

Welcome to AP Literature & Composition! Students will be evaluated on summer reading during the first few days of school. Students must read a total of **two** books - *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* is required; students then choose a literary piece from the choices below. Complete the attached assignments.

Books may be purchased at local bookstores such as The Book Oasis on Main Street, on-line, or borrowed from the Stoneham Public Library.

Required *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas Foster. **Note: Be sure to buy the first edition, ISBN# 9780060009427 as the second edition does not do as thorough a job in covering poetry. This book should be read before reading the novel. Complete the Guided Questions page - see attached.**

Take notes on the Foster book—annotations, highlighting, notecards, sticky notes, summaries, etc. are all good options. ***Due to the use of Foster's book as a resource throughout the school year, it is highly recommended students purchase this book.***

This non-fiction text will guide you through the world of literature. You will learn how to recognize symbols or themes, understand quests and allusions, and discover the hidden meaning beyond the literal words on the page. The fifteen guided questions (p. 4 in this packet) need to be answered and will count as a quiz grade.

Choose one of the following books to read and complete a Fiction Report - see attached. A model is provided. The following titles show up most often on the A.P. exam but are not covered in our class syllabus. You are only required to read one, but we recommend you read as many as you have time for because they are great books.

The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison. Pecola Breedlove, a young black girl, prays every day for beauty. Mocked by other children for the dark skin, curly hair, and brown eyes that set her apart, she yearns for normalcy, for the blond hair and blue eyes that she believes will allow her to finally fit in. A powerful examination of our obsession with beauty and conformity, Toni Morrison's first novel asks powerful questions about race, class, and gender.

A Passage to India by E.M. Forster. This novel is set against the backdrop of the British Raj and the Indian Independence Movement in the 1920s. The racial tensions and prejudices between indigenous Indians and the British Colonists who rule India are major themes.

Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert. Flaubert's first published novel focuses on a doctor's wife, Emma Bovary, who has **adulterous affairs** and lives beyond her means in order to escape the banalities and emptiness of provincial life. Note the gender and class issues. (Can be downloaded to Pcs, iPods, and MP3 players from Stoneham Public Library)

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini spans almost fifty years and traces the unlikely friendship of a wealthy, Afghan youth and a servant's son. It begins in the final days of Afghanistan's monarchy and ends with atrocities of the present day. Mature. Historical/realistic fiction.

Absolam, Absolam by William Faulkner is a Southern Gothic novel that takes place before, during, and after the Civil War. It is a story about three families of the American South, with a focus on the life of Thomas Sutpen, an enigmatic stranger who comes to Jefferson, Mississippi in

the early 1830s to wrest his mansion out of the muddy bottoms of the north Mississippi wilderness. He was a man, Faulkner said, “who wanted sons and the sons destroyed him.”

All the Pretty Horses, the first volume in Cormac McCarthy's *Border Trilogy*, is the tale of sixteen-year-old John Grady Cole who finds himself at the end of a long line of Texas ranchers cut off from the only life he has ever imagined for himself. With two companions, he sets off for Mexico on a sometimes idyllic, sometimes comic journey to a place where dreams are paid for in blood. Winner of the National Book Award for Fiction.

A Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood is set in the near-future dystopian Republic of Gilead, formerly the United States. Offred is a Handmaid in the home of the Commander and his wife. She is allowed to go out once a day to the food market, she is not permitted to read, and she is hoping the Commander makes her pregnant because she is only valued if her ovaries are viable. Offred can remember the years before when she was an independent woman, worked at a job of her own, and had a husband and child. But all of that is gone now...everything has changed.

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen. In a remote Hertfordshire village, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet -- a country squire of no great means and his scatterbrained wife -- must marry off their five vivacious daughters. At the heart of this all-consuming enterprise are the headstrong second daughter Elizabeth and her aristocratic suitor Fitzwilliam Darcy, two lovers in whom pride and prejudice must be overcome before love can bring the novel to its magnificent conclusion.

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens. Humble, orphaned Pip is apprenticed to the dirty work of the forge but dares to dream of becoming a gentleman — and one day, under sudden and enigmatic circumstances, he finds himself in possession of "great expectations." In this gripping tale of crime and guilt, revenge and reward, the compelling characters include Magwitch, the fearful and fearsome convict; Estella, whose beauty is excelled only by her haughtiness; and the embittered Miss Havisham, an eccentric jilted bride.

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte is the story of a small, plain-faced, intelligent, and passionate English orphan. Jane is abused by her aunt and cousin and then attends a harsh charity school. Through it all she remains strong and determinedly refuses to allow a cruel world to crush her independence or her strength of will. *Jane Eyre* is partly autobiographical, and filled with social criticism and sinister Gothic elements. It is a novel many consider ahead of its time given the individualistic character of Jane and the novel's exploration of [classism](#), [sexuality](#), religion, and gender roles.

