

# Honors Sophomore English

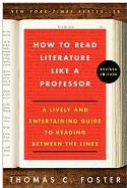
Mrs. Quinton

Welcome to your Sophomore year at Lutheran South Academy! I am very excited to be able to work with each one of you this next year in order to help you become better readers and writers. One of the best ways to become a reader is to be able to comprehend all the signs, patterns and symbols that authors give us to help infer and decipher the meaning they want us to capture. Thomas C. Foster has identified most of the symbols, archetypes and patterns that recur throughout literature as signposts to meaning in his book, *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* is a reference book to help you understand these major symbols, allusions, archetypes and patterns found within literature. Mixing quick wit and sharp intellectual insights, this reference book discusses different ways to analyze and break apart a text in order to truly illuminate all the layers within complex works of literature. This summer, you are to read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, and complete the following questions in a journal to be turned in on the first day of class.

## *How to Read Literature Like a Professor:*

### *A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines*

by Thomas C. Foster



\*\*\*\*Make sure you have the revised edition\*\*\*\*

**Note to students:** These short writing assignments will let you practice your literary analysis and they will help me get to know you and your literary tastes. Whenever I ask for an example from literature, you may use short stories, novels, plays, or films (Yes, film is a literary genre). If your literary repertoire is thin and undeveloped, use the Appendix (307) to jog your memory or to select additional works to explore. At the very least, watch some of the "Movies to Read" that are listed on pages 318-320. **Please note that your responses should be about a paragraph -- not pages!** Your answers should be written in complete sentences and should be at least a half a page each. **THEY MUST BE HAND-WRITTEN IN A COMPOSITION NOTEBOOK TO BE HANDED IN AT THE BEGINNING OF SCHOOL.**

\*\*The first few weeks of class we will be working exclusively with the material in the book.

\*\*Quizzes and a Final Test will be given over the material in the book.

I highly suggest spreading the reading of this out, taking a few chapters at a time, to truly let Foster's advice to sink in. Do not get bogged down by his examples. They will not be books that you have read. Instead capture the main ideas of each chapter and the connections he is trying to convey. Try to think of movies and/or stories that you have read that the ideas presented in each chapter will apply to.

## Writing Assignments for *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*

by Thomas C. Foster

**Chapter 1 -- Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not)-** List the five aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to something you have read (or viewed) in the form used on pgs 3-5.

**Chapter 2 -- Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion-** Choose a meal from a literary work (or movie) and apply the ideas of Chapter 2 to this literary depiction.

**Chapter 3: --Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires-** Who would be considered a "vampire" in something you have read (or watched)? Explain how.

**Chapter 4 --Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?-** Define intertextuality. Discuss three examples that have helped you in reading specific works.

**Chapter 5 -- When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare... -**Why do so many writers use Shakespeare? What are some of the ways that Shakespeare influences writers?

**Chapter 6 -- ...Or the Bible-** Why is the Bible so often alluded to in literature? What's the benefit of knowing/understanding Bible allusions in literature?

**Chapter 7 -- Hansel and Gretel-**Why do writers borrow from "kiddie lit" in their works? Think of a work of literature that reflects a fairy tale. Discuss the parallels. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation?

"THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A KID WHO HATES READING. THERE ARE KIDS WHO LOVE READING, AND KIDS WHO ARE READING THE WRONG BOOKS."  
JAMES PATTERSON

