

Dear Future AP Students and Parents,

Welcome to AP English Literature and Composition! This demanding course will prepare you for the reading and writing required in college classrooms and the workplace, and also gives you the chance to earn college credit.

This chorus will be a rigorous exploration of literature and literary criticism. In order to position the class to begin smoothly in the fall, you will be required to read two books over the summer. You will begin with *How to Read Literature like a Professor*, by Thomas C. Foster. This book will introduce you to literary interpretation in simple and enjoyable language. This guide is by far the most readable and entertaining guide to literary interpretation I have come across. It will help you to more confidently read and analyze literature. We will also be referring to this book throughout the school year.

**REQUIRED READING:**

**How to Read Literature Like a Professor (Thomas C. Foster)**

While many books can be enjoyed for their basic stories, there are often deeper literary meanings interwoven in these texts. *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* helps us to discover those hidden truths by looking at literature with the eyes—and the literary codes—of the ultimate professional reader, the college professor.

*\$8.99 on amazon.com (ISBN 9780062301673)*

We will be covering as much literature as possible during the school year, but there is no possible way to read everything. This summer you will start your AP studies by reading one of the many novels we will not have time to cover in class. You will choose your second summer reading book from the list of novels below, all of which commonly appear on the AP exam.

**CHOICE READING:**

**Frankenstein (Mary Shelley)**

*Frankenstein*, an instant bestseller and an important ancestor of both the horror and science fiction genres, not only tells a terrifying story, but also raises profound, disturbing questions about the very nature of life and the place of humankind within the cosmos: What does it mean to be human? What responsibilities do we have to each other? How far can we go in tampering with Nature? In our age, filled with news of organ donation genetic engineering, and bio-terrorism, these questions are more relevant than ever.

*\$6.00 on amazon.com (ISBN 9780486282114)*

**The Adventures of Huck Finn (Mark Twain)**

A nineteenth-century boy from a Mississippi River town recounts his adventures as he travels down the river with a runaway slave, encountering a family involved in a feud, two scoundrels pretending to be royalty, and Tom Sawyer's aunt who mistakes him for Tom.

*\$5.88 on amazon.com (ISBN 9780486280615)*

(List of Choice Reading continues on next page.)

**CHOICE READING (CONTINUED):**

**The Awakening (Kate Chopin)**

When first published in 1899, *The Awakening* shocked readers with its honest treatment of female marital infidelity. Audiences accustomed to the pieties of late Victorian romantic fiction were taken aback by Chopin's daring portrayal of a woman trapped in a stifling marriage, who seeks and finds passionate physical love outside the confines of her domestic situation.

*\$4.00 on amazon.com (ISBN 9780486277868)*

**Slaughterhouse-Five (Kurt Vonnegut)**

Selected by the Modern Library as one of the 100 best novels of all time, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, an American classic, is one of the world's great antiwar books. Centering on the infamous firebombing of Dresden, Billy Pilgrim's odyssey through time reflects the mythic journey of our own fractured lives as we search for meaning in what we fear most.

*\$9.48 on amazon.com (ISBN 9780812988529)*

**The House on Mango Street (Sandra Cisneros)**

Told in a series of vignettes – sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous – it is the story of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Few other books in our time have touched so many readers.

*\$7.67 on amazon.com (ISBN 978-0679734772)*

I expect you to keep a dialectical reading journal for both books (to be turned in the first week of school) and make a presentation to the class during the second week of school. Details of the presentation will be provided on the first day of class. You will have time to use your notes and knowledge of your chosen literature to assemble a well-organized presentation. Be sure to take good notes during your reading, so that you are well prepared.

I have included an example of your reading journal format below. On the left-hand column, write anything that catches your attention; this could be a quotation, an idea, a plot development, literary device, etc. I will not be picky about what you put in your journal, but I will give you a grade based on the thought put into your entries and overall completion. There is no minimum or maximum amount of entries, but in order to adequately notate the readings, you should expect to average around one entry for every five pages. Don't be afraid to include your own opinions and thoughts. There are no wrong answers in this journal. Your goal is to begin thinking critically about the literature and provide yourself some easy reference points for your presentation in August. It will help to include page numbers in your entries for quick reference. In the example below, I have used the events from the movie *The Lion King* to demonstrate the note taking format.

<p>"Everything the light touches is our kingdom." Mufasa (pg. 23)</p>	<p>This interests me because it could mean two things.  It could literally mean that they control the lands that they can see. OR, light may be a metaphor for righteousness, and this statement could also mean that they are the moral leaders of the land, or that they will only operate morally as they rule.</p>
<p>Simba sees Mufasa's ghost in the clouds, ghost tells Simba to remember who he is. (pgs. 50-66)</p>	<p>This caught my attention because it reminds me a lot of Hamlet, and the sighting of King Hamlet's ghost. This movie has a lot in common with Hamlet.</p>

If you are purchasing your summer reading books, I highly recommend you also highlight, underline, and make small notes in the book itself, in addition to maintaining your reading journal. The more notes you take, the easier it will be for you to put together your presentation in August.

This class will be rigorous and require you to stay current with class reading. Some reading will be done in class, but much will be assigned as homework. This will allow us to spend class time analyzing and discussing the literature.

Have a great summer. Be safe, and happy reading!

Sincerely,  
Mr. Evans