

AP Literature and Composition Summer Reading

All students accepted into AP Literature and Composition have a three stage summer reading assignment.

STAGE ONE:

Every student will read the following:

Chapters 1 and 2 and the envoi of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster. Before the beginning of summer break, students will be assigned in groups to read another set of chapters in the book. In the first week of the school year, students will present to the class (in the assigned groups) and teach the other students about the material in the individual chapters assigned. Each presentation should be approximately 30 minutes in length and must include a visual element (e.g., Video, Prezi, PowerPoint, etc.) and a handout for the students to keep and refer to during the year. You will be utilizing the lessons learned from this book throughout the year, on the AP Lit exam and in college, so please do not take this assignment lightly. **It is critical that you read the assigned sections of Foster's book before reading the two novels.**

STAGE TWO:

Every student will read the following:

David Copperfield by Charles Dickens (1850)

STAGE THREE:

Students will read ONE (1) of the following – the student may choose:

- 1) *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood (1985) (you may not choose this novel if you took AP Language and Composition);
- 2) *The Interestings* by Meg Wolitzer (2013)
- 3) *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver (1998)

David Copperfield was published in 1850 and may present some challenges in terms of language, but you should not have any comprehension issues with it. It is a long book. Deal with it. You will need to be comfortable with the style of writing from this era and the era's writing conventions to be successful in class. Keep in mind that Dickens was a superstar writer and that his novels were typically best-sellers. Each of the optional, more recent, novels, was also a best-seller. At the beginning of the school year, we will have class discussions comparing which elements are similar and which are dissimilar in best-selling books published 150 years apart.

You must keep a reading journal for each of the two books read. The journals will be graded. Each journal should be approximately 10-15 pages and will be part of your term one grade. We will spend the first one to two weeks of class discussing the summer readings and applying the principles discussed in Foster's book, so failure to do the summer readings may be grounds for dismissal from the course.

Reading Journal Guidelines

What is it? A reading journal is a journal that records a dialogue, or conversation, between the ideas in the text (the words that you are reading) and the ideas of the reader. In other words, your task is keep record of a dialogue with yourself as you read. Write down your thoughts, questions, insights and ideas while you read. A reading journal can and should include a mixture of things (for example, making connections to the text, interpreting the text, making predictions, asking questions, challenging the text, extending the meaning). There are no “right” and “wrong” answers. The important factor is that you read something and honestly, thoughtfully and articulately respond to it with your feelings and ideas. Your “writer’s voice” should be heard in the journal.

*Note: The following are guidelines, not commandments. You don’t have to answer every question in every journal. You do have to follow the format described in (1-2), below. Do not retell the story – a reading journal should not be plot summary - react to it, and develop each reaction as it merits development. Your reactions should be varied in length. **An entire page of one-liners does not make a journal.** Don’t rely on or even refer to Spark Notes, Cliffs Notes, or any other stale, safe, canned analysis: they cheat you out of thinking and they cheat your classmates out of their ideas. We are interested in your response, uncontaminated by the committees who produce these “study aids.” Use of these “study aids” may jeopardize your ability to remain enrolled in the class.*

- 1. It is preferred that you type your entries. Use loose-leaf paper if you are handwriting your entries (if your handwriting is not legible, your journals will not be accepted). Put the page number outside the margin. Write your comment inside the margin.**
- 2. Your journal entries must begin with the quotation you are commenting on. The quotation can be shortened by use of an ellipsis, but MUST include the page number in parentheses.**
3. Your classmates (teacher included) are your audience, so don’t spend your time relating matters of fact—and don’t retell the story. No plot driving.
4. Comment when an idea or character interests you, and be sure to tell why.
5. Notice repeated patterns in the text. Why might they be there? What do they contribute to the work? Explain your response.
6. Comment on striking or meaningful images in the text. Explain your response.
7. If you notice any literary devices, comment on their function in the text.
8. If something about the text confuses you—plot, language, or so forth—use the journal to explore why and what it might mean. It is expected that most of these texts will contain passages and ideas that may challenge and confuse you.
9. How are individual characters developed in the text? Explain your response.
10. Explain the choice of narrator in the text (e.g., first person limited, third person omniscient, etc.).
11. Comment on the tone of the text. How does it support the content? What specific words contribute to the tone? Explain your response.
12. Note strange or unusual diction. Keep track of **any** unfamiliar words.
13. Explore the relationship between setting and plot. Explain your response.

14. Comment on connections between the text and other texts (or movies, shows, and so forth) that you have experienced in the past. This could refer to theme, plot, setting, or character. Explain your response.
15. Challenge the text. For example, if a six-year-old narrator is using an advanced vocabulary, make a note of that in your journal and speculate why the author might have done that.

CRITERIA FOR A SUCCESSFUL READING JOURNAL (i.e. “How to earn an A!”)

- Quotations utilized are detailed, meaningful and attributed to a page number
- Interpretations of the text are thoughtful, in-depth, and avoid clichés
- Personal and cultural connections are insightful and thought-provoking
- The text is thoroughly covered (entries are not front or end-loaded)
- The journal discusses the **theme** of the text (themes must be expressed as a message about a topic)
- The journal discusses how literary elements such as imagery, diction, symbolism, setting, characterization and figurative language contribute to the theme
- The journal is neat, organized, looks professional and follows the directions above