

**AP LITERATURE & COMPOSITION
SUMMER READING 2019**

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Welcome to Advanced Placement Literature and Composition. I'm excited to begin teaching this course in the fall, and I look forward to exploring some of the greatest literary works with you and hearing your original insights. I hope you will genuinely invest time this summer into the first major work we shall discuss, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*.

Assignment:

Purchase a hard copy of the book.

Annotate as you read. Your notes should reflect your unique processing of the text, including both comprehension and analysis. (A helpful *Harvard Library* article on this skill is attached for your consideration.)

Grades/Expectations:

Bring your annotated book to class on the first day. There will be an opportunity to earn credit for your marginalia.

There will be an *Invisible Man* assessment in the first week of class, which will count as your first test grade.

You will also be expected to engage in Socratic seminar and small group projects/presentations in the first weeks of the course, so please prepare by reading the text closely this summer.

Recommended/Optional:

How To Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster is a helpful introduction to this course. I recommend this additional summer reading especially to those who are less than confident about taking AP Literature, for example those who haven't yet mastered the shift from mere comprehension of a text to deeper analysis.

Additionally, the AP exam for this course asks students to respond to essay prompts by drawing from works of literary merit they have studied. The more great literature you have read, the better your ability to summon a variety of familiar characters, ideas, and themes that you can analyze on command. If you can read more than the minimum this summer, your investment will certainly pay off in May.

Here is a list of cited texts from the AP Literature exam, in order of frequency they appeared between 1970 and 2015:

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison
Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte
Great Expectations by Charles Dickens
Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad
Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte
Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoevski
King Lear by William Shakespeare
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

Moby Dick by Herman Melville
Catch-22 by Joseph Heller
Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce
Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston
The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne
The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald
The Awakening by Kate Chopin
Beloved by Toni Morrison
Billy Budd by Herman Melville
Light in August by William Faulkner
Ceremony by Leslie Marmon Silko
The Color Purple by Alice Walker
Othello by William Shakespeare
Antigone by Sophocles
As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner
The Crucible by Arthur Miller
The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams
Native Son by Richard Wright
Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison
A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams
Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy
Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller
Jude the Obscure by Thomas Hardy
A Passage to India by E. M. Forster
Portrait of a Lady by Henry James
A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry
Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett
All the Pretty Horses by Cormac McCarthy
Bless Me, Ultima by Rudolfo Anaya
Candide by Voltaire
The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck
The Jungle by Upton Sinclair
Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert
The Mayor of Casterbridge by Thomas Hardy
Oedipus Rex by Sophocles
Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead by Tom Stoppard
Sula by Toni Morrison
Tess of the D'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy
A Doll House by Henrik Ibsen
All the King's Men by Robert Penn Warren
Cry, The Beloved Country by Alan Paton
Ethan Frome by Edith Wharton
Frankenstein by Mary Shelley
Lord Jim by Joseph Conrad
Medea by Euripides
The Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare
The Sound and the Fury by William Faulkner
The Sun Also Rises by Ernest Hemingway
The Tempest by William Shakespeare
Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? by Edward Albee
Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton
An Enemy of the People by Henrik Ibsen
Equus by Peter Shaffer
Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift
Hamlet by William Shakespeare
Hedda Gabler by Henrik Ibsen
Macbeth by William Shakespeare
Major Barbara by George Bernard Shaw
Moll Flanders by Daniel Defoe
Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf
Murder in the Cathedral by T. S. Eliot
Obasan by Joy Kogawa
The Piano Lesson by August Wilson
The Turn of the Screw by Henry James
Bleak House by Charles Dickens
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
The Cherry Orchard by Anton Chekhov
Doctor Faustus by Christopher Marlowe
Go Tell It on the Mountain by James Baldwin
Middlemarch by George Eliot
Mrs. Warren's Profession by George Bernard Shaw
Sister Carrie by Theodore Dreiser
A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens
To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
Tom Jones by Henry Fielding
Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys
Wise Blood by Flannery O'Connor

Interrogating Texts: 6 Reading Habits to Develop in Your First Year at Harvard

Critical reading--active engagement and interaction with texts--is essential to your academic success at Harvard, and to your intellectual growth. Research has shown that students who read deliberately retain more information and retain it longer. Your college reading assignments will probably be more substantial and more sophisticated than those you are used to from high school. The amount of reading will almost certainly be greater. College students rarely have the luxury of successive re-readings of material, either, given the pace of life in and out of the classroom.

While the strategies below are (for the sake of clarity) listed sequentially, you can probably do most of them simultaneously. They may feel awkward at first, and you may have to deploy them very consciously, especially if you are not used to doing anything more than moving your eyes across the page. But they will quickly become habits, and you will notice the difference--in what you "see" in a reading, and in the confidence with which you approach your texts.

1. **Previewing: Look "around" the text before you start reading.**

You've probably engaged in one version of previewing in the past, when you've tried to determine how long an assigned reading is (and how much time and energy, as a result, it will demand from you). But you can learn a great deal more about the organization and purpose of a text by taking note of features other than its length.

