

AP English Literature and Composition
2020-21 Summer Reading Assignment
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Purpose: The purpose of summer reading assignment is complex:

- To help build confidence and competence as readers of complex texts
- To give you, when you enter the class in the fall, an immediate basis for discussion of literature- elements like theme, narrative, viewpoint, symbolism, plot structure, etc.
- To set up a basis for comparison with other works we will read during the year
- To provide you with the beginnings of a repertoire of works you can write about on the AP Lit exam next spring
- Last but not least to enrich your mind and stimulate your imagination

You have THREE assignments. All of them are due on the first day of school.

Let's begin by building a literary language and understanding of how literature works on a non-literal level. You will first read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor. A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines* by Thomas C. Foster.

Assignment: After EACH chapter (there are 26!) summarize two to three main points and analyze those points in relation to a work (short stories, novels, or plays) you have read. While I realize that you may not have read a plethora of higher-level reading selections, please choose works you studied in high school or at the very least are at high school reading level. If you are unsure of the literary merits of your work, consult the College Board's list of AP quality authors. **YOU MUST DEMONSTRATE VARIETY;** use multiple sources for your examples. Practice rules of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, taboos. Full sentences please.

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.

*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 novel. This is the connection that I am looking for you to recognize. Find this, avoid plot summary, and you are good to go

After you have gained some insight into the way literature works, let's read some literature. Let's also ANNOTATE the works as Foster advises in *How to Read Literature*. These novels are:

- The English Gothic work *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (1818)
- The American Historical Fiction work *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest Gaines (1993).

We will spend some time discussing these novels, which will serve as the sources for a four-to-five page take home analysis and an in-class essay. The following questions will help you focus on essential issues in the novels as well as prepare you for the literary analysis that will follow.

Question 1: **Injustice** is a pivotal motif in both novels. Cite **THREE** specific quotations **from each novel** that illustrate injustice. After each citation explain how the quotations exemplifies this motif.

Question 2: The Creation and Jefferson are unable to experience **dignity** in a cruel world. Cite **THREE** specific quotations **from each novel** to illustrate this. After each citation explain how the quotation reflects the desire for dignity.

Question 3:

"Life is difficult.

This is a great truth, one of the greatest truths. It is a great truth because once we truly see this truth, we transcend it. Once we truly know that life is difficult - once we truly understand and accept it - then life is no longer difficult. Because once it is accepted, the fact that life is difficult no longer matters." - M. Scott Peck

Cite **THREE** specific quotations **from each novel** that reflect the difficulties of life experienced by the characters. After each passage discuss how the characters either accept or reject their difficulties. How does this affect their ability to see the "truth"?

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. This assignment can be found on my website.

I hope you have a wonderful summer vacation and that you find these works engaging and academically stimulating.

See you in August!