A.P. Literature and Composition

Summer Reading 2019

All incoming A.P. Lit students are required to read:

How to Read Literature Like a Professor
Thomas C. Foster

What does it mean when a fictional hero takes a journey? Shares a meal? Gets drenched in a sudden rain shower? Often, there is much more going on in a novel or poem than is readily visible on the surface—a symbol, maybe, that remains elusive, or an unexpected twist on a character—and there's that sneaking suspicion that the deeper meaning of a literary text keeps escaping you.

In this practical and amusing guide to literature, Thomas C. Foster shows how easy and gratifying it is to unlock those hidden truths, and to discover a world where a road leads to a quest; a shared meal may signify a communion; and rain, whether cleansing or destructive, is never just rain. Ranging from major themes to literary models, narrative devices, and form, How to Read Literature Like a Professor is the perfect companion for making your reading experience more enriching, satisfying, and fun.

Your assignment: Read the text and take notes. For each chapter take notes on Foster’s main points and record the works of literature and/or stories (movies, television, etc.) that you are familiar with that apply to the chapter. If you’d like, feel free to add your own personal commentary on Foster’s points as you read. Your notes will be collected the first week for credit. These notes will go in the homework category of the grade book. If you are not sure what your notes should look like, I have uploaded a PDF of the first two pages of my notes. Notice I have recorded words from our vocab list and highlighted the definition.

Your assessment:

- You will have a written assessment on this text in the first week of school. This written assessment will go in the assessment category of the grade book.
- You will have a multiple choice test on this text in the first week of school. This test will also go in the assessment category of your grade book. There will be vocabulary on this test. See my website for the list of vocabulary for this text.
In addition, all students must choose one of the following texts:

*The Bluest Eye*

Toni Morrison

Pecola Breedlove, a young black girl, prays every day for beauty. Mocked by other children for the dark skin, curly hair, and brown eyes that set her apart, she yearns for normalcy, for the blond hair and blue eyes that she believes will allow her to finally fit in. Yet as her dream grows more fervent, her life slowly starts to disintegrate in the face of adversity and strife. A powerful examination of our obsession with beauty and conformity, Toni Morrison’s virtuosic first novel asks powerful questions about race, class, and gender with the subtlety and grace that have always characterized her writing.

*One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*

Ken Kesey

Boisterous, ribald, and ultimately shattering, Ken Kesey’s *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* is the seminal novel of the 1960s that has left an indelible mark on the literature of our time. Here is the unforgettable story of a mental ward and its inhabitants, especially the tyrannical Big Nurse Ratched and Randle Patrick McMurphy, the brawling, fun-loving new inmate who resolves to oppose her. We see the struggle through the eyes of Chief Bromden, the seemingly mute half-Indian patient who witnesses and understands McMurphy’s heroic attempt to do battle with the awesome powers that keep them all imprisoned.
Kurt Vonnegut's absurdist classic *Slaughterhouse-Five* introduces us to Billy Pilgrim, a man who becomes unstuck in time after he is abducted by aliens from the planet Tralfamadore. In a plot-scrambling display of virtuosity, we follow Pilgrim simultaneously through all phases of his life, concentrating on his (and Vonnegut's) shattering experience as an American prisoner of war who witnesses the firebombing of Dresden.

Don't let the ease of reading fool you--Vonnegut's isn't a conventional, or simple, novel. He writes, "There are almost no characters in this story, and almost no dramatic confrontations, because most of the people in it are so sick, and so much the listless playthings of enormous forces. One of the main effects of war, after all, is that people are discouraged from being characters..."

*Slaughterhouse-Five* (taken from the name of the building where the POWs were held) is not only Vonnegut's most powerful book, it is as important as any written since 1945.

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**Your assignment:**

- Choose one of the novels and read it closely and carefully. You are invited to take notes, but these notes will not be collected for credit.
- Complete a **Major Works Data Packet** once you finish your novel. The Major Works Data Packet can be found on my website—it is a Google Doc—you can type out your responses or print it and hand write things out on the packet. IF you type your responses, you must upload your document to Turnitin.com. This packet will be collected the first week of school. This assignment will go in the **homework** category in the grade book.

**Your assessment:**

- You will write a timed impromptu about your summer reading book. You will be expected to write about specific details and thematic ideas. The impromptu will go in the **paper** category of the grade book.
- You will take a multiple-choice test on your book in the first week of school. This test will go in the **assessment** category of the grade book.