry or the arc of the argument that’s being made?

Does the text seem to be arranged according to *certain conventions of discourse*? Newspaper articles, for instance, have characteristics that you will recognize; textbooks and scholarly essays are organized quite differently. Texts demand different things of you as you read, so whenever you can, register the type of information you’re presented with.

2. **Annotating: Make your reading thinking-intensive from start to finish.**

Annotating puts you actively and immediately in a “*dialogue*” with an author and the issues and ideas you encounter in a written text. It’s also a way to have an ongoing conversation with yourself as you move through the text and to record what that encounter was like for you. Here’s how:

Throw away your highlighter: Highlighting can seem like an active reading strategy, but it can actually distract from the business of learning and dilute your comprehension. Those bright yellow lines you put on a printed page one day can seem strangely cryptic the next, unless you have a method for remembering why they were important to you at another moment in time. Pen or pencil will allow you to more *to* a text you have to wrestle with.

Mark up the margins of your text with words and phrases: ideas that occur to you, notes about things that seem important to you, reminders of how issues in a text may connect with class discussion or course themes. This kind of interaction keeps you conscious of the *reasons* you are reading as well as the *purposes* your instructor has in mind. Later in the term, when you are reviewing for a test or project, your marginalia will be useful memory triggers.

Develop your own symbol system: asterisk (*) a key idea, for example, or use an exclamation point (!) for the surprising, absurd, bizarre. Your personalized set of hieroglyphs allow you to capture the important -- and often fleeting -- insights that occur to you as you’re reading. Like notes in your margins, they’ll prove indispensable when you return to a text in search of that perfect passage to use in a paper, or are preparing for a big exam.

Get in the habit of hearing yourself ask questions: “What does this mean?” “Why is the writer drawing that conclusion?” “Why am I being asked to read this text?” etc. Write the questions down (in your margins, at the beginning or end of the reading, in a notebook, or elsewhere. They are reminders of the unfinished business you still

have with a text: something to ask during class discussion, or to come to terms with on your own, once you've had a chance to digest the material further or have done other course reading.

3. **Outline, summarize, analyze: Take the information apart, look at its parts, and then try to put it back together again in language that is meaningful to you.**

The best way to determine that you've really gotten the point is to be able to state it in your own words.

Outlining the argument of a text is a version of annotating, and can be done quite informally in the margins of the text, unless you prefer the more formal Roman numeral model you may have learned in high school. **Outlining** enables you to see the skeleton of an argument: the thesis, the first point and evidence (and so on), through the conclusion. With weighty or difficult readings, that skeleton may not be obvious until you go looking for it.

Summarizing accomplishes something similar, but in sentence and paragraph form, and with the connections between ideas made explicit.

Analyzing adds an evaluative component to the summarizing process—it requires you not just to restate main ideas, but also to test the logic, credibility, and emotional impact of an argument. In analyzing a text, you reflect upon and decide how effectively (or poorly) its argument has been made. Questions to ask:

What is the writer asserting?

What am I being asked to believe or accept? Facts? Opinions? Some mixture?

What reasons or evidence does the author supply to convince me? Where is the strongest or most effective evidence the author offers -- and why is it compelling?

4. **Look for repetitions and patterns:**

The way **language is chosen, used, positioned in a text** can be important indication of what an author considers crucial and what he expects you to glean from his argument. It can also alert you to ideological positions, hidden agendas or biases. Be watching for:

Recurring images

Repeated words, phrases, types of examples, or illustrations

Consistent ways of characterizing people, events, or issues

5. **Contextualize**: Once you've finished reading actively and annotating, **take stock for a moment and put it in perspective.**

When you contextualize, you essentially "**re-view**" **a text you've encountered, framed by its historical, cultural, material, or intellectual circumstances.**

When was it written or where was it published? Do these factors change or otherwise influence how you view a piece?

Also view the reading through the lens of your own experience. Your understanding of the words on the page and their significance is always shaped by what you have come to know and value from living in a particular time and place.

6. **Compare and Contrast: Set course readings against each other to determine their relationships (hidden or explicit).**

At what point in the term does this reading come? Why that point, do you imagine?

How does it contribute to the main concepts and themes of the course?

How does it compare (or contrast) to the ideas presented by texts that come before it? Does it continue a trend, shift direction, or expand the focus of previous readings?

How has your thinking been altered by this reading? How has it affected your response to the issues and themes of the course?