

## Summer Reading Assignment for the 2024-2025 School Year

AP Literature ● Due the first day of class (NO exceptions) **Must be printed out and ready to turn in.\*\***

Welcome to AP English Literature and Composition! I am honored and excited to be making this journey with you as you conclude your high school English career. All the skills you will learn in this class, including closely interpreting and critically analyzing texts and developing techniques to improve your writing, are skills you will use for a lifetime.

The demands of the Advanced Placement Literature and Composition Exam are such that we must use the summer months to continue our study of literature and keep our minds sharp for next year. It is my sincerest hope that you find the tasks below as interesting and worthwhile as I do. Trust me, I am not trying to design a scheme to ruin your summer vacation. I do not expect you to lock yourself indoors and devote your entire summer to schoolwork. (By the way, I highly recommend reading outdoors. It is so peaceful and one of my favorite places to lose myself in a story.) My goal is for you to become more proficient readers, writers, and thinkers.

At any point this summer, you may contact me by e-mail: Monica Johnson [mojohnson@madison-schools.com](mailto:mojohnson@madison-schools.com)

You will read a minimum of three texts before coming into AP English Literature and Composition. Though I am only requiring three texts, I encourage you to read more (adult fiction, young adult fiction, contemporary fiction, poetry anthologies, and classic texts are all great choices). **All the assignments will be due on the first day of class. There will be no exceptions.** I also cannot stress enough the importance of doing your own, independent work this year. This assignment should serve as a signpost for the kind of serious, analytical, and scholarly work we will be doing together. Should you find it overwhelming, you may do well to seek another senior English course. Should you find the need to plagiarize overwhelming, you should definitely reevaluate your moral compass, as such behavior can and has resulted in failure of the assignment and/or course, students being removed from NHS, AP courses, and, at the collegiate level, expelled from university coursework. Degrees have even been revoked **after** students have graduated. Academic integrity is an integral part of succeeding in secondary and collegiate-level work.

### Summer Reading Texts

Please purchase a copy of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. You will be referring back to it throughout the year. You may either purchase or borrow a copy of *Crime and Punishment* and *Mrs. Dalloway*. You will not be required to annotate, but you will need both for class discussion the first few weeks of school.

Nonfiction Selection:

*How to Read Literature Like a Professor* (Revised Edition) by Thomas C. Foster ISBN 9780062301673

Fiction Selections:

*Crime and Punishment* - Fyodor Dostoevsky

*Mrs. Dalloway* – Virginia Woolf

### Task 1: How to Read Literature Like a Professor Assignment

Your first task will be to read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* (Revised edition) by Thomas C. Foster. **YOU MUST READ THIS TEXT BEFORE YOU READ YOUR FICTION SELECTIONS.** This extremely important

nonfiction text is paramount to your success in this class. There are three main reasons for me to assign it as a summer book: 1) it is the single most helpful tool for developing the analytical and critical reading skills required to do well in this course, on the AP exam, in college, and in life; 2) we refer to it constantly throughout the school year, and it makes the reading we do throughout the course a little easier to understand; and 3) there is no way kids want to read it in addition to what we are reading for the course during the school year. *HTRLLAP* is our introduction to many of the archetypal and thematic lessons taught throughout the year.

NOW, for the assignment piece. Instead of responding to each chapter, I'm going to ask that you **CHOOSE FIVE (5) CHAPTERS TO RESPOND TO**. I've indicated some of the most important concepts with an asterisk (\*), so they may be good places to start. That does NOT mean you are only responsible for reading and understanding these five chapters. You will take a closed-book (open handwritten-notes) test during the first full week of school. Please read *HTRLLAP* carefully and include your answers to **FIVE (5)** of the questions/prompts below in an MLA-formatted document. In addition, read my note after the chapter prompts. I think the application and thinking through *how* Foster is applying these analytical skills to the texts he does (even if you haven't read them before) is incredibly valuable and will help you remember the skills. I'd strongly encourage you to at least think through the prompts for each chapter as you read.

**\*Introduction: How'd He Do That?** ... Discuss a time when your appreciation of a literary work was enhanced by understanding symbol or pattern. Make sure you mention a specific text within your response.

**\*Chapter 1 -- Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not)** ... Apply the five aspects of the quest to something you have read (or viewed) using the format Foster uses on pp. 4-5.

**Chapter 2 -- Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion** ... Choose a meal from a literary work and apply the ideas of Chapter 2 to this literary depiction.

**\*Chapter 3 -- Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires** ... Apply the ideas of the vampire story to a literary work you have read or viewed.

**\*Chapter 4 -- Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?** ... Discuss **three** (3) examples that have helped you in reading specific works in the past.

**\*Chapter 5 -- When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare...** Discuss a work that you are familiar with that alludes to or reflects Shakespeare. Show how the author uses this connection thematically.

**\*Chapter 6 -- ...Or the Bible** ... Read James Joyce's "Araby". Discuss biblical allusions that Foster does not mention in this chapter.

**Chapter 7 -- Hansel and Gretel** ... Think of a work of literature that reflects a fairy tale. Discuss the parallels. How does it create irony or deepen your appreciation of the work?

