

Summer News/Assignments: AP Literature

Hey! Welcome to AP Literature, your next favorite class at WSH!

NO, Summer is not over, so this can't possibly be an assignment—well . . . there are a few things I'll need you to take care of BEFORE you come to class in September. Please complete the (easy, simple, summer-like) tasks listed below over the next six weeks or so. This letter is coming to you during the break so that you will have lots of time to buy books, read them, and write about your experience. I hope that your vacation time is relaxing and fun, and I look forward to meeting you in September. Until then—

Task #1: Books to Buy* and Good Ideas on Where to Get Them Used and Cheap:

All the Pretty Horses, by Cormack McCarthy

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

For online buying, I recommend a site called *alibris.com*. You can usually get used copies in very good condition for \$.99-\$1.99 directly from them or from one of their network of sellers. You have to pay separate shipping for each, but it still usually amounts to a maximum of \$5 or \$6 each for texts in great condition—plus they always send you coupons for future purchases. I have found them to be much less expensive than *Amazon.com*, which I also love. Use *Amazon* if you feel like you would really like to have a new copy of a book—or if you are an experienced “Kindle” reader and know how to use the highlighting and note features easily. Many of the works we will study this year are available for “free” on Kindle, even if a Kindle reader and/or ipad app. is not, by any stretch of the imagination, “free.” You can always stalk the local St. Vincent de Paul or Goodwill stores as well as the used bookstores in town for these books, too. Many of the texts we need for later in the year will be available at these places, but inexpensive editions will also be in stock at the Student Store right here at West Salem High.

****The reason you must buy books for this class is that you must interact with the works freely and not treat them as precious artifacts to be preserved for future generations. You are encouraged/required to write margin notes, dog-ear pages and highlight passages at will. This is much easier to get used to when the book in question is inexpensive. The beauty of used books (and Kindle editions) is that someone else may have interacted with your book in the past—so you can reflect on another's ideas as well as your own while you study—excellent training for literary analysis!***

Task #2: Web Check In:

Go to my AP blogsite: <http://mrseddyaplit.blogspot.com/> Read my summer posts and **become a follower** (email notifications are available from my site, if you wish). Check out the “vital links” section at the upper right corner of the blog page. These and other links will supply you with information on how to mark texts, get an “A” on an English paper, etc. Think of these links as portals to some very good news!

(Keep Reading!)

Task #3: Summer Reading/Writing Assignments:

1-READ THE FIRST TEN CHAPTERS (the chapters are short) of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, by Thomas C. Foster, and do the reading/writing tasks: see attached assignment. **Your (TWO ONLY) Responses are due, typed, on the first day of class.**

2-READ/RESPOND TO *All the Pretty Horses*, by Cormack McCarthy—completing the reading log (available on the blog) as you do so. ***Please read this text, this first time, for enjoyment—this is a fantastic novel. The reading log assignments are there to help you think more deeply about portions of what you have read AFTER you read each section for the first time, but they do NOT ask for formal analysis.***

Reading Logs due: Sept. 10th.

Regards the Writing Assignments

In #1 above:

"The most durable thing in writing is style, and style is the single most valuable investment a writer can make with his time."

— **Raymond Chandler**

Note to students: The short writing assignments from *How to Read . . .* will let you practice your literary analysis and help me get to know your *writing style*. Whenever a response asks for an example from literature, you may use short stories, novels, plays, poems, or films (film is, absolutely, a literary genre). **Please note that each of your responses should be several paragraphs – not several pages—in length. This is meant to be a summer assignment.**

Okay, what I really want you to do is to practice **clear, specific** analysis as you complete this assignment and in whatever academic paper you may write from this day forward. After you detail your primary idea (make a **clear** thesis statement), you need to remain **specific** as you detail the thinking behind your response. Text references should be quick and casual and always cited—I've read the book, too.

A note on what “clear” and “specific” mean: Please do not write a paper that begins:

“The Odyssey is a great work of literature, but many other important works of literature reflect differently on the universal theme of motherhood set forth in Homer’s spectacular epic.”

Obviously, and in an amazingly murky way, the above sentence says nothing new, nothing you can prove in a few paragraphs, and, well, nothing worth the time it will take your reader to read it. *Please say something you really believe in* when you write. Never, never, never use valuable paper and ink and time and words to say nothing—or, especially, to avoid being wrong. Please, whatever else you do, be **clear** and **specific**! It is better to be genuinely mistaken than generally incomprehensible. Try this, instead:

“John Grady Cole’s mother is no Penelope, and McCarthy uses her sale of the family ranch to warn Grady that modern women, at least as they are presented in *All the Pretty Horses*, will never provide this young man with the kind of absolute loyalty that Homer insists are the mark of “good mother”

in *The Odyssey*.”

