

AP English Literature and Composition- Summer Assignment

Welcome to AP English Literature! This is a fun, yet challenging course designed to strengthen your writing skills and broaden your abilities in analyzing literature. In preparation for our study in the fall, you do have some work to complete over the summer. Please see below for more info. All readings and reflections are expected to be completed and ready to turn in on the first day of class.

E-Mail me if you have any questions- MAndrews@Hendricken.com

Assignment 1: Poetry Analysis (Written Reflection Required)

We will spend a portion of our year studying poetry. In preparation for this, I would like you to complete an assignment that tells me your interpretation of "great poetry." Select a poem that you consider to be worthy of study and instruction in AP English Literature. Then, write a 250+ word response explaining what makes this a "great" poem. I will not put any parameters on you; I simply want to know what you think makes a poem worthy of your time. Try to avoid online assistance in completing the analysis portion of the assignment. There is no "wrong answer"!

Assignment 2: Literary Merit- Great Expectations by Charles Dickens (Written Reflection Required)

The AP Exam challenges students to analyze texts that are described by the College Board to have "Literary Merit". Throughout the year we will be reading several novels and plays with such "merit" in preparation for the exam. You will read Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, a work that the College Board frequently cites as a "text of Literary Merit" and often appears on the exam. I suggest annotating the book while reading- see my directions on annotation; this skill will be useful to you throughout the year. Upon completion, write a 250+ word reflection explaining what the phrase "Literary Merit" means to you, and why this novel qualifies to be determined as such.

Assignment 3: How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster (Written Reflection Required)

Foster explores different ways to approach literary analysis to start developing skills that you'll find helpful for this class. It provides tips and strategies to help readers recognize important concepts in text and how to think critically. You will read this book and write a 250+ word reflection comparing and connecting one of the chapters/concepts to a book, play, poem, or short story that you have read in high school. Make sure that you have the original version (not the kids edition- the one you're looking for has a red cover).

I have also attached a list of other literary works that have been on the AP exam in the past. If you're looking for a fiction work to read in your spare time, check out these titles- we'll be reading a few throughout the year!

The expectation is that all written submissions follow standard MLA formatting and are of high quality. Remember, this is my first impression of your writing!