**Chapter 8 -- It's Greek to Me** ... Choose one (1) character from Greek mythology and do some further research. Summarize your learning in this paragraph (and be sure to cite your source(s))! How does this knowledge help you better understand literature?

**\*Chapter 9 -- It's More Than Just Rain or Snow** ... Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work, not in terms of plot. Avoid plot summary.

**\*Chapter 10 -- Never Stand Next to the Hero** ... Write a paragraph about the "sidekick" character you feel has been most memorable to you as a reader: why were they so memorable? What lesson, according to Foster's theory, did they have to learn?

**Interlude -- Does He Mean That?** ... What are your thoughts on the book so far? What do you think about what Thomas says? What are you having a hard time wrapping your head around?

**Chapter 11 -- ...More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence** ... Present one (1) example of each of the two kinds of violence found in literature. Show how the effects are different.

**\*\*Chapter 12 -- Is That a Symbol?** ... Read the short story "Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. Use the process Foster outlines on pp. 113-14 (beginning with the first full paragraph on p. 113), to investigate the symbolism within the story.

**Chapter 13 -- It's All Political** ... Assume that Foster is right and "it is all political." Use his criteria to show that one of the major works assigned to you in the last three years is political.

**Chapter 14 -- Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too** ... Apply the criteria on p. 126 to a major character in a significant literary work. 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*, *Gladiator* and *Ben-Hur*.

**Chapter 15 -- Flights of Fancy** ... Select a literary work in which flight signifies escape or freedom. Explain in detail.

**Chapter 16 -- It's All About Sex...**

**Chapter 17 -- ...Except the Sex** ... OK . . . the sex chapters. The key idea from this chapter is that "scenes in which sex is coded rather than explicit can work at multiple levels and sometimes be more intense than literal depictions" (149). In other words, sex is often suggested with much more art and effort than it is described, and, if the author is doing his job, it reflects and creates theme or character. 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** ... Think of a "baptism scene" from a significant literary work. How was the character different after the experience? Discuss.

**\*Chapter 19 -- Geography Matters...** Discuss at least four different aspects of one (1) specific literary work that Foster would classify under "geography."

**\*Chapter 20 -- ...So Does Season** ... Find a poem that mentions a specific season. Copy the poem into the text of your document, and discuss how the poet uses the season in a meaningful, traditional, or unusual way.

**Interlude -- One Story** ... Identify an archetypal story, and apply it to a literary work with which you are familiar.

**Chapter 21 -- Marked for Greatness** ... Figure out Harry Potter's scar. Analyze its implications for characterization. If you aren't familiar with Harry Potter, select another character with a physical imperfection to discuss.

**\*Chapter 22 -- He's Blind for a Reason, You Know**

**Chapter 23 -- It's Never Just Heart Disease...And Rarely Just Illness**

Recall a character who died of a disease in a literary work. Consider how this death reflects the "principles governing the use of disease in literature" (222-24). Discuss the effectiveness of the death as related to plot, theme, or symbolism.

**Chapter 24 -- Don't Read with Your Eyes** ... After reading chapter 24, choose a scene or episode from a novel, play, or epic written before the twentieth century. Contrast how it could be viewed by a reader from the twenty-first century with how it might be viewed by a reader from its own time period. Focus on specific assumptions that the author makes, assumptions that would not make it in this century.

**Chapter 25 -- It's My Symbol and I'll Cry If I Want To** ... Thomas claims, "Every work teaches us to read as we go along" (248). Describe a time when this was true for you, especially within the context of this chapter. What book have you had to learn to read as you read it? Why was that so? What symbol have you come across in reading literature that confused you to the point that you thought your teacher was crazy for thinking it was a symbol?

**Chapter 26 -- Is He Serious? And Other Ironies** ... Select an ironic literary work and explain the multivocal nature of the irony in the work.

**Chapter 27 -- A Test Case** ... Read "The Garden Party" by Katherine Mansfield, the short story starting on pg. 262. Complete the exercise on pp. 282-83, following the directions exactly before reading any further in the chapter (write your response on your Google Doc). Then, compare your writing with the three examples. How did you do? What does the essay that follows comparing Laura with Persephone add to your appreciation of Mansfield's story?

**Postlude -- Who's in Charge Here?** Write a short response to Foster's comments in the postlude.

**Envoi** ... Choose a motif not discussed in this book and note its appearance in three (3) or four (4) different works you have read previously. What does this idea seem to signify?

**Note:** Okay, I know. It is a lot. And you haven't read all the texts Thomas C. Foster refers to. And you kind of think he is a little pompous, and how dare he use that tone with you?! These are constant comments that I get at the beginning of the year, and I'd like to address them for just a second. It's okay if you haven't read what Foster is referring to, and it's okay if his examples don't make complete sense. They probably will at some point in this class, or they will later in life if you read those texts. I still think you can take his ideas and apply them to *any* text. Just try to understand the process he's working through with each of the examples he provides (or take some time and look up some of the texts as you read! THAT is a legit use for SparkNotes or LitCharts or whatever your preferred literature reference is). As far as Foster being pompous... it was rare to have professors in college who didn't come off as at least a little pompous or arrogant, but *they know their stuff*. Foster's credibility is undeniable, and you should listen to him; he has valuable insight. I think his tone is humorous, sarcastic, and endearing, but I'm old, a bit of a book nerd, and I've been through college and graduate-level English classes. I learned more about analyzing literature from this book than I ever had before I read it, and I still learn more from it every time I read it. And hey, I could make you read *How to Read a Book* by Mortimer Adler, so it could always be WAY WORSE! Seriously, look it up! And then thank me!

