

AP Literature and Composition Summer Assignments

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Summer To-Do List (short version)

1. Purchase the four novels + one informational text (*The Awakening*, *Song of Solomon*, *Bless Me Ultima*, and *Remains of the Day*, *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*) that we will study during first quarter
2. Read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* and briefly note the key lessons from each chapter
3. Read *The Awakening*
 - a. While reading, write a one-sentence summary for each chapter
 - b. After reading, write a two-page essay (prompt on following pages)
4. Read *Song of Solomon*
 - o Begin looking for and annotating motifs of flight and myth (folklore; Greek, especially Homer's *Odyssey*; Christian; Egyptian)
 - o While reading, write a one-sentence summary for each chapter
 - o Write a paragraph summarizing your initial thoughts about how the novel presents the search for identity, which is the theme for first quarter.

Summer Assignment details (long version)

The expectation is that you purchase each of these books so you can write in them. We will only read two during the summer. The other two you are welcome to preview, but you are not required to read, during the summer. Below I have listed titles, authors and the ISBN numbers, the latter of which will ensure that we are all using the same edition. Use all your internet skills to find the best deal on these books.

The Awakening by Kate Chopin
ISBN: 0-553-21330-X

Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison
ISBN: 1-4000-3342-X

The Remains of the Day by Kazuo Ishiguro
ISBN: 0-679-73172-5

Bless Me, Ultima by Rudolfo Anaya
ISBN: 0-446-67536-9

How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster
ISBN: 0062301675

Purchase these books as inexpensively as you can, but please purchase them so you can highlight, write notes and your chapter summaries. Besides, it's past time for you to start building your personal library.

If you need financial assistance, please talk with me--seriously. We have funds for just such needs.

For consideration:

If you are thinking of dropping the course, you have until the date of July 15 to do so without penalty. Students who request to drop an advanced course after that date will have their AP Lit summer work grade (or lack thereof) transferred to their new English course.

One-Sentence Chapter Summaries and Notations

While reading both novels, you are strongly encouraged to write one-sentence chapter summaries. These are for you, not me. I will not be collecting them. Writing brief summations will greatly help you in the fall when we re-read the novels. I prefer to write my summaries in my book at the beginning of each chapter. Some students like to keep it on separate note paper. Some students keep it on a doc. Do it wherever you think it will be most useful and easily referenced for you.

The Awakening response essay

Format (follow directions explicitly):

1. Your response should be two to three pages, typed and double-spaced using 12 point font. No more than three pages. My favorite font is Times New Roman. Your name should appear at the top right of your response's first page followed by Response to (name of book).
2. Your response should have a title that gives some kind of indication of the essay's topic. The more interesting/creative, the better.
3. Each response essay will be worth 100 points. No late essays will be accepted.
4. Number page two (top or bottom, center or right)

POSSIBLE TOPICS: Please don't mistake the following ideas for an exhaustive list. They are suggested topics, which are probably most useful as indicators of how focused your own topic should be in order to go deep enough to be valuable.

1. Identify the primary theme of the book and explain one technique that makes it emerge from the text. In other words, what is one important device that the book uses to construct the theme? Or what does this novel signify? (one of my favorite words.)
2. Choose a character you identify with. Explain how this character helps you better understand yourself. Again, perhaps choose one aspect of the character's personality. Stay focused on the character not yourself.
3. Analyze the novel in terms of one or more of the lesson's from Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. What's the message based on the use of the motif?
4. Examine some element of style (specific details, imagery, word choice, stand-out phrases, symbols, etc.). Explain how the particular stylistic element adds to the meaning of the text. The more perplexing the literary element, the better.
5. Consider the text's point of view(s). Any number of topics can result: the importance to the meaning of the text; the impact of narrator on the text; what the audience gains or misses from the chosen narration/ POV; level of reliability of the narrator; etc.
6. Go chunking. Choose a word, sentence, or paragraph—what I call a *chunk*—and respond. How is it surprising, delightful, annoying, trippy, etc.
7. How/In what ways does the text remind you of another work? Make the connection.

Some Suggestions - for the summer, and generally, the year:

- These essays are exercises in economy of language. (Remember that it takes time to be brief, clear and specific.) Don't submit more than three pages. Be clear, but concise. Be artful, but not flowery. There is no need to fill up space—start with your central claim followed by support claims, each with evidence/support and warrants.
- Keep your conclusion short (one to two sentences).
- There is merit in solid support claims. Work, however, on the art of placing support claims: the beginning of a paragraph works of course, but try occasionally to place one in the middle or end of a section.
- Think for yourself rather than relying on and parroting Cliff's Notes or Spark Notes. If I were interested in those limited perspectives, I'd read them myself. Sometimes I do but for different reasons. There are few things worse in my mind than third-hand ideas. I'd rather you be slightly thin with your thoughtful analysis than thick with regurgitated ideas that you didn't originate.
- Related to above: Please do not write the essay on Edna's three immersion in water or the essay about the trajectory of birds. I've read those two essays more times than I can count, and they are nearly always a facsimile of the information on CliffsNotes. If you have an original idea, by all means, show me something new!
- The way to learn is to take risks. It's hard to earn an A by playing it safe.
- On that note, I recommend staying away from Spark/CliffsNotes altogether over the summer - trust yourself and reflect and reason through your confusion. I'd rather you take a risk than sum up generally-accepted online viewpoints I've already read.
- Most students struggle at first to define a narrow enough topic. Start by being specific. Then be more specific. The point is depth not breadth. Don't try to hide weak or unoriginal thinking behind generalizations or DORDs.
- I strongly encourage you to conference with me both during your writing process and after you receive your grade but in your early stages, don't ask me to respond to vague concepts or your initial musings. Give me substantive thinking to work with. This kind of process pays honor to what we know produces high quality writing—re-writing. And you can no longer afford to practice the profession of procrastination.

EVALUATION: Here are my criteria for evaluating response essays.

- Originality of thought
- Organization and cohesion
- Depth of thought
- Use of language
- Use of textual support
- Adherence to guidelines

Every response essay should take a small piece of the book and show how it is important to the overall meaning of the text