- Chapter 8 -- It's Greek to Me-** Why do writers allude to mythology? What are some of the ways that writers allude to mythology?
- Chapter 9 -- It's More Than Just Rain or Snow-** What are some of the common “meanings” of various types of weather? (Rain, Rainbow, Fog, Snow) Discuss an example of the use of weather in a specific literary work (or movie) and the importance of it.
- Interlude -- Does He Mean That-**What are the reasons Foster provides that lead him to believe that most writers do not accidentally create the symbols, allusions, and patterns we find when we read critically? <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>What's the benefit of noticing that it happened anyway? <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Chapter 10- Never Stand Next to the Hero-** Think of an example, from either movies you have watched or books that you have read, of when a character perished or was hurt do to being too close to the Hero. What is the problem with being best pals with the hero? What purpose does the death of a friend serve? Why are not all characters created equal? Be sure to lay the groundwork to the story and how the character was affected. Remember the death has to spur the Hero forward, it cannot be innocent bystanders in a rampage.
- Chapter 11 --...More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence-** Present examples of the two kinds of violence found in literature (or movie). Show how the effects are different.
- Chapter 12 -- Is That a Symbol?-** What's the difference between symbolism and allegory? <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>What impacts a readers' understanding of symbolic meaning? <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>What, besides objects, can be symbolic? <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>How should a reader approach symbolism in a text? <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>What questions should the reader ask of the text when trying to determine symbolic meaning?
- Chapter 13 -- It's All Political-** Assume that Foster is right and "it is all political." Use his criteria to show that one of the major works assigned to you as a freshman is political.
- Chapter 14 -- Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too-** Apply the criteria on page 126 to a major character in a significant literary work. Try to choose a character that will have many matches. Why do writers use Christ figures? This is a particularly apt tool for analyzing film -- for example, *Star Wars*, *The Lion The Witch and The Wardrobe*, *Frozen*, *Braveheart*, *The Lion King*, *Gladiator* and *Ben-Hur*.
- Chapter 15 -- Flights of Fancy-** Select a literary work in which flight, either by plane or some other means, signifies escape or freedom. Explain in detail.
- Chapter 18 -- If She Comes Up, It's Baptism-** Think of a "baptism scene" from a significant literary work (or movie). How was the character different after the experience?
- Chapter 19 -- Geography Matters...-**How can geography *be* character? How can geography play an important plot role? What are some patterns of symbolism with regard to geography? What does it mean when an author sends a character south?
- Chapter 20 -- ...So Does Season-** What are the symbolic implications of each major season: spring, summer, fall, winter? <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>What is the symbolic implication of the progression of season (from spring through winter)? <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Interlude -- One Story-** Identify an archetype and apply it to a literary work or movie with which you are familiar. What does Foster mean when he says there is only “one story”?
- Chapter 21 -- Marked for Greatness-** Figure out Harry Potter's scar. If you aren't familiar with Harry Potter, select another character with a physical imperfection and analyze its implications for characterization.
- Chapter 22 -- He's Blind for a Reason, You Know-** What can physical blindness mirror? <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>What is often the irony behind a blind character? <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>Identify a blind character in a story and discuss the importance of their lack of sight. Is it a hindrance or a benefit? Explain.
- Chapter 23 -- It's Never Just Heart Disease ...And Rarely Just Illness-** What are some of the symbolic possibilities associated with the heart? Why? What things make a “prime literary disease”? Recall a character whom has died of a disease in a literary work. Consider how this death reflect the "principles governing the use of disease in literature" (222-224).
- Chapter 24 -- Don't Read with Your Eyes-** What is Foster's main point in this chapter? <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>Do we have to accept the values of another culture to accept the impact those values had on <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>the writing? <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Chapter 25—It's My Symbol and I'll Cry If I Want To-** Symbols do not mean the same thing for everyone, so how do you figure out symbolism? Read *The Lottery Ticket* by Anton Chekov and explain what the Lottery Ticket symbolizes. Remember to use examples and evidence from the text to support your answer. <http://www.classicshorts.com/stories/lottery.html>
- Chapter 26 -- Is He Serious? And Other Ironies-** What does Foster mean when he says, “Irony trumps everything”? There are three types of irony in literature, what are they? What is the irony in “The Story of an Hour”? <https://archive.vcu.edu/english/engweb/webtexts/hour/>

Happy Reading! If you have any questions, feel free to email me

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