And lastly, I may be biased as an English nerd, but please don't groan when I talk about your BFF, Thomas C. Foster, all year long! And, prepare yourself, because he has another book out: *How to Read Poetry Like a Professor!* \*insert evil teacher laugh here\*

#### **A Final Note on *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*:**

I am a firm believer in taking notes by hand and research supports that. **If you take notes by hand, you may use them during the test.** Any format... Cornell, Outline, Sketchnotes, etc.... Pinterest and Instagram have really great posts and accounts dedicated to taking notes. Seriously, learning to take notes will SAVE YOUR LIFE in college. This is totally optional, though. We are going to have notebooks for the entire year, so if you'd like to put your *HTRLLAP* notes at the front of a new notebook, you can start there! I would! Again, this will not be something I grade, but the notebook will be extremely helpful throughout the year!

#### **Task 2: Novel Assignment**

**AFTER** reading *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, your job is to apply lessons that you have learned from reading that book to the reading of *Crime and Punishment* and *Mrs. Dalloway*. Use all the tricks that Thomas C. Foster taught you in the first book to make meaning out of the novel you choose. You may not use any sources other than your brain, your choice text, and *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*.

Make sure you explicitly answer the following questions about each novel (but do not limit yourself to these) in MEAL paragraph format (**M**ain idea (insight into question); **E**vidence (blended quotations from the text); **A**nalysis of evidence (how/why is it important and how/why does it support your main idea); **L**ast thought (wrap up your paragraph with a concluding sentence and tie it back to your main idea/insight):

1. In the novel, what is the quest? Choose a character and explain how he/she gains self-knowledge.
2. What features of intertextuality do you recognize in reading this novel with other pieces of literature you have previously read? What was your "aha! Factor" while reading this book?
3. Choose a scene where weather or the environment is more than what it seems and explain the significance. If weather or the environment doesn't play a significant role, choose another chapter to apply to your text. Be explicit in your response about which analytical feature you're applying.
4. Pay special attention to the geography/setting in the novel and explain its importance to the story, the characters, and the message the author is sending to his/her readers.
5. Who is the hero in the novel? How do you know he/she is the hero? Is there a visible, physical difference between the hero and other characters? Why would this be important?

6. Choose a quotation from the novel that reflects the overall meaning of the work. What did you glean from this reading experience? Write a possible theme statement for your novel.

Rubric for All Paragraph Responses- Please read completely!!!

	Advanced (10)	Proficient (7)	Developing (4)	Missing (0)
<b>Paragraph Responses</b>	Response answers all parts of the prompt and includes properly cited textual evidence (including quotations with page numbers from past texts*) that explicitly applies to the text.	Response answers all parts of the prompt and includes sufficient evidence but that evidence might implicitly apply to the text. This answer includes textual evidence but might be missing a direct quotation and/or page numbers.	Response attempts to answer the prompt but is missing some element—an answer to one part of the prompt, text evidence, proper analysis, etc.	Not attempted and/or is plagiarized, summarized, or paraphrased without proper citation(s) <b>OR</b> uses outside sources when explicitly told not to.
<b>MLA Format</b>  MLA header, page header, double-spaced, Times New Roman size 12 font, creative title, in-text citations, <b>Works Cited page</b>	Paper is in proper MLA format and meets all requirements.	Paper is mostly in proper MLA format but might be missing one or two elements.	MLA format is attempted, but there are significant errors in formatting.	MLA format is not attempted <b>OR</b> the Works Cited page is missing completely.

\* Throughout college I had to go back to texts I had read in previous years and find excellent, relevant examples and cite them correctly. This is a skill you should start developing now **before** you go to college. In college, you would receive a 0 on an assignment (not 7/10) for failing to go back and cite your sources correctly. And no, you shouldn't just Google important quotes for past works. This is why this is considered **advanced** on the rubric; because for a summer assignment and quite possibly the first time you've been required to refer to past texts with proper citation, **you are going above and beyond and spending more time**, the definition of advanced in my book.

AP Lit Basic Summer Reading Checklist

Task 1: *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*

- Read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* in its entirety
- Take optional handwritten notes in a new notebook (2 or 3-subject)
- Complete MEAL paragraphs on FIVE (5) chapters – be sure to include Works Cited page

Task 2: Novels

- Read *Crime and Punishment*
- Complete MEAL paragraphs on the SIX (6) prompts above – be sure to include Works Cited page
- Read *Mrs. Dalloway*

- Complete MEAL paragraphs on the SIX (6) prompts above – be sure to include Works Cited page