AP Literature and Composition Summer Reading 2024-25

Directions: Read each of the following texts and complete related assignments. The assignments will be graded as extra credit. The most important text is *The Odyssey* because our first essay of the year will be about that book. *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* is an optional text about technical aspects of studying literature.

Required Text:

*The Odyssey*, by Homer, translated by Robert Fitzgerald (This is a good translation and the one I use, but you can choose another if you wish. Fitzgerald’s translation is available on Kindle.)

* Written between 750 and 700 B.C. by Homer, *The Odyssey* and its values are set in a time before Homer, between 1200 and 800 B.C. This story was extremely well known throughout the Mediterranean region, so much so that Plato complained about the Greeks’ obsession with it. Several hundred copies of *The Odyssey* survived from antiquity. The plot is concerned with the hero Odysseus and his return voyage from the Trojan War. For us, it is a classic coming of age story that highlights heroic values and that, in the end, hints at a more civilized future. The journal assignment is as follows:
* The assignment is to write journals consisting of two parts: quotes and explications of those quotes. Because *The Odyssey* is an epic poem, choose a quote that is ten to fifteen lines in length. This is not as long as it sounds because the story is written in verse, and lines are not as long as they would be in a novel. The explications should be twice as long as the quote. Include book/chapter/line/page numbers with the quote. Book, chapter, and line numbers are important because we are likely to be using different texts. Choose quotes from throughout the story, not just one section. Focus on quotes that illustrate Odysseus’ personality. You will want to look for change as you progress through the story. These will help you prepare to write the essay because the essay will be about Odysseus’ growth.
* How many quotes and explications? Eight from beginning to the end of Odysseus’ story.
* What am I looking for in these quotes? Anything that helps to develop your understanding of the main character. Look for change, realization, and growth.
* What is in an explication? Choose a quote that is from what you consider to be an important moment in the story.
  1. Put the quote in context: who, what, where, when
  2. Explain what the quote shows about character/conflict (Odysseus changes over the course of the story)
  3. Explain how the quote relates to another part of the story (such as how one quote shows change or growth from a previous quote).
  4. Always analyze what is in the quote. Write about the quote in specific terms, not broad, generalized terms.
* What is the purpose of explications? To examine the text closely and to make connections between specific examples of the story in order to find meaning. In this case, we will analyze Odysseus' development and growth over the course of the story.
* Structure: You could use a two column format, with quotes on the left and explications on the right, or you can insert a quote and then explicate below that quote. Either is fine. You are not to use *Sparknotes*, *Pink Monkey Notes*, *Cliff Notes*, or any other type of book notes for your journals. The point is not to write down what someone else thinks, nor is it to try and figure out EVERYTHING in the story. The point is to look for patterns and try to use those patterns to find meaning.

**Recommended Text**

*How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, by Thomas Foster

* As the title indicates, this book is about reading literature. *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* is written for non-academics, meaning it is very accessible, and reading this book should help prepare you for AP Literature. Each chapter is about a different reading technique. There is an assignment that will help you remember some of the ideas from the book. It will be graded as bonus:
  1. First, read and summarize the main idea of each chapter. Your summaries should be three to six sentences for each chapter. Include in each summary the title of a story or work to which Foster applies his theory.

Additional Recommended Readings:

* *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J.D. Salinger
* *The Great Gatsby,* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

While not required, reading any or all of the additional titles will enhance your experience in AP Literature. The two novels above are stories that I will refer to and relate to other stories throughout the year.

**Due Date**: Electronic copies of summer assignments will be due in September on the second full class period upon our return to school on [www.Turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). I will provide information for signing up for turnitin.com upon return to school from summer vacation.

Feel free to email me at [sean.dulin@bsd.k12.de.us](mailto:sean.dulin@bsd.k12.de.us) with any questions.