The Sun Also Rises by Ernest Hemingway. A poignant look at the disillusionment and angst of the post-World War I generation, the novel introduces two of Hemingway's most unforgettable characters: Lady Brett Ashley and Jake Barnes. The story follows the flamboyant Brett and the hapless Jake as they journey from the wild nightlife of 1920s Paris to the brutal bullfighting rings of Spain with a motley group of expatriates. It is an age of moral bankruptcy, spiritual dissolution, unrealized love, and vanishing illusions.

Obasan by Joy Kogawa chronicles Canada's internment and persecution of its citizens of Japanese descent during World War II from the perspective of a young child. Kogawa uses strong imagery of silence, stones and streams throughout the novel. Themes depicted in the novel include memory and forgetting, prejudice and tolerance, and justice versus injustice.

Cry, the Beloved Country by Alan Paton is the profoundly compassionate story of the Zulu pastor Stephen Kumalo and his son Absalom, set in the troubled and changing South Africa of the 1940s. Kumalo travels to Johannesburg to find that his son is a criminal, and he sees first-hand how people try to live in the squalor and impoverishment of the slums of the city.

Native Son by Richard Wright. Right from the start, Bigger Thomas had been headed for jail. It could have been for assault or petty larceny; by chance, it was for murder and rape. *Native Son* tells the story of this young black man caught in a downward spiral after he kills a young white woman in a brief moment of panic. Set in Chicago in the 1930s, Wright's powerful novel is an unsparing reflection on the poverty and feelings of hopelessness experienced by people in inner cities across the country and of what it means to be black in America.

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe. This post-colonial novel follows the life of Okonkwo, an Igbo ("Ibo" in the novel) leader and local wrestling champion in the fictional Nigerian village of Umuofia. *Things Fall Apart* tells two intertwining stories, both centering on Okonkwo. The first, a powerful fable of the immemorial conflict between the individual and society, traces Okonkwo's fall from grace with the tribal world. The second, as modern as the first is ancient, concerns the clash of cultures and the destruction of Okonkwo's world with the arrival of aggressive European missionaries. These perfectly harmonized twin dramas are informed by an awareness capable of encompassing at once the life of nature, human history, and the mysterious compulsions of the soul. The title of the novel comes from a line in W. B. Yeats' poem "The Second Coming".

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce. The novel starts to make use of techniques that would make Joyce famous – and infamous—such as stream of consciousness narration, interiority (a revealing view of the character's inner workings), and a frank realism that shocked some readers of the time. The novel reworks the classic coming of age story (the fancy German term is *bildungsroman*), and it mirrors the author's life up to age 20, when he left Dublin for Paris. Its challenging attitude to family, homeland, and the Catholic Church all gave the novel (and Joyce himself) quite the reputation when it was published. Joyce treats youth with a directness and honesty.

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston is an enduring Southern love story sparkling with wit, beauty, and heartfelt wisdom. Told in the captivating voice of a woman who refuses to live in sorrow, bitterness, fear, or foolish romantic dreams, it is the story of fair-skinned, fiercely independent Janie Crawford, and her evolving selfhood through three marriages and a life marked by poverty, trials, and purpose.

How to Read Literature Like a Professor Guided Questions

1. Quests: What should one look for to know a story is a quest? What is the essential reason for a quest?
2. Vampires: If ghost and vampires are never simply about ghosts and vampires, what abstract ideas might they represent?
3. Sonnets: In general, how do all the “parts” of a sonnet relate to each other and contribute to the overall meaning of the poem?
4. Repeated throughout this book is the notion that there is only one story (Chapters 5, 8, 9, “Interlude”, and “A Test Case”). What evidence does Foster provide to support this notion and how does this change your perspective of literature?
5. Allusions: List the two most commonly referenced texts and explain why they are so often alluded to.
6. Weather is significant (Chapter 10)—so are seasons (Chapter 20). Explain what rain, fog, snow, and the four seasons add to a story’s meaning.
7. There are two categories of violence used in literature: character-to-character and narrative violence. What reasons do authors have for violence in literature?
8. Symbolism: What’s the difference between symbolism and allegory? How can you recognize symbols (hint: look on page 106)?
9. How do politics influence literature (or vice versa)?
10. Christ Figures: What are the signs that a character is a Christ figure?
11. Flight (Chapter 15) symbolizes what? Water (Chapter 18) is used to...?
12. Physical deformity, blindness, heart disease, and illness all have meaning beyond the literal. Briefly define the significance of each of these conditions as they are used in literature.
13. What does Foster mean when he says, “Don’t read with your eyes” (226)?
14. “Irony trumps everything” (235). How? Why?
15. After the short story in “A Test Case,” Foster provides two general questions for understanding the significance of a story, and rules for answering these questions. What are the questions/rules and how will you apply these to your own reading?

