

**LGHS Honors English II  
Summer Reading Assignment**

***How to Read Literature Like a Professor Revised Edition:  
A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines***  
**Thomas C. Foster**

In Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Red-Headed League," Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson both observe Jabez Wilson carefully, yet their differing interpretations of the same details reveal the difference between a "good reader" and a "bad reader." Watson can only describe what he sees; Holmes has the knowledge to interpret what he sees, to draw conclusions, and to solve the mystery.

Understanding literature need no longer be a mystery. Thomas Foster's book will help transform you from a naïve, sometimes confused Watson to an insightful, literary Holmes. Professors and other informed readers see symbols, archetypes, and patterns because those things are there – if you have learned to look for them. As Foster says, you learn to recognize the literary conventions the "same way you get to Carnegie Hall. Practice" (xiv).

**READING**

For this assignment, you will read the entire text and write many short responses. It would be wise to create a schedule wherein each day you read a chapter and complete the written assignment(s). These short writing assignments will allow you practice your literary analysis. Whenever asked for an example from literature, you may use short stories, novels, plays, or films. If your literary repertoire is sparse, use the Appendix of Foster's text to jog your memory or to select additional works to explore. At the very least, watch some of the "Movies to Read".

**Introduction: How'd He Do That?**

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.

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

In a single paragraph essay, share the five aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to something you have read or viewed.

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

In a single paragraph essay, choose a meal from a literary work and apply the ideas of Chapter 2 to this literary depiction.

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

In a single paragraph essay, explain what are the essentials of the Vampire story. Apply this to a literary work you have read or viewed.

**Chapter 5: Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?**

In a single paragraph essay, define intertextuality. Discuss 3 examples that have helped you read specific works.

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

In a single paragraph essay, discuss a work, familiar to you, that alludes to or reflects Shakespeare. Show how the author uses this connection thematically. In your discussion, focus on theme.

**Chapter 7: ...Or the Bible**

In a single paragraph essay, discuss a work that Foster does not mention (but with which you are familiar) that alludes to or reflects the Bible. To start, you can look at the example of the "two great jars." Be creative and imaginative in these connections. If you cannot think of a literary work, consider reading "Araby" by James Joyce. You can find it online.

**Chapter 8: Hansel and Gretel**

Think of a work of literature that reflects a fairy tale. In a single paragraph essay, discuss the parallels between your choice of a text and the fairytale it reflects. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation? (Be careful that you do not discuss a movie that is a direct depiction of a fairytale in a modern setting.)

**Chapter 9: It's Greek to Me**

Write a free verse poem derived or inspired by characters or situations from Greek mythology. Include margin notes

or footnotes to explain the mythological allusions/references in your writing. Be prepared to share your poem with the class.

### **Chapter 10: It's More Than Just Rain or Snow**

Read "Distillation" by Hugo Martinez-Serros and, in a single paragraph essay, discuss the importance of weather in this literary work, not in terms of plot. You can find the story online. Be sure to read all 19 sections of the story.

### **Chapter 12: Is That a Symbol?**

In a single paragraph essay, investigate symbolism in a text of your choice. If you struggle to find a text, consider "The Pit and the Pendulum" by Edgar Allan Poe; you can find the complete text online.

### **Chapter 13: It's All Political**

Assume that Foster is right and "it is all political." In a single paragraph essay, use his criteria to show that one of the major works assigned to you as a freshman is political.

### **Chapter 15: Flights of Fancy**

Select a literary work, in which flight signifies escape or freedom. In a single paragraph essay, explain the flight symbolism in detail.

### **Chapter 18: If She Comes Up, It's Baptism**

Think of a "baptism scene" from a significant literary work. In a single paragraph essay, discuss how the character was different after the experience? Consider "Distillation" (Chapter 10) for your textual reference.

### **Chapter 19: Geography Matters...**

In a single paragraph essay, discuss a specific literary work in which the "geography matters." In other words, a change in setting would make it completely different; meaning the plot, characters, theme, etc. would be significantly changed. Consider "Distillation" (Chapter 10) for your textual reference.

