

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE REQUIRED WRITTEN SUMMER ASSIGNMENT #1

HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR BY THOMAS C. FOSTER

In Arthur Conan Doyle's stories, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson both observe 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 does not need to be a mystery -- Foster's book will help transform you from an unexperienced, sometimes confused "Watson" to an insightful, literary "Holmes". 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).

These short writing assignments will let you practice your literary analysis and they will help me get to know you and your literary tastes. Unless I specifically ask for a novel from your summer reading, you may use any short story, novel, play, or film (Yes, film is a literary genre). While I realize you may not have read a plethora of higher-level reading selections, please try to choose a variety of works that are at the very least high school level.

Even though this is analytical writing, you may use "I" if you deem it important to do so; however, most uses of "I" are just padding. For example, "I think the wolf is the most important character in 'Little Red Riding Hood'" is padded. As you compose each written response, re-phrase the prompt as part of your answer. In other words, I should be able to tell which question you are answering without referring back to the prompts. Concerning mechanics pay special attention to pronouns. Make antecedents clear. Say Foster first; not "he." Remember to capitalize and punctuate titles properly for each genre. **Please note that your responses can be answered in sentences and paragraphs. They should not be pages!**

This assignment should be **HANDWRITTEN IN BLUE OR BLACK INK** (please write neatly and legibly) and be ready to turn in the first week of class. Also, be sure you read the entire book, even though not every chapter has a writing prompt, there are eleven total "prompts". There will be a test **over the entire book** during the first week and we will reference the material throughout the year. Please note: there are several editions of the book, so I have removed chapter numbers and just referenced the title of each chapter since numbers and/or pages may be different. There are also online versions available if you don't want to purchase the book itself.

#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 Title --Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires

What are the essentials of the Vampire story? Apply this to any literary work you have read.

#3: Chapter Title --Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?

Define intertextuality. Discuss three examples that have helped you in reading (choose from summer reading).

#4: Chapter Title -- 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 (first edition) carefully. In these pages, Foster shows how Fugard reflects Shakespeare through both plot and theme. In your discussion, focus on theme.

#5: Chapter Title -- Hansel and Gretel

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

#6 and #7: Chapter Titles (2 titles) -- It's All About Sex... & ...Except the Sex OK ...the sex chapters.

The key idea from these chapters 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.

#8: Interlude -- One Story

Write your own definition for archetype. Then identify an archetypal story and apply it to a literary work.

#9: Chapter Title -- 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.

OR

Chapter Title --...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. Use your summer reading.

#10: Chapter Title -- A Test Case

Read "The Garden Party" by Katherine Mansfield, the short story starting on page 245 (of first edition). Complete the exercises after the story, 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?