

**Mallard Creek High School
AP English Literature and Composition
Summer Reading Assignments – 2017
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Congratulations, Mavericks, on your decision to enroll in Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition. You will be expected to do a great deal of reading and writing in AP English, and this collection of summer reading assignments is tailored to prepare you for this rigorous college-level course. These assignments have been designed to introduce college-level interpretive strategies that we will develop over the course of the coming school year in a manner that emphasizes depth and breadth.

The following reading and writing assignments carry significant weight both literally in regards to your first quarter grade and figuratively with regards to the habits we will be cultivating and developing through this course. Please be mindful of each assignment's due date.

If you have any questions as you are working over the summer, please email me.

Those of you receiving this information through your 11th grade English teacher will be asked to sign a form to confirm that you have received it.

Required Texts:

The following texts are necessary for you to complete your summer assignments. You are strongly encouraged to purchase your own copies so that you may make personal notes and annotations in the texts; however, if you choose to check out copies from a library or purchase e-books instead, your notes and annotations will need to be recorded on paper.

1. Read *How to Read Literature like a Professor* – Thomas C. Foster

****Please be advised that the directions in this summer reading assignment regarding THIS title reflect the revised edition; if you purchase an older edition, simply pay attention to the chapter TITLES in the assignment for this text, as they are the same in both editions.**

2. Choose ONE title for your second text –

- ***Invisible Man* – Ralph Ellison**

Ellison's novel, published in 1952 and winner of the National Book Award in 1953, is listed as a suggested text on the AP English Literature and Composition exam more than any other title of literature. This is a college-level text; discussions about this book in class will focus on its historical context and lasting contributions to literature that addresses the struggles for civil rights and freedom of expression.

Before choosing this text students are encouraged to visit the link on my website that offers more information about Ellison and the novel. www.mchsenglish4.weebly.com

▪ ***The Poisonwood Bible* – Barbara Kingsolver**

The Poisonwood Bible is a story told by the wife and four daughters of Nathan Price, a fierce, evangelical Baptist who takes his family and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959. They carry with them everything they believe they will need from home, but soon find that all of it—from garden seeds to Scripture—is calamitously transformed on African soil. What follows is a suspenseful epic of one family's tragic undoing and remarkable reconstruction over the course of three decades in postcolonial Africa. The novel is set against one of the most dramatic political chronicles of the twentieth century: the Congo's fight for independence from Belgium, the murder of its first elected prime minister, the CIA coup to install his replacement, and the insidious progress of a world economic order that robs the fledgling African nation of its autonomy. Against this backdrop, Orleana Price reconstructs the story of her evangelist husband's part in the Western assault on Africa, a tale indelibly darkened by her own losses and unanswerable questions about her own culpability. Also narrating the story, by turns, are her four daughters—the self-centered, teenaged Rachel; shrewd adolescent twins Leah and Adah; and Ruth May, a prescient five-year-old. These sharply observant girls, who arrive in the Congo with racial preconceptions forged in 1950s Georgia, will be marked in surprisingly different ways by their father's intractable mission, and by Africa itself. Ultimately each must strike her own separate path to salvation. Their passionately intertwined stories become a compelling exploration of moral risk and personal responsibility. (<http://www.kingsolver.com/books/the-poisonwood-bible.html>)

Check out book descriptions and summaries on Amazon and Goodreads as well as free book reviews from the New York Times archive. Both texts contain mature content and are taught in freshman level college courses across America. Additionally, both are featured year after year as suggested titles for the open-ended essay question on this course's AP exam. Both texts appear on the College Board suggested reading list and the CMS AP suggested reading list.

1. Assignment One - Due on our *third* day of AP English class

Read and annotate BOTH texts. Skillful annotators have their own system, usually combining underlining, highlighting, and writing notes in the margins. When you are working with a literary text certain elements deserve close reading. Look for the use of plot structure and development, conflict, setting, theme, point of view, and characterization. You should also note examples of allusions, symbolism, tone, etc. You may also recognize and note examples of rhetorical devices and figurative language (zeugma, chiasmus, metonymy, synecdoche, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification, sound devices, connotation/denotation, etc.).

Skillful annotators find connections between what they are reading and other texts or real-world issues.

Skillful annotators also note new or challenging vocabulary inside the front and back covers. They might also use sticky notes to hold questions for class discussions. If you are truly “lost” about any aspect of either book, formulate questions so that we can discuss them when we meet as a class. *Please refer to the provided grading rubric for annotations as you complete your close reading.

2. Assignment Two – Due on our *third* day of AP English class

Complete a reflective analysis of both literary texts. After you have read and annotated both required texts, answer the following questions. Your responses should be either typed (12 pt. font, Times New Roman, double-spaced) OR neatly handwritten using blue or black ink on one side of each page. Focus on the noted chapters below from *How to Read Literature like a Professor* and use details from *Invisible Man* or *The Poisonwood Bible* as your textual example to answer the given questions. Your responses should present a thorough discussion of the message Foster expresses in his text and the message that Ellison expresses in his novel. You should cite examples from both texts in your responses.

(Again, the chapter numbers may be different in the edition you have purchased; the chapter titles should be the same.)

1. Chapter 1 – Every Trip is a Quest – “The real reason for a quest is always self-knowledge” (Foster 3).

In the novel, what is the quest? Choose a character and explain how he/she gains self-knowledge.

2. Chapter 9 – It’s More than Just Rain or Snow – “It’s never just rain” (Foster 75).

Choose a scene where weather or the environment is more than what it seems and explain its significance.

3. Chapter 11 - ...more than It’s Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence – “...in literature, though, while it is literal, it is usually also something else” (Foster 88).

Choose a scene from *Invisible Man* or *The Poisonwood Bible* that depicts an act of violence, paying special attention to the details. Why does Ellison choose this particular form of violence? Explain what it could mean in the larger meaning of the book – thematically, symbolically, or contextually.

4. Chapter 19 – Geography Matters – “Geography in literature...can be revelatory of virtually any element in the work. Theme? Sure. Symbol? No Problem. Plot? Without a doubt” (Foster 166).

Pay special attention to the geography in the novel and explain its importance to the story, the characters, and the message the author is sending to his/her readers.

5. Chapter 21 - Marked for Greatness – “How many stories do you know in which the hero is different from everyone else in some way...” (Foster 195).

Who is the hero in this novel? How do you know he/she is the hero? Is there a visible, physical different between the hero and other characters? Why would this be important?

6. Chapter 24 – Don’t Read with Your Eyes – “...take the works as they were intended to be taken” (Foster 228).

Choose a quote from *Invisible Man* or *The Poisonwood Bible* that reflects the overall meaning of the work. Explain why you have chosen this quotation and how it applies in some way to Foster’s words in Chapter 24 of his book.

3. Assignment Three – Due on our *second* day of AP English class

Write a college entrance essay. Part of the preparation for this college-level course requires that you practice a writing style that is expected in essay prompts that accompany most college applications.

The following prompts are listed as Common Application's 2015-2016 suggested essay prompts. Choose one and develop your best essay.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

2. The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?

4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma—anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.

5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, which marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

- You are to submit your best writing for this assignment.
- Please refer to the provided grading rubric as you complete your essay.
- These essays will be shared in class in some way, so be prepared for this.
- Your essay should be 250-500 words, typed, 12 point font, Times New Roman, double-spaced.

Suggestions for success:

- These prompts require introspection. Show, rather than tell, who you are through your experiences.
- A strong application essay will present a vivid personal and compelling view of you to the college admissions board.
- Narrow your topic and keep your focus on one central idea. Admissions officers read hundreds of essays each day, and they have many submissions on the same few topics. Try to make yours unique.
- Avoid writing about the 4 “D’s”: death, divorce, drugs, and depression. While these experiences are truly significant in anyone’s life, admissions officers will not equate a tragedy or trauma with a successful essay topic. Magic happens when students are brave enough to find meaning in everyday events.
- After you have finished writing, ask yourself if anyone else could have written it. If the answer is “yes,” your essay is not personal enough. Be brave enough to reveal yourself to the powers that be.