

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 and one lengthy (but enjoyable!) critical text.

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.

Have an electronic copy of each assignment available on Google Drive. You will turn each assignment in on the first day of class for a grade.

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. **This assignment may be completed with a partner, but make sure both of you are reading the text and discussing it.**

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.

You need to dissect the novel for its literary merit. Each student must complete a major works data sheet. **This assignment may be completed with a partner, but make sure both of you are reading the text and discussing it.** 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.

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 linked 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.