Now, that’s what I’m talking about, or at least what I should be talking about, in the few paragraphs that could follow such a clear opening, and— whether the reader agrees or disagrees with me—they get my point.

That’s my point—be crystal **clear** and **specific** when you write analysis. Leave the mystery, and the possible need for your reader to consult a crystal ball, for when you write fiction or poetry or “Dear John” letters.

Another note: Even though this is analytical writing, you may use “I” if you think it important to do so; remember, however, that most uses of “I” (and “is,” for that matter) are just padding, and soften the impact of your wonderful ideas. For example, “**I think the wolf is the scariest character in *Little Red Riding Hood***” is, I think, (!) not as insightful, as powerful, or as interesting as, “**The wolf symbolizes childhood fears in *Little Red Riding Hood***.”

Another, related, note (!): There is no need to repeat the prompt in your answer--I will be able to tell which question you are answering because your response is so specific and moving. *Remember, your responses will be several paragraphs – not several pages, so make your (few) words count.*

Okay, One More Note: Concerning mechanics/conventions-- pay special attention. Enough said.

P.S. This is a college-level course. I will not pester you or treat you like a child. I will try to explain what is expected, then, “Tell you when it’s due, so it’s up to you.” If what I am expecting or when I am expecting it to be accomplished is not clear in my instructions, PLEASE speak up and ask-- inquiry is the scholarly and academic way to enlightenment. Thanks!

If you have any questions, at all, email me at eddy_christina@salkeiz.k12.or.us as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Christina Eddy
West Salem HS

(keep reading!)

Quick Review: The writing assignment for Foster’s book follows-- the Reading Log for *All the Pretty Horses* is linked to my blogsite.

Reading/Writing Assignment #1
How to Read Literature Like a Professor,
by Thomas C. Foster
(Some questions adapted from Donna Anglin).

PICK ONLY TWO prompts—your TWO responses are due, typed, on the first day of class.

Introduction: How'd He Do That?

How do memory, symbol, and pattern affect the reading of literature? How does the recognition of patterns make it easier to read complicated literature? Prompt: Discuss a time when your appreciation of a literary work was enhanced by understanding symbol or pattern.

Chapter 1 -- Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not)

List the five aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to something you have read (or viewed). Refer to the information used on pages 3-5 for ideas on what you might discuss.

Chapter 2 -- Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion

Choose a meal from a literary work you have studied and apply the ideas of Chapter 2 as you think about the meal as a literary experience.

Chapter 3: --Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires

What are the essentials of the Vampire story? Apply these ideas to a specific literary work you have read or viewed.

Chapter 4 -- If It's Square, It's a Sonnet

Select three sonnets that you enjoy. Discuss how their content reflects the form as discussed in this chapter. (Submit copies of the sonnets, marked, to show your notes and analysis).

Chapter 5 --Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?

Define intertextuality in your own words. Discuss three examples of how literary "echoes" that have helped you in reading specific works.

Chapter 6 -- When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare...

Discuss a work that you are familiar with that alludes to or reflects on a work/the works of William Shakespeare. Show how the author uses this connection *thematically*. Read pages 44-46 carefully. In these pages, Foster shows how Fugard reflects Shakespeare through both plot and theme. *In your discussion, focus on theme.*

Chapter 7 -- ...Or the Bible

Read "Araby" (available online). Discuss at least three Biblical allusions that Foster does not mention. Look at the example of the "two great jars." Be creative and imaginative in these connections.

Chapter 8 -- Hanseldee and Greteldum

Think of a specific work of literature that reflects a fairy tale. Discuss the parallels. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation? Please be specific about which fairy tale you are referring to and which work of literature that you find parallels in.

Chapter 9 -- It's Greek to Me

Write a free verse poem of at least 20 lines in length and containing at least two stanzas (the precise number of lines and stanzas is optional—this is free verse!) derived from or inspired by characters or situations from Greek mythology. Be prepared to share your poem with the class this September. Note that there are extensive links to classical mythology on the internet (and in the Percy Jackson books!).

Chapter 10—It's More Than Just Rain or Snow

Write about the effect of at least two specific references to the weather from Cormack McCarthy's, *All the Pretty Horses*. Please remember to connect the weather to what you feel is the author's message, straight or ironic, about a major THEME of the text.