

Summer Reading for English IV A.P. Students 2009

Welcome to A.P. Literature and Composition! I am excited that you have chosen to take this course, but you must be sure that you are willing to devote the necessary time and effort. If you do not like to read, write, and discuss, this is not the class for you, and it is better to decide this before the start of the 2009-2010 school year; you'll save us both aggravation and pain. (If you decide this class is not for you, head to the Counseling Office and transfer to Honors English.) In the coming year, we will be reading "works of recognized literary merit," both classic and modern, and these sometimes can be daunting for students. Ideally, you should be a dedicated English student with a strong work ethic who likes to read, appreciates a challenge, and wishes to push yourself intellectually. You also should be willing to work at your reading, without using study "aids" such as SparkNotes. If that describes you, read on.

Your summer reading assignment includes the following selections with accompanying projects. It is essential that you obtain your own copies of the books so you can mark them and bring them to class with you.

NOTE: Responses to the *HTRLLAP* questions and the Literary Response Journal for *A Doll's House* **MUST** be emailed to me at cathys1@wcs.edu by August 20, 2009. If you do not have access to email, you must bring a hard copy of the work to class August 20, 2009. Late work will be severely penalized.

A Prayer for Owen Meany John Irving

How to Read Literature Like a Professor (HTRLLAP) Thomas C. Foster

From **the Bible**: Genesis, Exodus, **and one** of the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, or

John (You may use whichever translation you prefer; these selections are important for the recognition of literary allusions.)

A Doll's House Henrik Ibsen (preferably the Literary Touchstone edition)

I. *A Prayer for Owen Meany*. If you have some knowledge of the controversy over the Vietnam War and the 1960s, this background will enhance your reading of the novel. (If not, you should do some research.) Mark the book as you read—whatever strikes you, questions you may have, passages you wonder about. Underline, highlight, write questions in the margins or at the tops and bottoms of pages. Read the article "How to Mark a Book" at <http://radicalacademy.com/adlermarkabook.htm> to understand the rationale behind this requirement and methods you may use. I will check your book for annotation, and it should be thoroughly annotated. This check will factor into your grade for summer reading. All of this is to set the stage for us to discuss the novel. I prefer group discussion with student input to lecture. Be prepared for an objective (Did You Read This—DYRT) test on *Owen Meany* the **second** week of school.

II. For *How to Read Literature like a Professor (HTRLLAP)*, respond to the following questions. Write your answers in ink (dark blue or black) or type them (definitely preferable!). We will consider other questions/connections during the year. Reading *HTRLLAP* before *Owen Meany* and *A Doll's House* will enhance your reading and analysis of these works.

Application Questions for *How to Read Literature like a Professor*

1. List the five aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to something you have read in the form used on pp. 3-5.
2. What are the essentials of the Vampire story? Apply this to a novel or story you have read (NOT one of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series).
3. Discuss a work that you are familiar with that alludes to or reflects Shakespeare. Show how the author uses this connection thematically. Read pp. 44-46 carefully. In these pages, Foster shows how Fugard reflects Shakespeare through both plot and theme. In your discussion, focus on theme.
4. Find a "way the Bible shows up" in something you have read this summer (easy with *Owen Meany*; this could be something not on the summer reading list!). Explain how this extends or emphasizes the story/novel thematically.
5. Discuss the importance of weather in a specific novel you have read before, not in terms of plot.
6. Apply the criteria on p.119 to four characters from your AP or pre-AP novels. Create a comparison chart. Try to choose two characters that will have many matches and two that will have only a few. Draw some conclusions from this chart.
7. Think of a "baptism scene" from a novel or movie. How was the character different after the experience?
8. Read the short story starting on page 245. Complete the exercise on pages 265-6, following the directions exactly. Then compare your writing with the three examples. How did you do? What does the following essay comparing Laura with Persephone add to your appreciation of Mansfield's story?

III. **Be familiar** with the Bible selections. These, as well as your knowledge of Greek myths, are important for recognizing allusions in literature.

IV. Read (and, of course, **mark**) *A Doll's House* carefully in preparation for an objective test and discussion of the play after we study *A Prayer for Owen Meany*.

Prepare a Literary Analysis Journal for the play. Please type, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, a 3-4 page journal which responds to all seven of the following questions. Be sure to write in complete sentences.

1. What is the setting's importance to the play? Consider the time period, place, and mood.
2. Describe the culture or society portrayed. Does the main character fit into the society or is he/she alienated in some way? Explain.
3. Briefly describe the opening scene. How is it important to the play?
4. Briefly describe the closing scene. Explain its importance/significance.
5. Plot paradigm: Identify the inciting incident and climax/turning point. (Look up these terms if you are not familiar with them.) Support each with quotations from the text (one for each).
6. Theme: What is one of the messages the playwright is conveying through this work? How do you know?
7. React, relate, and/or reflect: What are some of your reactions to the play? Did you see any connections between it and other plays/novels/movies/personal experiences? What questions would you like to discuss in class?