

Summer Reading Assignment for AP English Literature and Composition

Welcome to Senior AP English! Unlike Junior AP English, we will be looking more closely at prose, poetry, and drama than nonfiction, although you will still read critical analyses of the novels and plays that we cover during the course. The following summer reading assignment that I have prepared will in many ways prepare you for the AP material and test preparation that we will be doing throughout the year.

For summer reading, you will read the One School, One book choice as well as *Wuthering Heights*, by Emily Brontë. I have chosen this novel for a variety of reasons. First, it is longer, and so the summer will allow more time to read it. Secondly, it is one of the most highly recommended books for students to read in preparation for the AP Literature Exam. Third, it is really, really good. So get excited!

It is imperative that you please purchase the Norton Critical edition of *Wuthering Heights*. It is available on amazon. You can purchase either the fourth or the fifth edition. I ask this for two reasons: so that we all have the same copy of the book which makes it easier to locate passages in class, and because of the biographical context and critical essays included (that you will eventually read).

The following assignment may seem daunting, but consider this excerpt from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, by Dr. Thomas C. Foster:

If you've ever spent time in a literature classroom...it may seem at times as if the professor is either inventing interpretations out of thin air or else performing parlor tricks, a sort of analytical sleight of hand. Actually, neither of these is the case; rather, the professor, as the slightly more experienced reader, has acquired over the years the use of a certain "language of reading," something to which the students are only beginning to be introduced. What I'm talking about is a grammar of literature, a set of conventions and patterns, codes and rules, that we learn to employ in dealing with a piece of writing. Every language has a grammar, a set of rules that govern usage and meaning, and literary language is no different. It's all more or less arbitrary, of course, just like language itself. Take the word "arbitrary" as an example: it doesn't mean anything inherently; rather, at some point in our past we agreed that it would mean what it does, and it does so only in English (those sounds would be gibberish in Japanese or Finnish). So too with art: we decided to agree that perspective—the set of tricks artists use to provide the illusion of depth—was a good thing and vital to painting...

So, too, in literature...Stories and novels have a very large set of conventions: types of characters, plot rhythms, chapter structures, point-of-view limitations... Memory. Symbol. Pattern. These are the three items that, more than any other, separate the professorial reader from the rest of the crowd. English professors, as a class, are cursed with memory. Whenever I read a work, I spin the mental rolodex looking for correspondences and corollaries—where have I seen his face, don't I know that theme?...Professors also read and think symbolically. Everything is a symbol of something, it seems, until proven otherwise. We ask, "Is this a metaphor? An analogy? What does the thing over there symbolize?" The kind of

mind that works its way through literature and criticism has a predisposition to see things as existing in themselves while simultaneously also representing something else.

A related phenomenon in professorial reading is pattern recognition. Most professional students of literature learn to take in the foreground details while seeing the patterns that the detail reveals. Like the symbolic imagination, this is a function of being able to distance oneself from the story, to look beyond the purely affective level of plot, drama, characters...Literature is full of patterns, and your reading experience will be much more rewarding when you can step back from the work, even while you're reading it, and look for those patterns.

With this in mind: Look for patterns, symbols, and things that remind you of other "texts." Heavily annotate. You will have two assignments for your *Wuthering Heights* novel due on the first day of school. Please closely read the following before reading the book.

Both assignments should be typed in MLA format with a works cited page and parenthetical citations. They will be submitted to turnitin.com. Please do not feel tempted to search the internet for information to put into your writings. I would prefer to see your own original thoughts, and I notice when a student has presented something that is not his or her own.

Wuthering Heights Assignments

1: Close Reading Passages

Firstly, it is very important that you read the actual book rather than look to a film or sparknotes. Expect quizzes in the early weeks of school which can only be passed if you have actually read the book. These will usually consist of timed analyses of passages from the book in which you will receive a passage or passages from the text and compose an analysis that reveals your understanding of the plot as well as theme, character development, foil, symbol, tone, and other literary elements.

Divide the novel into four equal sections. You will choose two passages for each section of the novel: one that includes examples of doubling in the novel and one that illustrates a symbol. Please type each passage. Then, in a detailed paragraph below the passage (between 200 and 400 words), explain how the double or symbol illuminates meaning in the novel. Begin with a topic sentence that clearly states your central interpretive idea. Then, in the body of the paragraph, discuss details from the passage (and other related passages if necessary)—making sure to incorporate precise and focused quotations that support your ideas and explanation of literary devices where applicable. Remember that I am looking to see 2 passage analyses from each section of the novel, so that makes 8 total...You must analyze one towards the end of the book!

Doubles in *Wuthering Heights*:

- Two houses
- Two generations
- Two narrators
- Two central emotions: love and hate
- Two driving forces: civility and passion (wildness)
- Two influences: nature and nurture
- Two settings: interior and exterior
- Two emotional spaces: exile and acceptance
- Two social roles: master (controller) and servant (controlled)

Symbols in *Wuthering Heights*:

- Doors and windows
- Keys and locks
- Property and ownership
- Ghosts
- Books

2: AP Essay in response to *Wuthering Heights*

After reading the novel and finishing your close reading passages, write an essay that will also be due on the first day of school. This essay is in response to actual previous AP Literature prompts. They should be typed, MLA format with a works cited page and parenthetical citations, and at least 600 words. You must provide explicit (QUOTE SANDWICHES) and implicit evidence (paraphrasing/summarizing) to back your claims. If you do quote, no quote should be longer than 8 words.

Choose 1 of the following prompts for your essay.

1. In Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), protagonist Edna Pontellier is said to possess "that outward existence which conforms, the inward life which questions." In *Wuthering Heights*, can you identify a character or characters who conform outwardly while questioning inwardly? Write an essay in which you analyze how this tension between outward conformity and inward questioning contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.
2. Select *Wuthering Heights* and focusing on one symbol or motif, write an essay analyzing how that symbol or motif functions in the work and what it reveals about the characters or themes of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.
3. Many works of literature deal with political or social issues. *Wuthering Heights* focuses on a political or social issue. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the author uses literary elements to explore this issue and explain how the issue contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

4. In some works of literature, childhood and adolescence are portrayed as times graced by innocence and a sense of wonder; in other works, they are depicted as times of tribulation and terror. Choose *Wuthering Heights* to explain how their representations of childhood or adolescence shape the meanings of the work as a whole.

Please note that all of the prompts end the same way...how does this “shape the meaning of the work as a whole.” You MUST answer that question. In other words, what is the meaning of the work? How can you relate it to the prompt? Go DEEP. Notice as well all the prompts warn against mere plot summarization. Your answers should be perceptive, insightful, analytical. Just like AP Language, in order to make a claim, you have to have evidence (quotes/paraphrasing—CONCRETE DETAILS), and then your COMMENTARY is an argument of why that evidence backs up your claim. Remember that you will be doing this on timed essay tests and won’t have a chance to google the correct answer, so resist the urge. Put on your thinking hats and prepare yourself for AP Literature and Composition!

Mrs. Johnson

sjohnson@loyolaprep.org

