

Grunin Performing Arts Academy AP Literature and Composition – Summer Assignment 2025-2026

“After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world.”
— Philip Pullman

Welcome to the Advanced Placement Literature and Composition program. Your interest in this course indicates you enjoy being academically challenged and learning for learning's sake. The course involves a substantial amount of reading, analyzing, and writing at the college level. The summer reading assignment is a fundamental component to starting the academic year properly, and your commitment level for all assignments is not only expected, but also crucial to your success in the upcoming academic year.

Selected Texts:

How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster

*please note the page numbers correspond to the revised edition (2014)

The Talented Mr. Ripley (Book #1 in Series) by Patricia Highsmith

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte

The Gift of Rain by Tan Twan Eng

- ❖ Read *How to Read Literature like a Professor* by Foster **first and in its entirety**, as you will apply the techniques outlined in this work to complete your test during the first week of school. Start this reading early and pace yourself. Be sure to annotate and take notes on each novel. We will also refer to Foster's text during the semester.
- ❖ Do not underestimate this assignment. You will be graded on your ability to examine complex works of literature. Do not merely summarize the plot or Foster's ideas, as this shows little analysis of the text on your part and is not considered AP Literature level work.
- ❖ Completion of the summer assignment is required in order to enter AP Literature and Composition. This is a TEST GRADE and it is difficult to pass the course without this foundational assignment.

Assignment:

1. Submit one assignment for each novel (except *How to Read Literature like a Professor*). Title each document with your full name and the name of the novel. Example: “**Grant, Gabriella – Jane Eyre**” All work **must** adhere to MLA guidelines using Times New Roman, 12-point font, double spaced, with proper headings, citations, and a properly formatted **Works Cited page** listing Foster's text and the respective novel.
2. **All assignments** are due on September 4, 2025 at 8:00AM. Late work **will not** be accepted.
3. **All assignments** must be submitted through TurnItIn.com in order to preserve the academic integrity of the course while checking for plagiarism and AI responses. Become familiar with this site; you will be using it to submit every assignment for AP Literature. Do not e-mail me the assignments, as the submission through the TurnItIn website will serve this purpose. Make sure you sign-up with your OCVTS gmail. Go to www.turnitin.com and make an account. Please capitalize your first and last name in the sign-up. Join our class with the code: **48854425** and use the password: **shelley**. Submit each assignment under its respective submission link by 8:00AM on the due date.
4. **All assignments are to be your own work. Any act of plagiarism or usage of AI will result in a zero, discipline form, and possible removal from AP Literature.**
5. **On AI: Do not underestimate the technology meant to detect AI. Don't listen to the influencers on TikTok claiming you can get by without doing honest work. You are expected to use your own brain in this course. The majority of your grade will involve in-class assessments with new material where your critical thinking skills will be tested. Spending the summer letting a computer do the thinking for you will have academic consequences. Your best bet to doing well is to do the assignments yourself, exercise your own critical thinking skills, so they'll be ready for class discussions and assignments.**

Directions: Using **quotations/support/textual evidence** from **both** texts answer the questions accompanying the following quotations. This should be a formal, well-written discussion (i.e. multiple paragraphs per question) of the message Foster is communicating in *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* and the implications Highsmith, Bronte, and Eng are conveying in each novel. While the entire assignment should be in MLA format, it need not resemble a complete essay. **Number** each question and answer in **complete well-written paragraphs**. Have access to this work. We will be discussing these assignments the first week(s). **See the questions below.**

1. **Every Trip is a Quest – Chapter 1: “The real reason for a quest is always self-knowledge” (Foster 3).**
 - ☐ In the novel, what is the quest? Choose a character and explain how he or she gains self-knowledge. The knowledge doesn’t always have to be generally positive if you’re thinking of Tom Ripley here...
2. **It’s More Than Just Rain or Snow – Chapter 9: “It’s never just rain” (Foster 70).**
 - ☐ Choose a scene where weather or the environment is more than what it seems and explain the significance.
3. **Is That a Symbol? – Chapter 12: “We want it to mean...one *thing*...[b]ut that handiness would result in a net loss: the novel would cease to be what it is, a network of meanings and significations that permits a nearly limitless range of possible interpretations” (Foster 106).**
 - ☐ Choose a symbol in the novel and analyze how it demonstrates meaning for the characters, plot, geography, quest, moral lesson, etc. Pay special attention to how the author is illustrating the point of this symbol and the message the author is sending to the reader.
4. **Marked for Greatness – Chapter 21: “How many stories do you know in which the hero is different from everyone else in some way...” (Foster 203).**
 - ☐ Who is the hero in the novel? How do you know he or she is the hero? Is there a visible, physical difference between the hero and other characters?
5. **Don’t Read With Your Eyes – Chapter 24: “...take the works as they were intended to be taken...” (Foster 234).**
 - ☐ Choose a quote from the novel that reflects the overall meaning of the work. What can a reader glean from this reading experience? What is the instinctual truth the author is trying to convey?

Be diligent and prepare yourself for a thought-provoking and challenging year. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me: ggrant@ocvts.org For now, I leave you **Mrs. Grant’s reading tips:**

1. Find a comfortable reading spot with good light. Figure out which conditions allow for the best kind of comprehension: favorite chair, soft music, silence, snacks etc.
2. If possible, purchase these books – even if it is a grubby, torn, used copy from Thriftbooks.com (honestly, those smell the best). Highlight passages that seem important, flag pages with essential information, look up words you do not know, and annotate within the margins. Make reading an active experience where you enter the story and engage in discussion with the author.
3. Be consistent! Too often, students push off reading until it is too late to read well. This can be very overwhelming. Especially with longer novels, (Hi, *Jane Eyre*!) it is important to keep a steady pace by reading each day. Before you know it, you will be half-way through. It is when students leave reading for the last minute that they seek supposed answers from online summaries. Understand this is **not** what an AP Literature student should do. You are here to analyze literature yourself, not have it worked out by someone else.
4. **Use audiobooks.** Today, most modern recordings are wonderful. These editions have proper voice actors adding to an already compelling story. You can listen along while you read, or if you are more of an auditory learner, listen in the car, when you are getting ready for the day, doing laundry, eating snacks etc. Use the local library apps (Libby & Hoopla!) *Jane Eyre*, read by Thandie Newton is wonderful, for example.
5. If the material is challenging, and it will be, discuss the concepts with a friend – perhaps someone taking the course – to work out difficult passages.

6. Finally, remember this excerpt from a *Reader's Digest* article by Marc Peyser: "You can take fish oil supplements or eat lots of turmeric. You can invest in a language class, puzzle books, or a few hours of exercise every week...But the cheapest, easiest, and most time-tested way to sharpen your brain is right in front of your face. It's called reading...That said, not all reading is created equal. Preliminary results from a study conducted at Stanford University indicate that **close literary reading in particular gives your brain a major workout**...increase in blood flowing to areas of the brain that control both cognitive and executive function, as opposed to the more limited effects that come from more leisurely reading." Enjoy the workout.

Happy reading, Mrs. Grant