Fiction Report for the novels - complete one for each novel you read

Report Format – Fiction

A fiction report is just as challenging to write as an essay, if not more so. To do the job well, you have to see the story in its elements, then specify them succinctly and accurately in a word document. (Feel free to use a format that works for you – bullets, etc.) DO NOT plagiarize. We want to see what you can do. In this assignment, you are asked to include the following:

1. Title and original date of publication
2. Author's name and dates
3. Protagonist—identify and detail character's traits or features
4. Antagonist—identify and detail any characteristics
5. Conflict of protagonist and antagonist—short description
6. Minor characters—briefly identify
7. Setting—short description
8. Narrator/Point of View—identify
9. Memorable/Significant Quotes—List **five** quotes (with page numbers). Explain why you believe each quote is significant to the novel as a whole.
10. Symbols—Identify at least **three** major symbols and briefly explain what each represents. These should not come from Spark Notes. Do your best to find and explain them on your own.
11. Tone—Describe the author's apparent feelings toward central character or main event, as well as it can be determined.
12. Themes/ideas for discussion-list **three** universal understandings—ideas that may apply to a variety of readings—that you gained from reading this text. These should not come from Spark Notes. Do your best to explain them on your own.
13. Evaluation—Provide a concise opinion regarding the story itself, the characters, the lesson/message, the writing, the author's feelings, etc. This should be a **full** paragraph.

Fiction Report Sample

(Student's name) (Course and section)

Nathaniel Hawthorne 1804-64 "Young Goodman Brown" 1846

Protagonist: Goodman Brown, a young man who kisses his wife goodnight one evening and then sets out on an errand never to return as the same person. His bitterness and cynicism, as a result of that evening's errand, follow him to his grave.

Antagonist: Brown's own natural depravity that he sees reflected in everyone else.

Conflict: Once Brown realizes (the night that he is walking in the woods with the devil) that he is no different than anyone else, he is miserable because those he has known and loved did not live up to his expectations. As a result, he is disillusioned and bitter for the rest of his life.

Minor Characters: Faith- Goodman's wife, the stranger Brown is meeting, a former Sunday school teacher, his minister, a deacon.

Setting: Mostly takes place deep in a dark forest where he has an appointment with the devil.

Narrator/Point of View: Third person omniscient

Memorable/Significant Quotes: (1) "On he flew among the black pines, brandishing his staff with frenzied gestures, now giving vent to an inspiration of horrid blasphemy, and now shouting forth such laughter as set all the echoes of the forest laughing like demons around him. The fiend in his own shape is less hideous than when he rages in the breast of man" (2142). Explanation: This passage suggests that some of the shame and horror Goodman Brown feels when he returns to Salem Village may come from his feeling of weakness at having succumbed to evil. Goodman Brown resists the devil while he still believes that various members of his family and community are godly, but when he is shown, one by one, that they are all servants of the devil, he gives in to his dark side completely and grabs the devil's staff. The change that comes over him after either waking up from his dream or returning from the ceremony can be explained partially by his shame at having fallen so quickly and dramatically into evil.

Symbols: 1) pink ribbons on Faith's cap--innocence and blind trust 2) dark forest--place of evil where Brown loses his innocence 3) sunset--the end of the day coincides with the end of Brown's faith in his fellow man 4) walking stick--similar to a serpent, obviously a comparison to the serpent in the Garden of Eden who tempted Eve 5) Goodman Brown--Every man

Tone: Disappointment and regret that Brown throws away everything (he is not able to enjoy life, he cannot face his friends and loved ones without suspicion--especially his wife Faith, he has no hope for the afterlife). While Hawthorne thinks Brown is a fool, he also seems to point out that even the most pious people guard some rather unsavory secrets about their lives.

Themes: (1) The realization that evil can infect people who seem upright. (2) One man's virtue is another man's sin, and vice versa. (3) How the Puritans' strict moral code and overemphasis on the sinfulness of humankind foster undue suspicion and distrust.

Evaluation: Although Hawthorne's prose is rather flowery and stiff for today's world, the story is still gripping. The relevance of Goodman Brown's experience lies in the fact that

each of us must face that moment we move from the innocence of the world where we would like to live to the reality of the world that actually exists. The more that one reads this account, the more there is to think about.