

AP English Literature and Composition Summer Preparation 2009

The following statements are taken from the *Teacher's Guide for AP English Literature and Composition*. I include them here so that students and parents will know what is driving not only these summer reading and writing assignments, but others throughout the year as well.

On reading:

. . . students in an AP English Literature and Composition course should read actively. The works taught in the course should require careful deliberative reading. And the approach to analyzing and interpreting them should involve students in learning how to make careful observations of textual detail, establish connections among their observations, and draw from those connections a series of inferences leading to an interpretive conclusion about the work's meaning and value. (14)

On writing:

The goal of both types of writing [analytical and creative] assignments is to increase students' ability to explain clearly, cogently, even elegantly, what they understand about literary works and why they interpret them as they do.

To that end, writing instruction should include attention to developing and organizing ideas in clear, coherent, and persuasive language. It should include study of the elements of style. And it should attend to matters of precision and correctness as necessary. (15)

On text selection:

. . . the restrictions placed upon the selection of texts in a required high school course must of necessity be removed in an elective that is the equivalent of a first-year university course. Administrators and parents must be aware that the books used in such a course are by definition adult works. . . there must be representative works from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries . . . Ideally . . . students will hear many voices from different cultures, genders, and English-speaking countries. (18-19)

Assignment #1: Due first day of class, worth 100 points

Compose/create an introduction of yourself that addresses

- (a) who you are as a person, and
- (b) who you are as a reader/writer.

I will leave format and style up to you, as your choices in these areas will also tell me something about you. You might write a formal paper; you might write an informal letter; you might write and illustrate a poem; you might make a poster, collage, or scrapbook; you might even do something really creative like some kind of performance. However you choose to showcase yourself, in order for you to receive full credit, after examining your work, I must know something about you in each of the following areas:

- personality
- goals*
- strengths/weaknesses*
- likes/dislikes*
- learning style
- attitudes toward/experiences with reading and writing
- how you spend your time/what is important to you
- why you are taking AP Lit/what you hope to gain from it

**personal and/or academic*

Grading criteria:

- clearly addresses all listed expectations
- organized and neat
- grammatically correct

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Assignments #2 and #3: Due second (*Heart of Darkness*) and third (*The Poisonwood Bible*) days of class, worth 60 points each.

Read *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad and *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver. Copies of HD are available for checkout from the English department. See me before leaving for the summer if you wish to check out one of these copies.

Select three “significant passages” (from one or two sentences up to one or two paragraphs) for each book. Copy each passage (if it’s long, feel free to use ellipsis), list its page number, and write a paragraph explaining each of your choices. Do not copy from SparkNotes. I will check.

Grading criteria:

- Choice of passage
- Depth of insight
- Writing Conventions

In addition, expect **reading comprehension check quizzes** on each of the two novels to be given on class **days two and three**.

Assignment #4: no grade, nothing to hand in, just something to learn! ☺

Read *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White. If you have your own copy, mark it up; highlight things to remember. There are many different style manuals on the market, but this is a classic, and its small size makes it easy to use. Use its advice to guide your writing in Assignment #5 and beyond.

Assignment #5: Due first day of class, worth 100 points

Use the *Finding Literary Criticism Articles* handout to locate a critical commentary on one of the two novels. Write a well-organized essay either supporting or refuting the viewpoint presented in the article you have chosen. Be sure to incorporate quotations from both the novel and the critical commentary. Be sure to include all necessary bibliographic information on the critical commentary.

Grading criteria:

- Purpose/audience – clear thesis; focused; reader is engaged
- Idea development – specific text-based support for thesis
- Organization – logic, transitions, unity
- Syntax – sentence structure, style, coherence
- Diction – word choice, tone
- Correctness – mechanics, surface features

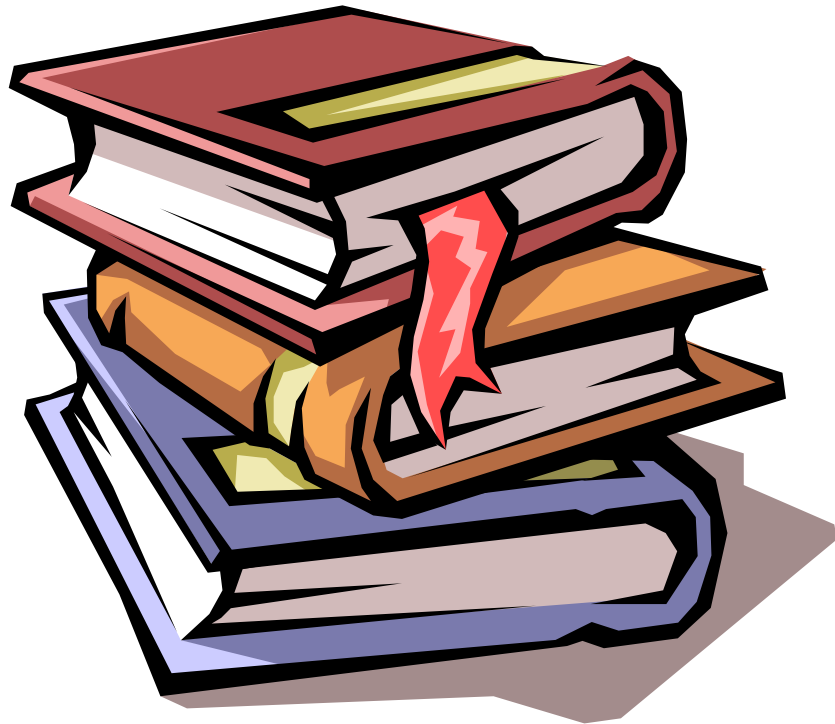
Miscellaneous

- Review Thomas Foster’s book *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* which you read last summer for the AP Language course (Note: if you did not take the AP Language course, you’ll want to get and read this book because we will also make frequent references to it.)

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- If you did not read *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe (also available from the English Department) for Advanced English II, you may wish to read this book, because we will refer to it during discussion and activities for the other two books.

If you have questions over the summer, please do not hesitate to e-mail me: linda.mauser@campbell.kyschools.us. I won't promise to check e-mail every day – after all, I'm on vacation too, but I will check it frequently. And check your school e-mail from time to time as well – if I need to contact you for any reason, that's how I'll do it. I'm looking forward to reading and discussing literature with you.



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Introduction

	Super job – Clearly addressed criteria, organized and neat, mechanically correct: 5 pts.	Pretty good – a little fuzzy, occasional surface errors: 4.5 pts.	Meets expectations: 4 pts.	Hmm. Forgot you had to do this until Sunday night, didn't you? 3.5 pt.
<i>Personality</i>				
<i>Goals</i>				
<i>Strengths/weaknesses</i>				
<i>Likes/dislikes</i>				
<i>Learning style</i>				
<i>Reading & writing attitudes/experiences</i>				
<i>Personal time</i>				
<i>Why taking course</i>				
Multiplier x 2.5				
Totals				

Score _____ / 100 Comments:

Passages

	Passage choice 5	Explanation/insight 10	Writing conventions 5	Total points _____/ 20
1				
2				
3				

Score _____ / 60 Comments:

Literary Analysis

Criterion	Excellent 4	Good 3.5	Satisfactory 3	I know you can do better 2	Multiplier	Criterion total
Purpose/audience					5	
Idea development					5	
Organization					5	
Syntax					4	
Diction					4	
Correctness					2	

Score _____ / 100 Comments: