Advanced Placement Literature and Composition
Summer Reading

As you might guess, AP Lit is a challenging course, designed for both highly motivated and highly capable students who are interested in pursuing potential college credit. AP Lit is quite a bit different than AP Lang. This course will push you to explore literary elements such as a work’s structure, style and themes, as well as analyzing the use and, more importantly, the purpose of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone. You will be learning to analyze and interpret imaginative literature through careful reading and critical analysis of representative works from various genres and periods. AP Lit is taught as a college-level English class and thus, includes a heavy workload, especially outside reading. Be prepared, during the school year, to schedule reading and writing into your study time.

Summer Assignment Part 1

1. Read How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines**, by Thomas C. Foster. This text is an easy-to-read introduction to the themes and associations all pieces of literature share. We will refer to this text throughout the year in combination with literature we read.

**(A full PDF copy of this text is available on Mrs. Davis' Blackboard page under the Summer Assignment tab.)

The text includes 26 chapters. For each chapter, provide a 5 – 7 bullet-pointed summary of Foster’s key points. I expect each bullet to be written in a complete sentence and for you to carefully read and condense the key ideas of each chapter.

Summer Assignment Part 2

1. Read ONE of the following works:

Joseph Heller – *Catch-22*
Patrick Süskind – *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*
William Faulkner – *As I Lay Dying*
Toni Morrison – *Beloved*
Charles Frazier – *Cold Mountain*
Leslie Marmon Silko – *Ceremony*
Ernest Hemingway – *The Sun Also Rises*
Alice Walker – *The Color Purple*

2. Collect New Words: List 50 words, along with the sentences in which they appear (including a citation with page number). These should be words new to you. After the sentences (from the book), write a definition for the word.

3. Application of Foster’s Guide:
As you read your chosen novel, consider what you learned from Foster's guide. Make direct, specific connections from the novel to eight of the chapters from the guide.
Make a numbered list of these eight connections, providing a direct quotation from the book, citing page numbers, and explaining the connection fully (in 3-5 sentences). Your application will be similar to the literary examples Foster uses to make his points. Think of it this way: Imitate Foster’s explanations, using your own chosen novel as your example. What from the novels could be examples for Thomas Foster’s book? What would a teacher who has worked on How to Read Literature Like a Professor use for a discussion of the book? You are demonstrating your understanding of Foster’s ideas, applying them to your chosen novel (which demonstrates your analysis of the novel), and exhibiting writing skills that are appropriate for an AP class.

Example of application: From Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen (no, it’s not on the list!)

1. “Well, my dear,” said Mr. Bennet, when Elizabeth had read the note aloud, “if your daughter should have a dangerous fit of illness, if she should die, it would be a comfort to know that it was all in pursuit of Mr. Bingley, and under your orders” (Austen 29).

   This is connected to chapter 24 of Foster’s book concerning illness. In this case, Jane Bennet has contracted a fever and is confined to the home of Mr. Bingley. As Foster points out “often… the most effective illness is one the writer makes up” (Foster 224). In this case, a “fever” serves Austen’s purpose of placing Jane in Bingley’s home for an extended period without actually putting her character in any serious danger. Jane’s illness also gives her sister, Elizabeth, ample opportunity to stay in the company of Bingley, his sisters and Mr. Darcy. Without a doubt, Jane’s illness “works like a charm” as a device for moving the plot of the novel forward and giving the characters a valid reason to interact with each other for a prolonged time (Foster 224).

You are encouraged to use supplemental sources as needed to aid your understanding of your selection. When we arrive back at school in August, you will turn in your summer assignment to your respective teacher—NO EXCEPTIONS. THESE ARE DUE BY THE END OF THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.

While there will not be a formal test when you return as has been done in years past, this assignment, if done well, will help jumpstart your grade in AP as well as be a building block for many things we read throughout the course.

We look forward to meeting you and working with you next year! Have a great summer.

AP Literature and Composition, Millbrook High School