Previewing enables you to develop a set of *expectations about the scope and aim* of the text. These very preliminary impressions offer you a way to focus your reading. For instance:

- What does the presence of *headnotes*, an *abstract*, or other *prefatory material* tell you?
- Is the *author* known to you already? If so, how does his (or her) *reputation* or *credentials* influence your perception of what you are about to read? If the author is unfamiliar or unknown, does an editor introduce him or her (by supplying brief biographical information, an assessment of the author's work, concerns, and importance)?
- How does the disposition or *layout of a text* prepare you for reading? Is the material broken into parts--subtopics, sections, or the like? Are there long and unbroken blocks of text or smaller paragraphs or "chunks" and what does this suggest? How might the parts of a text guide you toward understanding the line of inquiry or the arc of the argument that's being made?
- Does the text seem to be arranged according to *certain conventions of discourse*? Newspaper articles, for instance, have characteristics that you will recognize; textbooks and scholarly essays are organized quite differently. Texts demand different things of you as you read, so whenever you can, register the type of information you're presented with.

2. **Annotating: Make your reading thinking-intensive from start to finish.**

Annotating puts you actively and immediately in a "*dialogue*" with an author and the issues and ideas you encounter in a written text. It's also a way to have an ongoing conversation with yourself as you move through the text and to record what that encounter was like for you. Here's how:

- **Throw away your highlighter:** Highlighting can seem like an active reading strategy, but it can actually distract from the business of learning and dilute your comprehension. Those bright yellow lines you put on a printed page one day can seem strangely cryptic the next, unless you have a method for remembering why they were important to you at another moment in time. Pen or pencil will allow you to do more to a text you have to wrestle with.
- **Mark up the margins of your text with words and phrases:** ideas that occur to you, notes about things that seem important to you, reminders of how issues in a text may connect with class discussion or course themes. This kind of interaction keeps you conscious of the *reasons* you are reading as well as the *purposes* your instructor has in mind. Later in the term, when you are reviewing for a test or project, your marginalia will be useful memory triggers.
- **Develop your own symbol system:** asterisk (*) a key idea, for example, or use an exclamation point (!) for the surprising, absurd, bizarre. Your personalized set of hieroglyphs allow you to capture the important -- and often fleeting -- insights that occur to you as you're reading. Like notes in your margins, they'll prove indispensable when you return to a text in search of that perfect passage to use in a paper, or are preparing for a big exam.
- **Get in the habit of hearing yourself ask questions:** "What does this mean?" "Why is the writer drawing that conclusion?" "Why am I being asked to read this text?" etc. Write the questions down (in your margins, at the beginning or end of the reading, in a notebook, or elsewhere. They are reminders of the unfinished business you still

have with a text: something to ask during class discussion, or to come to terms with on your own, once you've had a chance to digest the material further or have done other course reading.

3. **Outline, summarize, analyze:** Take the information apart, look at its parts, and then try to put it back together again in language that is meaningful to you.

The best way to determine that you've really gotten the point is to be able to state it in your own words.

Outlining the argument of a text is a version of annotating, and can be done quite informally in the margins of the text, unless you prefer the more formal Roman numeral model you may have learned in high school. **Outlining** enables you to see the skeleton of an argument: the thesis, the first point and evidence (and so on), through the conclusion. With weighty or difficult readings, that skeleton may not be obvious until you go looking for it.

Summarizing accomplishes something similar, but in sentence and paragraph form, and with the connections between ideas made explicit.

Analyzing adds an evaluative component to the summarizing process—it requires you not just to restate main ideas, but also to test the logic, credibility, and emotional impact of an argument. In analyzing a text, you reflect upon and decide how effectively (or poorly) its argument has been made. Questions to ask:

- What is the writer asserting?
- What am I being asked to believe or accept? Facts? Opinions? Some mixture?
- What reasons or evidence does the author supply to convince me? Where is the strongest or most effective evidence the author offers -- and why is it compelling?

4. **Look for repetitions and patterns:**

The way *language is chosen, used, positioned in a text* can be an important indication of what an author considers crucial and what he expects you to glean from his argument. It can also alert you to ideological positions, hidden agendas or biases. Be watching for:

- Recurring images
- Repeated words, phrases, types of examples, or illustrations
- Consistent ways of characterizing people, events, or issues

5. **Contextualize:** Once you've finished reading actively and annotating, *take stock for a moment and put it in perspective.*

When you contextualize, you essentially "*re-view*" a text you've encountered, framed by its historical, cultural, material, or intellectual circumstances.

- When was it written or where was it published? Do these factors change or otherwise influence how you view a piece?

Also view the reading through the lens of your own experience. Your understanding of the words on the page and their significance is always shaped by what you have come to know and value from living in a particular time and place.

6. **Compare and Contrast:** Set course readings against each other to determine their relationships (hidden or explicit).

- At what point in the term does this reading come? Why that point, do you imagine?
- How does it contribute to the main concepts and themes of the course?
- How does it compare (or contrast) to the ideas presented by texts that come before it? Does it continue a trend, shift direction, or expand the focus of previous readings?
- How has your thinking been altered by this reading? How has it affected your response to the issues and themes of the course?