

AP English IV Literature and Composition – Stafford High School

Summer Reading Assignment 2023

C Robinson

Dear AP Scholar,

Welcome! I'm so glad you have chosen to take AP Literature and Composition this coming year. As an AP class, it is faster-paced and more rigorous, so getting started in the summer is a great way to prepare for class in the fall. This class is all about analyzing fiction (short stories, poetry, and drama and novels), having an opinion about it to form a literary argument, and then learning to back that up with evidence and commentary. Get ready to grow into a stronger reader, writer, and analyst who can see the world through a critical eye about issues that affect you, right where you are in high school.

I can't wait to hear what you have to say! Welcome to the literary community.

~Mrs. Robinson ☺

Here are a few checklist items for you to get ready for the 2022-2023 year:

1. You will need to obtain *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya. The preference is that you purchase your own copy, as you will need to annotate as you read. Amazon has the book listed, both new and used, for under \$10. However, if you will struggle to obtain your own copy for any reason, please come see me before the school year lets out and I can check you out a copy from the school. You will still be expected to annotate, just with post-it notes.
2. You must complete the tasks for the summer reading assignment. Be sure to respond to each task thoroughly and completely, as your responses will count as a major grade for the first marking period. You should make sure your ideas are both organized and presented clearly and thoroughly. Please remember that this is an AP class, so I expect well-developed and thoughtful responses to each task. If you pace yourself over the summer, you should easily be able to read through this book.

Note: it is expected that you complete your summer assignments on your own. Although you may struggle, put forth your best effort and complete all of what is detailed below. It is unacceptable to come in with incomplete work and claim "I didn't get it." If you have any questions, please email me at crobinson2@staffordmsd.org. I am here to help you!

Assignment for *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya:

Read the entire book.

Bless Me, Ultima focuses on a young boy's spiritual transformation amidst cultural and societal changes in the American Southwest during World War II. Anaya's work aims to reflect the uniqueness of the Hispano experience in the context of modernization in New Mexico—a place bearing the memory of European and indigenous cultures in contact spanning nearly half a millennium. The relationship between Anaya's protagonist, Antonio, and his spiritual guide, Ultima, unfolds in an enchanted landscape that accommodates cultural, religious, moral, and epistemological contradictions: Márez vs. Luna, the Golden Carp vs. the Christian God, good vs. evil, Ultima's way of knowing vs. the Church's or the school's way of knowing.

The Big Ideas serve as the foundation of the AP English Literature and Composition course and enable you to create meaningful connections. These are, along with their Enduring Understandings:

- **Character** – Characters in literature allow readers to study and explore a range of values, beliefs, assumptions, biases, and cultural norms represented by those characters.
- **Setting** – Setting and the details associated with it not only depict a time and place, but also convey values associated with that setting.
- **Structure** – The arrangements of the parts and sections of a text, the relationships of the parts to each other, and the sequence in which the text reveals information are all structural choices made by a writer that contribute to the reader's interpretation of a text.
- **Narration** – A narrator's or speaker's perspective controls the details and emphases that affect how readers experience and interpret a text.
- **Figurative Language** – Comparisons, representations, and associations shift meaning from the literal to the figurative and invite readers to interpret a text.
- **Literary Argumentation** – Readers establish and communicate their interpretations of literature through arguments supported by textual evidence.

As you read, annotate each chapter for the Big Ideas. Complete a Dialectic Journal for every two chapters (22 chapters / total of 11). Essentially this is a Cornell notes structure:

- At the top of the page, write your name, the date(s) you read the chapters, and the chapter numbers.
- On the left-hand side of the page, you will write down quotes / text evidence that you think is significant to the Big Ideas.
- On the right-hand side of the page, you will explain the connection of the quote / text evidence to the Big Ideas. In this column, you will also write your own notes about what you're reading. If you have questions or wonder about something, write them down. If you realize something or connect with the text in some way, write it down.
- Be sure to include page numbers for any quotes.

