

## AC English 2 Summer Reading 2018: A Farewell to Arms

### Part 1: Context

The National Endowment for the Arts included Ernest Hemingway's [A Farewell to Arms](#) as part of its "Big Read Project." The following NEA documents provide a solid foundation for the historical, thematic, and literary concerns of the novel. Before you crack open the text itself, take a look at—that means read--the following documents:

- [Ernest Hemingway, 1899-1961 \(NEA\)](#)
- [Hemingway and World War I \(NEA\)](#)
- [NEA Handouts: World War I—The Great War; Modernism; Hemingway's Writing Style](#)
- Ernest Hemingway's 1948 Introduction to the Novel (pages VI-X in the text)
- Sean Hemingway's Introduction to the Novel ( pages XIII-XIX in the text)

### Part 2: Reading the Novel

Read and [annotate](#) Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, giving special attention to Hemingway's unique writing style and his own recurring themes (see list on the next page). Hemingway claimed that he wrote to reflect a technique he called the "iceberg principle," in which an author "may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of the iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water." Thus, Hemingway tried to write characters, descriptions, and plots in a concise, realistic, accessible, and profound way. A tactful reviser, he would often spend eight hours to produce 500 words of writing. Because he took great care writing his stories, we should take great care in reading them. Your annotations will count for your first homework grade, and they will provide a foundation for your writing.

### Part 3: In-Class Assessment

To "test" your completion and comprehension of the text, you will have a summer reading quiz on the second day of classes. This quiz will be 50 points, which will be approximately 20-30 multiple choice questions and 2-3 short answer questions (about a paragraph response for each). This quiz will be on August 17.

### Part 4: In-Class Writing

After completing English 1, you should have developed a foundation and framework for engaging with literature. Accordingly, the essay topics will be related to some core terms and ideas in literature: style, theme, and character (see below).

On the third day of classes, August 18, you will write an argumentative, thesis-driven essay in class. The essay must have at least an effective, arguable thesis statement and two complete body paragraphs. You may use your notes and annotations as part of this writing exercise. This essay is your chance to show your analytical writing skills from English 1 and your understanding of this particular text. After the first few weeks of discussing the novel, we will expand this short essay into the semester's first major writing assignment. The prompts for the essay (areas in which you should pay close attention) will likely come from the list on the following page.

### Style:

- Consider the NEA's explanation of Hemingway's style and his comments about the iceberg principle. Underneath the surface-level concision is a world of depth—or seven-eighths of the story, according to his math. So, what do you find underneath the surface?
  - What key ideas are implied rather than stated?
  - What, in the dialogue especially, is communicated but left unsaid?
  - What do you understand beyond the surface of the text?
  - What symbolic, metaphorical, or implied significance can you draw from the details?

### Theme:

- Consider one of the recurring Modernist themes that Hemingway often addressed with his stories.
  - The Function of Racial or Gender Dynamics (Male/Female, Masculine/Feminine)
  - The Role of Violence and War
  - Tone and Mood: Hopeful or Hopeless?
  - The Function of Agency/Autonomy (Free Will v. Determinism)
  - Human Beings ← → Environment
  - The Role of Religion
  - The Role of Family
  - The Role of Interpersonal Relationships
  - Bravery and Courage
  - Loyalty and Honor
- Character:
  - Choose either of the two main characters, Catherine or Henry. Is the character dynamic or static? How so? Why? So what?
  - Is there a protagonist or antagonist? How so? Why or why not? So what?
  - Does the novel contain a hero or an antihero? How so? Why or why not? So what?
  - Choose a supporting character other than Catherine or Henry. What is their function in the novel? Or, why is this character included? What does the character add to the thematic and literary purpose of the novel (beyond just advancing the plot)?