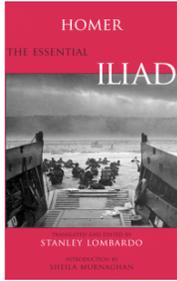


# AP English Literature Summer Reading 2018



## *The Essential Iliad*

by Homer, translated by Stanley Lombardo

ISBN 9780872205420. Use this number to purchase your book.

It is imperative that you buy a *paper copy* of this translation: You will annotate your reading; we will work closely with the poem’s language and style.

<i>Reading literature</i>	
<p>Before you read <i>The Iliad</i>, consider why we read literature.</p> <p>American writer Flannery O’Connor once received a letter from a student at Hollins College asking her “just what enlightenment” she intended in her stories.</p> <p>“I suspect she had a paper to write,” O’Connor said. “I wrote her back to forget about the enlightenment and just try to enjoy them.”</p>	<p>“A story isn’t any good,” O’Connor wrote, “unless it...hangs on and expands in the mind. Properly, you analyze to enjoy, but it’s equally true that to analyze with any discrimination, you have to have enjoyed already....”</p> <p>For O’Connor, enjoyment and analysis work cog and wheel. We understand best what we enjoy first.</p> <p>Read <i>The Iliad</i> in this spirit, allowing delight to bring discriminating wisdom.</p>
<i>Reading The Iliad</i>	
<i>Before reading The Iliad</i>	<i>While reading The Iliad</i>
<p>Read about theme <a href="#">from poet Edward Hirsch</a> and <a href="#">from The Bedford Introduction to Literature</a>. Noticing themes and how literature conveys them is powerful, and essential for AP reading and writing. Gain a good understanding of theme. Identify themes as you read <i>The Iliad</i>, and track how the poem thinks about those themes. What questions does Homer pose? What solutions does the poem offer to those questions?</p> <p>Read <a href="#">Justin Cronin</a> on telling vs. showing and the importance of showing.</p>	<p>Focus on conflicts and how they’re resolved; focus on characters and their values and attitudes, their actions and decisions, their motivations; focus on theme and style, especially on literal and figurative language and how it shows rich human reality.</p> <p>You might choose one of the essay topic options listed below to focus your reading and annotation still more.</p> <p>I expect to see annotations and notes in your book, memorializing your engaged reading. (<a href="#">Sample annotated pages.</a>) Annotation enacts your understanding, your thoughts as you read. It organizes the work, linking related passages, tracking themes.</p>
<i>Writing about The Iliad for August</i>	
<i>Topic options for writing</i>	<i>Instructions for writing</i>
<p>Each option is broad, intentionally. Begin by defining how the poem thinks about the subject of the option. (Which character, which god and man, which moments, for example?)</p> <p>Identify those ways. Then study them to learn how you see the poem thinking about your topic and what you see the poem saying about it.</p>	<p>To help me get a sense of how you read and write about literature, compose a short essay of no more than 500 words on one topic option.</p> <p>Do no Googling or other “research.” You want to read from the page, yourself. Your ideas are to be yours and yours alone. Having the courage to express and defend a point of view is one of the big lessons you learn in the humanities.</p>

Then discern which for you is the most focused, interesting, and rich way to develop and resolve that question/problem. Focus your thinking and your writing on that way.

One character? Maybe. One Book? Maybe. One speech by one character? Maybe. A focused and defined compare/contrast of two characters or speeches? Maybe. The evolution of a theme or character? Maybe.

Define a 500-word-sized topic, one you can “exhaust.”

Option A: Why is rage “black and murderous” (1:2)?

Option B: Sympathy for Agamemnon?

Option C: The relationship between gods and men.

Option D: Homeric similes. How and when does Homer use them? How do they enrich the poem?

Option E: How comfortably is the dispute between Agamemnon and Achilles resolved? *Can it be* resolved in the cultural world of the poem?

Option F: The price of honor.

Option G: Who behaves more disreputably, Agamemnon or Achilles?

Option: H: Who is wise? How is wisdom acquired? What is wisdom?

Option I: Why do we suffer? Does our suffering have purpose, meaning?

Option J: Why is Hector so often the reader’s favorite?

Option K: Several characters in the poem (Ajax in Book 9, for example) harshly judge Achilles. Do you? Why?

Option L: The use and abuse of language and rhetoric.

Don’t fret of getting a “right” answer. There isn’t one. Say what you think. That’s what an essay is, after all, a way to help you figure out what you think.

Do not follow the 5-¶ formula or any other prefab formula. Begin to break that bad thinking and writing habit. Give the essay a beginning, a middle, and an end, with as many ¶s as required.

The essay is due on the second day of class by 15:30 to turnitin assignment 8-17-18, The Iliad DRAFT. (You will know the late policy on day 1.)

On the essay document, omit heading and name. Begin the essay with your title, which should include Option in a parenthesis: Agamemnon’s Unjust Rage (Option A).

Do lots of close reading and developing, working from evidence.

Use Times New Roman font size 12 and follow MLA conventions for citation. Cite the poem like this: first citation (Book 1: lines 49-51); second and following citations (1:49-51). See [How to quote poetry](#) for reference.

Include a Works Cited page. See [How to create MLA bibliographic entries](#) for reference. (Avoid easybib and other internet services. They’ll lead you astray.)

The draft will count 10 points of the first 50-point essay grade. The revision will count the remaining 40 points.

How writing works. Drafting. Revising. Drafts are experiments. Drafts help you test what you think. Drafts are never perfect. (See [the interesting origin of the word draft/draught](#).)

To write the draft: gather your evidence; define the question evidence asks; create a thesis to resolve that question. Read through the question and the evidence at least twice.

Then write in two stages: 1) Set a timer for 30 minutes. Follow your thoughts without pause. Stop. Let the draft sit; 2) Later, the next day even, read your draft. Highlight the good insights/ideas. Think about how to focus them. Re-gather your evidence, perhaps adding to your original list. Set a timer for 45-60 minutes. Write without pause.

There’s your draft.

### *What books to have right away in August*

Have *The Bedford Handbook* and *Writing with Style* to hand when you arrive to school in August. Along with *The Iliad*, they are the books you will need right away.