

## ***How to Read Literature Like A Professor***

These are the prompts you will use for your writing assignment on *How to Read Literature Like A Professor*. When asked for an example, you may use anything that is considered Literature (novels, short stories, poems, plays). The responses to these should be paragraphs, but not pages. Please keep your examples terse, but deep.

### **Introduction:**

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

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

4. 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.

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

5. 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:**

6. What are the essentials of the Vampire story? Apply this to a literary work you have read or viewed.

### **Chapter 4: If It's Square, It's a Sonnet:**

7. 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).

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

8. Define intertextuality. Discuss three examples that have helped you in reading specific works.

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

9. 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.

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

10. 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.

### **Chapter 8: Hansel and Gretel:**

11. Think of a work of literature that reflects a fairy tale. Discuss the parallels. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation?

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

12. Write a free verse poem derived or inspired by characters or situations from Greek mythology.

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

13. Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work, not in terms of plot.

### **Chapter 11: ...More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence:**

14. Present examples of the two kinds of violence found in literature. Show how the effects are different.

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

15. Use the process described on page 106 to investigate the symbolism of the fence in "Araby." (Mangan's sister stands behind it.)

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

16. Assume that Foster is right and "it is all political." Use his criteria to show that one of the major works assigned to you as a freshman is political.

**Chapter 14: Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too:**

17. 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.

**Chapter 15: Flights of Fancy:**

18. Select a literary work in which flight signifies escape or freedom. Explain in detail.

**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.

19. 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:**

20. Think of a "baptism scene" from a significant literary work. How was the character different after the experience? Discuss.

**Chapter 19 -- Geography Matters...:**

21. Discuss at least four different aspects of a specific literary work that Foster would classify under "geography."

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

22. 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.)

**Interlude -- One Story:**

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

**Chapter 21 -- Marked for Greatness:**

24. 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.

**Chapter 22 -- He's Blind for a Reason, You Know**

**Chapter 23 -- It's Never Just Heart Disease...**

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

25. 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:**

26. After reading Chapter 25, choose a scene or episode from a novel, play or epic written before the twentieth century. Contrast how a reader from the twenty-first century could view it 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:**

27. Select an ironic literary work and explain the nature of the irony in the work.

**Chapter 27 -- A Test Case:**

28. Read "The Garden Party" by Katherine Mansfield, the short story starting on page 245. Complete the exercise on pages 265-266, following the directions exactly. Then compare your writing with the three examples. How did you do? What does the essay that follows comparing Laura with Persephone add to your appreciation of Mansfield's story?

**Envoi:**

29. Choose a motif not discussed in this book (as the horse reference on page 280) and note its appearance in three or four different works. What does this idea seem to signify?