### **Chapter 20: ...So Does Season**

Find a poem that mentions a specific season. In a single paragraph essay, discuss how the poet uses the season in a meaningful, traditional, or unusual way. Submit a copy of the poem with your analysis.

### **Interlude: One Story**

In a single paragraph essay, write your own definition for archetype, and identify an archetypal story. Apply the story archetype to a literary work with which you are familiar.

### **Chapter 21: Marked for Greatness**

Select a character with a physical imperfection and, in a single paragraph essay, analyze its implications for characterization.

### **Chapter 24: ...And Rarely Just Illness**

Recall two characters who died of a disease in a literary work. In a single paragraph essay, consider how these deaths reflect the "principles governing the use of disease in literature". 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. (Feel free to recall upon epic literature that you read as a freshman.) In a single paragraph essay, contrast how a reader from the twenty-first century might view it with how a contemporary reader of the era in which the text was written might view it. 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, in a single paragraph essay, explain the multi-vocal nature of the irony in the work.

### **Envoi**

Choose a motif not discussed in this book and note its appearance in three or four different works. What does this idea seem to signify? Your response can be longer than a single paragraph essay if necessary to complete the task well.

## **WRITING EXPECTATIONS**

Use MLA formatting. The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) is a comprehensive resource for MLA style writing. The website address is <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

### **How do you format your completed summer assignment?**

**The general requirements are listed below; they will help you submit an outstanding product.**

- ✗ Create a cover sheet. You may decorate the cover sheet if you wish; however, the decoration is optional. One-third of the way down the cover sheet, center and list your name, your teacher's name, the course title, and the due date. This information, and all of the writing assignments, should be double-spaced.

Jane Doe  
Mrs. Collie  
Honors English II  
8 August 2014
- ✗ Format each assignment with a header at the top, right of the paper... your last name and the page number.
- ✗ Use section headings for each of your assignments. The section heading for each assignment should be the title of the chapter about which you are writing... Chapter 4: It It's Square, It's a Sonnet.
- ✗ For each textual paraphrase or quote, include an internal (in-text) citation... (Foster 25).
- ✗ Include a Bibliography/Works Cited for all of the short stories, poems, novels, plays, and films that you use.

### **How do you write a single paragraph essay?**

**Refer to the general guidelines listed below; they will lead you to a well written 10-sentence paragraph.**

- ✗ Begin with a thesis statement that includes the title, author, and genre about which you are writing.
- ✗ Make an assertion... a bold point/statement about the topic or the literature.
- ✗ Use a supporting detail or example from the text to support your bold point/statement.
- ✗ Provide an explanation or interpretation of the example's importance.
- ✗ Explain your thought process even further.
- ✗ Make another assertion... another bold point/statement about the topic or the literature.
- ✗ Use a supporting detail or example from the text to support your second bold point/statement.
- ✗ Provide an explanation or interpretation of the example's importance.
- ✗ Explain your thought process even further.
- ✗ Write a concluding statement that wraps up your position. Remember... this is **not** just a repeat of your thesis statement.

### **How can you ensure that you will not be penalized for writing errors?**

**Pay close attention to the reminders listed below.**

- ✗ Avoid abbreviations and contractions. This is formal writing, so please treat it formally.
- ✗ Proofread for commonly confused homonyms such as... their and there or to and too.
- ✗ Pay special attention to pronouns; their antecedents must be clear.
- ✗ Vary your sentence structure. Your mastery of compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences should shine through.
- ✗ Remember to capitalize and punctuate titles properly for each genre... "Short Stories" and *Novels* and *Films*.
- ✗ When referring to the author, use the writer's last name. Use "Foster," not "he", and NEVER write "Thomas."
- ✗ Typed work is much more professional, and it is much easier to revise; therefore, a typed product is preferred. However, if you have no computer or an alternative for typing your work, please be sure that your writing is legible and in blue or black ink.

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**Assignment adapted from the work of many –  
including Donna Anglin, Sandra Effinger, Cherish Donaldson, and Deb Salter**