

AP Literature & Composition

Summer Work - 2024

Google Classroom Code: 7lhpav4

Welcome to AP Literature & Composition! Your summer reading assignment is to read and to think seriously about two novels:

1. *Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng
2. *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens

Reading & Note-Taking

These texts can be purchased, or you can obtain a copy of each from the Lunenburg Public Library. **You are *not* obligated to purchase them.** Please keep in mind that **you must have *each* text with you on the first day of class in August**, so if you do borrow the books from the library, be sure that your lending period extends to the beginning of the school year. If you are choosing to purchase your books, consider doing so from [Thrift Books](#), which is a cost-effective option. *If you have any difficulty obtaining one or both of these texts, please email me at jcallahan@lunenburgschools.net.*

During the second week of the school year, you will be required to complete a major in-class, timed essay that will ask you to synthesize ideas from the two texts. (See “Potential in-Class Essay Prompts”, below.)

You are expected to read each text **actively** and **critically**, and you must take notes as you read (either on sticky notes, within the margins of each text [if you own it!], and / or in a reading journal). Consider the potential essay prompts, below, to guide your reading, reflecting, and note-taking. Your notes must be analytical in nature and not merely plot summaries. **You will have to show evidence of active note-taking upon your return to school.**

Questions for Discussion

When you have finished reading both of the books, you must compose **two** discussion questions that will help foster discussion during our first week of class. Strive to compose questions that invite discussion of *both* novels. You do **not** need to answer the questions – simply pose them.

Potential In-Class Essay Prompts

1. In a literary work, certain characters, known as **foils**, possess traits that emphasize, by contrast or comparison, the distinctive characteristics and qualities of another character. For example, the ideas or behavior of the **foil** might be used to highlight the weaknesses or strengths of the other character. In *Little Fires Everywhere* and *Where the Crawdads Sing*, identify ways in which a character serves as a foil to a second character. In your essay, analyze how the relation between the two characters illuminates the meaning of each work.
2. In many works of literature, past events can affect, positively or negatively, the present actions, attitudes, or values of a character. Choose a character from each novel (*Little Fires Everywhere*; *Where the Crawdads Sing*) and explain how that character must contend with some aspect of the past, either personal or societal. Write an essay in which you show how each character’s relationship to the past contributes to the meaning of each work as a whole.
3. Morally ambiguous characters—characters whose behavior discourages readers from identifying them as purely evil or purely good—are at the heart of many works of literature. Choose a morally-ambiguous character from each text (*Little Fires Everywhere*; *Where the Crawdads Sing*). Write an essay in which you

explain how the characters can be viewed as morally ambiguous and why their moral ambiguity is significant to each work as a whole.

4. In many works of fiction, houses take on symbolic importance. Such houses may be literal houses or unconventional ones (e. g., hotels, hospitals, monasteries, or boats). Consider how the “houses” (either literal or figurative / unconventional) in *Little Fires Everywhere* and *Where the Crawdads Sing* serve as significant symbols. In a well-written essay, analyze how these houses contribute to an interpretation of each work as a whole.
5. Many works of literature feature characters who accept or reject a hierarchical structure. This hierarchy may be social, economic, political, or familial, or it may apply to some other kind of structure. Consider how a character in each work (*Little Fires Everywhere*; *Where the Crawdads Sing*) responds to a hierarchy in some significant way. In a well-written essay, analyze how each character’s response to the hierarchy contributes to an interpretation of each work as a whole.

In sum, you need to...

- ☐ ...obtain a copy of Celeste Ng’s *Little Fires Everywhere* and Delia Owens’s *Where the Crawdads Sing*. You must have a copy of each to bring with you on the first day of class.
- ☐ ...actively read each novel. Take / Record notes by using sticky notes, taking notes in the novels’ margins, and / or keeping a reading journal. You must be able to show evidence of thoughtful and analytical note-taking upon your return to school. **Evidence of your notes are due within the first week of school.**
- ☐ ...compose two thought-provoking discussion questions (after reading both books). **EACH** question must address and synthesize ideas, plot points, themes, characters, etc. from **BOTH** books. **Your questions are due on the first day of class. You do not need to answer the questions, but you should be prepared to discuss them with your classmates.**
- ☐ ...review the potential in-class essay prompts to begin thinking critically about how to best synthesize ideas related to each text. You will be responding to one of these prompts during an in-class, timed essay within the second week of school.

Please note that I am aware of the Hulu series of *Little Fires Everywhere* and the film version of *Where the Crawdads Sing*. While each is a decent rendering of the source material, the show and the film do not come close to providing the depth of meaning and nuance contained within each novel. **If you are planning to simply watch the show and the film, then you should reconsider whether you should be taking AP Literature. My expectation is that you read the novels.** A close and careful reading will allow you to participate meaningfully in our summer reading activities, set you up for success on the essay, and give you two additional books to keep in the “library” of your mind (which will be useful on the AP Literature exam).