

AP Literature & Composition (pgs.1-3)

How to Read Literature like a Professor

How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas Foster

Welcome to your senior year of English! The primary “suggestion” is this: do not, do not, DO NOT wait until the weekend before it is due to begin this work. Should you do so, your regret will be of a magnitude without parallel in the universe.

This is where you must BEGIN your summer assignments.

Thomas Foster knows “how to read literature like a professor” because he is a professor of English at the University of Michigan. In a very informal style (this is not a textbook), foster focuses on literary basics: major themes and motifs, literary models, and narrative devices...all of which will be helpful as we study texts throughout the school year ahead. Some of what you read will be familiar to you, and some of it will be new and provide “food for thought” as you read your summer novel.

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Answer the accompanying questions. This “How-to” book will better prepare you to read carefully and analytically. Having knowledge of the subjects covered in this text will give you an advantage throughout the school year. I do not expect essay responses for each question. As long as you satisfactorily answer the questions. Do not google the questions to avoid reading! I do not have Google as a student in my class, I have YOU. I want your answers and explanations.

1. 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? Discuss a time when your appreciation of a literary work was enhanced by understanding symbol or pattern.

2. Chapter 1 -- Every Trip Is a Quest List the five aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to something you have read (or viewed) in the form used on pages 3-5.

3. Either of the following: Chapter 2 -- Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion Choose a meal scene from a literary work and apply the ideas of Chapter 2 to this literary depiction. **Chapter 3: --Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires** What are the essentials of the Vampire story? Apply this to a literary work you have read or viewed.

4. Chapter 4-- If It's Square, It's a Sonnet Select three sonnets and show which form they are. Discuss how their content reflects the form. (Submit copies of the sonnets, marked to show

your analysis). **Optional: Chapter 5--Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?** Define intertextuality. Discuss three examples that have helped you in reading specific works.

5. Chapter 6 -- When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare... Discuss a work that you are familiar with that alludes to or reflects 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.

6. Chapter 7 -- ...Or the Bible Read "Araby" (available online). Discuss Biblical allusions that Foster does not mention. Look at the example of the "two great jars." Be creative and imaginative in these connections.

7. Chapter 8 -- Hansel and Gretel Think of a work of literature that reflects a fairy tale. Discuss the parallels. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation?

8. Chapter 9 -- It's Greek to Me Write a free verse poem derived or inspired by characters or situations from Greek mythology. Note that there are extensive links to classical mythology .

9. Chapter 10 -- It's More Than Just Rain or Snow Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work. Apply this concept to 3 literary works you have read or viewed.

10. Chapter 11 --...More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence Present examples of the two kinds of violence found in literature. Show how the effects are different.

11. Chapter 12 -- Is That a Symbol? Use the process described on page 106 and investigate the symbolism of the fence in "Araby." (Mangan's sister stands behind it).

12. Chapter 13 -- It's All Political Assume that Foster is right and "it is all political." Use his criteria to show that one of the major works assigned to you is political.

13. Chapter 14 -- Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too Apply the criteria on page 119 to a major character in a significant literary work. Try to choose a character that will have many matches. This is a particularly apt tool for analyzing film -- for example, Star Wars, Cool Hand Luke, Excalibur, Malcolm X, Braveheart, Spartacus, Gladiator and Ben-Hur. **Optional: Chapter 15 - - Flights of Fancy** Select a literary work in which flight signifies escape or freedom. Explain in detail.

14. One of the three: Chapter 16 -- It's All About Sex... Chapter 17 -- ...Except the Sex OK...the sex chapters. The key idea from this chapter is that "scenes in which sex is coded rather than explicit can work at multiple levels and sometimes be more intense than literal depictions" (141). In other words, sex is often suggested with much more art and effort than it is described, and, if the author is doing his job, it reflects and creates theme or character. Choose a novel or movie in which sex is suggested, but not described, and discuss how the relationship is suggested and how this implication affects the theme or develops characterization. **Chapter 18 -- If She Comes Up, It's Baptism** Think of a "baptism scene" from a significant literary work. How was the character different after the experience? Discuss.

15. Chapter 19 -- Geography Matters... Discuss at least four different aspects of a specific literary work that Foster would classify under "geography."

16. Chapter 20 -- ...So Does Season Find a poem that mentions a specific season. Then discuss how the poet uses the season in a meaningful, traditional, or unusual way. (Submit a copy of the poem with your analysis.)

17. Interlude -- One Story Write your own definition for archetype. Then identify an archetypal story and apply it to a literary work with which you are familiar.

18. Chapter 21 -- Marked for Greatness Figure out Harry Potter's scar. If you aren't familiar with Harry Potter, select another character with a physical imperfection and analyze its implications for characterization.

19.-20. Two of the five: Chapter 22 -- He's Blind for a Reason, You Know Chapter 23 -- It's Never Just Heart Disease... Chapter 24 -- ...And Rarely Just Illness Recall two characters who died of a disease in a literary work. Consider how these deaths reflect the "principles governing the use of disease in literature" (215-217). Discuss the effectiveness of the death as related to plot, theme, or symbolism. **Chapter 25 -- Don't Read with Your Eyes** After reading Chapter 25, choose a scene or episode from a novel, play or epic written before the twentieth century. Contrast how it could be viewed by a reader from the twenty-first century with how it might be viewed by a contemporary reader. Focus on specific assumptions that the author makes, assumptions that would not make it in this century. **Chapter 26 -- Is He Serious? And Other Ironies** Select an ironic literary work and explain the multifocal nature of the irony in the work.

Assignment 2:

The Awakening – By Kate Chopin

Read the novel The Awakening by Kate Chopin. As you read, annotate for character, setting, theme, figurative language, motifs, and plot. Consider taking notes and annotating in your book. I look forward to reviewing your notes and annotations in our early discussions and assignments.

Assignment 3: College Essay

write, rewrite, polish, and perfect your college essay, personal statement, and professional resume. College Awaits ❤️

English IV Honors

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