

AP Literature and Composition

Summer Reading Assignment 2018

Please use this code to join our Google Classroom: ndtzfw. Email me at twhite@veronaschools.org if you have a problem joining.

The goals of your summer reading assignment are as follows:

- To help build your confidence and competence as readers of complex texts, perhaps the most important skill you will take to college and beyond.
- To give us an immediate basis for discussion of literature when we meet in the fall.
- To continue to build a repertoire of works you can write about on the AP Literature exam next spring.
- To do what all great literature does: enrich your mind and stimulate your imagination.

Your summer reading assignment consists of three works:

- *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* (revised edition) by Thomas C. Foster
- *A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving
- Third choice (see list after Roman numeral III)

Copies of *Owen Meany* are available from me if you choose not to buy your own copy. You can stop by room 49 before or after school any day to pick one up. If you use a borrowed copy, please use Post-It notes for annotation. If it is at all possible however, I recommend you buy your copy of all three books for annotation purposes.

Here is what you will specifically do for each of these, and I recommend you do this assignment in this order:

I. For *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* (revised edition):

The book has many chapters, each of which grapples with some aspect of reading and more deeply understanding really good literature. You do not have to read the entire book unless you choose to (don't get used to me saying that). Instead, do the following:

- Scan through it and find ten chapters of the first 26 that grab your attention for whatever reason. Read those in their entirety. For **each** of the ten, summarize 2-3 main points and then either relate those points to something you have read, or simply discuss why that idea resonated for you, or both!
- Due upon completion, no later than the first day of school. Please post in Classroom.

II. *Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving

- For this novel, you will create a dialectical journal (full description below)
- Due upon completion, no later than the first day of school.

Some of you have done dialectical journals before. There are many variations on how they can be done, but basically they are about being in a conversation with the author and trying to develop a better understanding of the text as you read, considering, challenging, connecting, and furthering the writer's message. For this one, your response will take a two-column form in which you note a passage on the left and respond on the right.

PROCEDURE

As you read, choose passages that stand out to you and record them in the left-hand column of the chart (**always include the page number of the passage**). You may shorten long passages using an ellipsis, but don't cut so much that I can't find the passage to which you refer. In the right column, write your response to the text (ideas/insights, questions, reflections, comments)

- You must have at least **27** passages that are spread evenly throughout the novel. This number is derived from APFOM having nine (rather long) chapters - so three per chapter. Please number your 27 entries. Also be sure to have a bibliography so I know which edition of the novel you used.
- Each passage you choose must be marked with a "code." Write the "code" for each in the right hand column before your response. Make sure to use a variety. I'm not requiring a specific count, and no one type of response (of the list below) is required, but using the same codes for most or all of your entries will result in a lower score. The codes:

(Style) Effective and/or creative use of stylistic or literary devices. These could be about diction, detail, syntax, tone of a particular passage, effectiveness of a particular metaphor, a striking use of language - things of that nature

(NT) narrative technique - here, you are commenting on things such as perspective shifts and general structural issues - you are deconstructing what the writer is doing as a storyteller

(Patterns) Recurring images, ideas, colors, symbols, motifs, etc. When you see a pattern, note it and comment on it.

("Aha") Moments where you make a connection or figure out something helpful. Perhaps you make a prediction based on this insight.

("Oh no") Moments where you are confused or struggling - think out loud about what it is that has thrown you off.

(Char) Passages that provide insight into a particular character

(Big Idea) Think deeply about what the passage means in a broad sense – not just to the characters or the author. What conclusions can you draw about the world, about human nature, or just the way things work? Have I discovered a theme of this novel?

(Eval)- make a judgment about what the author is trying to say

The most important thing to remember is that your observations should be specific, detailed, and varied. You can write as much as you want for each entry.

Word of caution: *A Prayer for Owen Meany* is a weighty text. Please do not try to read it last minute. Be forewarned that it may take some time to fully engage you (possibly as much as a hundred pages) but it will be worth the work. You should make it your goal to be done with it by late July or early August (and feel free to submit the journal at any time after you complete it) so you have ample time to read the third book.

Choices for Third Book

The number before each title is the number of times that particular work has appeared on the AP Lit exam as a choice for the open-ended essay. So these are the AP-favorites, books of a caliber they feel every AP student should have challenged herself or himself to read. There is no written response attached to this title. However, very early in the school year, you will be doing a timed writing on this book so I strongly recommend that you annotate as you read.

