

AP English Literature and Composition
Summer Reading Assignment
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Introduction and Purpose

Hello, young reader! I am very excited to be teaching this course, and I hope you are excited to be taking it. You're receiving this summer assignment in order to give you an idea of what we'll be trying to accomplish this year; it will prepare you for the academic rigors ahead. Advanced Placement classes are designed to enrich a student's current knowledge base, but they ultimately test a student on their acumen, as well. This assignment is designed to evaluate your current level of preparation and provide you with a digestible version of the expected course work.

Don't leave this until the last minute! There is one work of literature herein, one lengthy (but enjoyable!) critical text, and multiple reading selections. At the same time, in the words of the immortal Douglas Adams, "Don't panic." By completing this assignment, you are embarking on a path to success.

How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster

This book will introduce the concept of literary analysis and begin to prepare you for the assignments ahead. For each chapter, carefully consider the methods Foster is advising. In outline or bullet fashion, compile a list of the three to five most important points he makes **per chapter**. Keep a copy of this outline (or bulleted list) for yourself to aid you as we move through the year. Bring a copy of this assignment on the first day of class for a grade, but make sure you always have your copy, to serve as a guide for analyzing literature as we move forward.

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

You will be required to read *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. The novel has been mentioned as a possible topic for essay question three on the final examination, and lends itself well to analysis, especially based on the other summer assignments (Foster and the allusions project).

You need to dissect the novel for its literary merit. Each student must complete a major works data sheet. This data sheet should be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1" margins all around. It should include:

1. The novel's title, author, date of publication, and genre
2. Historical information about the period of publication (no more than 100 words)
3. Biographical information about the author (no more than 250 words)
4. Characteristics of the genre (no more than 100 words)
5. A plot summary (no more than 250 words)
6. Notes on the author's style (tone, diction, narrative voice, sentence structure, paragraph structure, chapter structure; no more than 150 words)
7. A quote as an example to demonstrate style
8. A list of memorable quotations (at least 20). These quotes should reflect the novel's primary subjects to help the student construct their thematic statements. Record the quote in its entirety, the chapter from whence it came, and a few words (no more than 100) to explain the importance or relevance of each quote.
9. A list of characters, separated into primary and secondary characters. Record each character's name (and its significance), their role in the novel, an explanation of why they are important to the novel, and a brief description of each character (include physical and personality traits).
10. The novel's setting (time *and* place; no more than 150 words)
11. An explanation (no more than 150 words) of how the opening scene of the novel is significant to the novel as a whole.
12. The significance of the closing scene of the novel (no more than 150 words)
13. A list of any symbols in the novel, which should include all instances when the symbol or symbols appear and an explanation of the symbolism
14. Three possible thematic statements. Remember that a theme is a central message about life or human nature that the author wishes to communicate to the reader. Each thematic statement should be evidenced by the quotes recorded earlier in the major works data sheet.

Allusions Project

A literary allusion is a reference to another work of literature within a specific work. An author, poet, or playwright may employ an allusion for various reasons, such as revealing purpose, thematic content, making a comparison, or to drive a point home. The most common allusions are to classical literature and *The Bible*. Read all of *Mythology* by Edith Hamilton and the following passages from the King James version of *The Bible*. In a typed and bulleted (or numbered) list, give a brief summary (50-100 words) for each of the following biblical and mythical stories.

Biblical Passages

- 1) Genesis, Chapters 1-4 (Creation, Adam & Eve, The Fall, Cain & Abel)
- 2) Genesis, 6:9-9:7 (This means chapter 6, verse 9 to Chapter 9, verse 7) (Noah, The Flood)
- 3) Genesis, 11:1-9 (The Tower of Babel)
- 4) Genesis, Chapter 19 (Sodom & Gomorrah, Lot's Wife)
- 5) Genesis, 22:1-18 (Abraham & Isaac)
- 6) Exodus, 3:1-10 (The Burning Bush)
- 7) Exodus, 14: 5-31 (The Parting of the Sea)
- 8) Exodus, Chapter 32 (The Golden Calf)
- 9) I Samuel, Chapters 17 & 18 (David & Goliath/Saul)
- 10) Job, 1:1-2:10 (God and Satan discuss Job.)
- 11) Matthew, 14:1-21 (John the Baptist/5 Loaves of Bread and 2 Fish)
- 12) Matthew, 26:14-56, (Thirty Silver Coins/ Gethsemane/Betrayed With a Kiss)
- 13) Matthew, 27:27-31 (Mocked by Soldiers)
- 14) Luke, 6:24-31 (Wealth/Turning the Other Cheek)
- 15) Luke, 10:25-37 (The Good Samaritan)
- 16) Luke, 15:11-32 (The Prodigal Son)
- 17) John, 2:1-11 (Water into Wine)
- 18) John, 11:1-44 (Lazarus)
- 19) John, 20:24-31 (Doubting Thomas)
- 20) Revelations, Chapter 6 (The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse)

Mythology Passages

- 1) Zeus/Jupiter/Jove
- 2) Hera/Juno
- 3) Hades/Pluto
- 4) Poseidon/Neptune
- 5) Athena/Minerva
- 6) Apollo
- 7) Artemis/Diana
- 8) Aphrodite/Venus
- 9) Hermes/Mercury
- 10) Ares/ Mars
- 11) Hephaestus/Vulcan
- 12) Odysseus/Ulysses
- 13) Ajax the Greater
- 14) Adonis
- 15) Narcissus and Echo
- 16) Demeter and Persephone
- 17) Dionysus/Bacchus
- 18) Daedalus and Icarus
- 19) Theseus
- 20) Perseus
- 21) Aeneas and Dido
- 22) Arachne
- 23) The Judgment of Paris
- 24) The Twelve Labors of Heracles
- 25) Midas
- 26) Tiresias
- 27) Sisyphus
- 28) The Muses
- 29) The Fates
- 30) Achilles

Final Notes

It may seem a little intimidating right now, but the benefits of this course are numerous, and you certainly have the ability to succeed. We just need to work together to ensure that your abilities reach their optimal level. If you need any help with the literary terms peppered throughout this assignment, you can always visit the websites I have bracketed below. Good luck, and enjoy the journeys through which these great works take us!

[http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/lit_terms/] This blog has great definitions, but doesn't inundate you with examples.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_terms] I know you've been told not to trust Wikipedia, but at least the articles from this list are legitimate and will give you a handy reference.