The annotations and dialectical journal will be a grade the first week of school. The annotations should include underlined quotes, marks where you identify the Big Ideas, and your thoughts / questions / epiphanies as you read. Your goal should be to make notes throughout every chapter, as this will also help you complete the dialectical journal. These notes (annotations and dialectical journal) will be used to participate in a Socratic seminar in class, so make sure you have detailed notes/thoughts so you can contribute!

When you are finished reading, select one of the essay topics below to answer. Your essay must include a thesis statement, textual evidence, and commentary. Review the essay rubric attached to this assignment. Every essay you write for the longer fiction pieces will be graded by this rubric. This is the key to understanding how your Free Response Question #3 Essays will be graded on the AP Lit Exam in the spring.

1. Critic Roland Barthes has said, "Literature is the question minus the answer." Using *Bless Me, Ultima*, and considering Barthes' observation, write an essay in which you analyze a central question it raises and the extent to which it offers answers. Explain how the author's treatment of this question affects your understanding of the work as a whole.
2. The most important themes in literature are sometimes developed in scenes in which a death or deaths take place. Write a well-organized essay in which you show how a specific death scene helps to illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole.
3. In Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), protagonist Edna Pontellier is said to possess "That outward existence which conforms, the inward life that questions." Identify a character who outwardly conforms while questioning inwardly. Write an essay in which you analyze how this tension between outward conformity and inward questioning contributes to the meaning of the work.
4. Many writers use a country setting to establish values within a work of literature. For example, the country may be a place of virtue and peace or one of primitivism and ignorance. In *Bless Me, Ultima*, the setting plays a significant role. Write an essay in which you analyze how this setting functions in the work as a whole.
5. In some works of literature, childhood and adolescence are portrayed as times graced by innocence and sense of wonder; in other works, they are depicted as times of tribulation and terror. In a well-developed essay, explain how its representation of childhood or adolescence shapes the meaning of the work as a whole.

You only need to choose ONE of the five topics to write about. The essay may be handwritten or typed. (If you type, please follow MLA format.) This essay, the dialectic journal, and the annotations will be due within the first week of school.

Finally, read and sign the attached AP Student Code of Honor. Be sure you understand the expectations of this class in terms of academic work and behavior. The signature will be due on the first week of class as well.

Accelerated Placement Student HONOR CODE:

All students are expected to abide by the honor code. By signing this agreement, you acknowledge you have read the requirements fully, agree to abide by them, and certify that you will wholeheartedly attempt to follow them yourself and hold yourself and your peers accountable.

AP students will act with integrity towards classwork, homework, and exam materials always, including in an official AP College Board setting, such as sitting for the required exam. Cheating and plagiarism will be treated with a zero-tolerance policy. Any student caught engaging in these activities will receive a zero on the assignment or exam and will have parent/AP contact.

AP students will engage thoughtfully and actively in class every day to the best of their ability and will arrive to class prepared and ready to discuss/speak up, participate, work or listen. This includes, but is not limited to, phone usage, games, or socializing unless explicitly stated by the instructor.

AP students will focus their efforts on reading or writing to keep up with the pace of the class, not just for their academic grades but for their own progress in skills and growth as young adults in a collegiate setting. They understand that this course is a partnership with their instructor: grades are not handed out, they are earned, and there is always room for them to make mistakes if they help them learn.

AP students will engage respectfully and maturely with each other and with their instructor when presented with challenging material. They understand they will be exposed to a wide range of topics and themes. They understand that they may not always agree with the ideas presented personally and that nothing will be presented to them that is intentionally hurtful or disrespectful to another person/group. As such, they agree to work with peers cheerfully and cooperatively that they may not know and to act with fidelity to their assignment, which is to think, read, and write critically and with an open mind.

I, (first and last name) _____, have read and understand the expectations of this class as outlined in this Honor Code, and I agree to faithfully conduct myself according to these guidelines all year.

Signature _____

Date _____