Here is a link to an AP-teacher showing you an example of the type of timed writing essay you will do on this book in September, and will do repeatedly next year in class.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_H7oiHiYM4

- 30 *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison
- 25 *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte
- 18 *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
- 17 *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte
- 15 *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville
- 14 *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller
- 14 *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce
- 13 *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston
- 13 *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin
- 12 *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry
- 12 *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
- 12 *Billy Budd* by Herman Melville
- 11 *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko
- 11 *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker
- 10 *Native Son* by Richard Wright
- 9 *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe
- 9 *Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James
- 8 *Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy
- 8 *All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy
- 8 *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck
- 8 *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen
- 7 *All the King's Men* by Robert Penn Warren

Final Thoughts: Annotating a Text

This should help with *Owen Meany*, your choice book, or anything we read next year.

When you **annotate** a text you generate a record of responses to your reading. Such a record will prove valuable to you later when you proceed to discussion and analysis of the text. Practice doing it will also dramatically improve your reading comprehension and skills. Annotating a text involves interacting with that text's language and images. This approach should help you discover what you find important, what you want to explore, and/or what you find puzzling about a text.

You cannot effectively "speed read" or skim great literature. You should approach the text as if you were "entering into a discussion" with it. While a text cannot literally speak, its written words, images, and phrases do indeed communicate. Author Kurt Vonnegut once described all art as "half of a conversation." The other half of the conversation is, of course, uniquely yours. So annotation comes from something called **metacognition** – literally, thinking about what you are thinking about. This is a supremely important skill to develop as you near your college years and begin to wrestle with increasingly more difficult texts. Your ultimate academic success requires that you realize that reading is not a passive activity and that good readers have strategies to approach a text that is challenging for them.

Just as you aren't always clear on the other person's meaning in normal conversation, it is okay when there are times a text's meaning is unclear. Battle through. At other points it may be very clear. Either way, you can note such encounters and offer comments.

Your "discussion" with a text occurs as you engage with and subsequently think over its words, phrases, and ideas. These thoughts can find their way onto the text's margins if you own the book, or on "Post-It notes" placed on the page if you do not. As you underline telling phrases, note ideas, link portions of the text, and raise issues and questions around particular observations, you establish a written record of your interactive discussion. After annotation, you will be better able to identify the text's message and discern both its purpose and argument. You will also know what parts of this work resonated most with you.

If you fail to note what you find remarkable as you read, the initial ideas and important questions you have while reading may be lost to you. By annotating a text, you can return to it later to rethink what you considered important.

Techniques for annotating a text will vary since each reader generates his or her own reading and each person will identify different portions of a text as noteworthy, interesting, or remarkable.

Here are some suggestions on how to **DO** your annotations:

- If you like highlighters use one, but don't *only* highlight; you'll forget why the passage is highlighted.
- Make margin notes; remember that this is metacognitive. Remind yourself (for later) what you were thinking about.
- Look for patterns and note them.
- Mark passages that seem to jump out at you because they suggest an important idea or theme.
- Mark phrases, sentences, or passages that puzzle, enlighten, or foreshadow.
- Mark passages that catch your attention because of an arresting figure of speech or image, an intriguing sentence pattern, a bit of dialogue that reveals character etc.
- Mark passages that please or disturb you.
- Circle words you want to learn. If you don't want to stop reading, highlight them and look them up later.

Here are some questions to guide how to **THINK ABOUT** your annotations:

- Where do you begin to engage with this text? What "grabbed" you?
- What arguments take shape in or emerge from this text? What exactly was he or she trying to say in writing this book?
- Do particular portions of this text link or connect with each other?
- Do key words, phrases, and ideas repeat?
- When you review your annotations, what do you discover?
- Are there places where the author's message is made clear?
- Are there segments that continue to puzzle or confuse you?
- Is there something about this text you have never really encountered before?
- Can you link this text with others you have read?
- If you were going to lead a "book group" type discussion on this book what specific passages would you direct the other readers to and why?

Links to the books on Amazon if you choose to buy them:

[How to Read Literature Like a Professor](#)

[A Prayer for Owen Meany](#)