Happy Reading! ☺

Suggested Literature

Ancient Texts

800 BC – *The Iliad* – Homer

800 BC – *The Odyssey* – Homer

Neoclassical

1759 – *Candide* – Voltaire

Romantic

1811 – *Sense and Sensibility* – Jane Austen

1813 – *Pride and Prejudice* – Jane Austen

1838 – *Oliver Twist* – Charles Dickens

Victorian

1847 – *Wuthering Heights* – Emily Brontë

1847 – *Jane Eyre* – Charlotte Brontë

1850 – *The Scarlet Letter* – Nathaniel Hawthorne

1861 – *Silas Marner* – George Eliot

1869 – *Little Women* – Louisa May Alcott

1897 – *Dracula* – Bram Stoker

1891 – *The Picture of Dorian Gray* – Oscar Wilde

1899 – *The Awakening* – Kate Chopin

Naturalist

1902 – *Heart of Darkness* – Joseph Conrad

1903 – *The Call of the Wild* – Jack London

1911 – *Ethan Frome* – Edith Wharton

Modern

1925 – *The Great Gatsby* – F. Scott Fitzgerald

1925 – *Mrs. Dalloway* – Virginia Woolf

1937 – *Of Mice and Men* – John Steinbeck

1939 – *The Grapes of Wrath* – John Steinbeck

1940 – *The Power and the Glory* – Graham Greene

1945 – *Animal Farm* – George Orwell

1949 – *Nineteen Eighty-Four* – George Orwell

Post Modern

1951 – *The Catcher in the Rye* – J.D. Salinger

1952 – *East of Eden* – John Steinbeck

1953 – *Fahrenheit 451* – Ray Bradbury

1954 – *Lord of the Flies* – William Golding

1959 – *A Separate Peace* – John Knowles

1960 – *To Kill a Mockingbird* – Harper Lee

1967 – *The Chosen* – Chaim Potok

1969 – *Slaughterhouse-Five* – Kurt Vonnegut

1970 – *Grendel* – John Gardner

1976 – *A River Runs Through It* – Norman Maclean

1984 – *The House on Mango Street* – Sandra Cisneros

1987 – *Beloved* – Toni Morrison

1989 – *A Prayer for Owen Meany* – John Irving

1990 – *The Things They Carried* – Tim O'Brien

1992 – *The Secret History* – Donna Tartt

1994 – *In the Lake of the Woods* – Tim O'Brien

1996 – *Push* – Sapphire

1997 – *Cold Mountain* – Charles Frazier

1997 – *The Red Tent* – Anita Diamant

1997 – *Memoirs of a Geisha* – Arthur Golden

1998 – *The Poisonwood Bible* – Barbara Kingsolver

1998 – *The Handmaid's Tale* – Margaret Atwood

2001 – *Atonement* – Ian McEwan

2003 – *The Kite Runner* – Khaled Hosseini

2001 – *Life of Pi* – Yann Martel

2005 – *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* – Kim Edwards

2005 – *The Glass Castle* – Jeannette Wells

2005 – *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* – Jonathan Safran Foer

2006 – *The Road* – Cormac McCarthy

2008 – *Serena* – Ron Rash

2008 – *Little Bee* – Chris Cleave

2010 – *Room* – Emma Donoghue

2013 – *The Goldfinch* – Donna Tartt

2014 – *All the Light We Cannot See* – Anthony Doerr

2014 – *A Man Called Ove* – Fredrik Backman

2015 – *Go Set a Watchman* – Harper Lee

2015 – *The Nightingale* – Kristin Hannah

Suggested Plays:

Antigone – Sophocles

Any Shakespearean play

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof – Tennessee Williams

The Crucible – Arthur Miller

Death of a Salesman – Arthur Miller

A Doll's House – Henrik Ibsen

An Enemy of the People – Henrik Ibsen

The Importance of Being Earnest – Oscar Wilde

Our Town – Thornton Wilder

Waiting for Godot – Samuel Beckett

Fences – August Wilson

Annotating a Text

Annotating a literary text (or any text, for that matter) is a valuable skill for students to learn. Annotating can be defined as the process of taking notes directly on the literary text that you are reading. In order for this to happen, you first need to know why annotating a text is useful and then how to annotate a text.

Why Annotating Is Useful

Taking notes inside a text while reading is particularly useful because it forces your brain to transact with the text while reading. Really, your brain does this all the time anyway whenever you read, but annotating provides you with the opportunity to become cognitive of your brain's work because you are writing down thoughts as they occur to you. Also, it allows you to keep track of significant plot events, characters, conflicts, literary techniques, and themes so that you can return to them more easily at a later time. In fact, studies show that after a six-week time lapse, students with an annotated text can recall all of the key information in that text after a 15- to 30-minute review session. Finally, as the old adage goes, writing it down is learning it twice. The physical act of transcribing your thoughts while reading cements the information into your memory; once this is done, you can access it later.

How to Annotate

Annotating is a skill, and like most skills, it requires practice to develop. Because most of you are probably novices when it comes to taking notes inside the text, here are a few general guidelines to follow. Once you get comfortable with this skill, you may decide to craft your own parameters for annotation. The goal here is to give you a framework at the start. Only you know how you learn best, though, so feel free to adjust or add to this list as needed.

1. **Mark key lines:** Any time you read a passage that is significant to the plot or character development, underline it and write a brief notes to yourself in the margin describing the passage and/or why it is important.
2. **Ask questions:** If a passage or scene is confusing, or if you want to know more about what is occurring, bracket the passage or scene and jot your question in the margin. Then you can bring the question to class discussion for clarification.
3. **React to what you read:** If something in the text strikes you, surprises you, troubles you, or even makes you laugh, mark it and write your reaction in the margin. Often these passages are intentionally written by the author to elicit such a response, so they can prove important later.
4. **Track themes:** As you read, you will begin to discern the text's threads or themes. Once you notice them, you can begin marking them every time they occur. This is especially valuable when it comes time to write an essay on the book.
5. **Notes at the end of each chapter:** If the book is broken up into chapters, you should take a few minutes at the end of each one to list its 4-5 most important plot events. Do it right there in the book, right at the physical end of the chapter itself. That way, when you remember a key plot event but do not remember where in the text it occurs, or when you cannot recall which event occurs before which, you have a resource for easy reference instead of having to thumb through the entire book, mining it for one little piece of plot.

At the beginning, you may find this process a bit laborious, but with some practice, it will become second nature to you. Ultimately, if you stick with it and concentrate on being an active note-taker while reading, you will find that you comprehend texts more fully and are better prepared to discuss and write about what you have read.