AP Literature & Composition
Summer Assignment 2025

"I believe that reading and writing are the most nourishing forms of meditation anyone has so far found. By reading the writings of the most interesting minds in history, we meditate with our own minds and theirs as well. This to me is a miracle." – Kurt Vonnegut

Introduction:

Your summer assignment is a chance for you to read a Pulitzer Prize finalist text, ***The Poisonwood Bible*** **by Barbara Kingsolver**, a poem of your choice, explore ideas, conduct literary analysis, and write in response to what you are reading and thinking. The assignment requires you to either use a physical notebook, or create an electronic notebook. All work is due the first week of school. There will be an assessment in the first week on the book. And our first unit consists of this text.
In many cases, I have included extra links for insight and support. Do not wait to begin. This is a lengthy text full of eloquent and poetic language, a story told by the wife and four daughters of Nathan Price, an evangelical Baptist who takes his family and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959. What follows is a suspenseful epic of one family's tragic undoing and remarkable reconstruction over the course of three decades in postcolonial Africa.

(Students who join the class after summer, still need to complete the summer assignment and read *The Poisonwood Bible*. Contact Mrs. Pantilione for details.)

As Voltaire said, "Think for yourself and let others enjoy the privilege of doing so too." Enjoy the privilege of reading great texts. Enjoy the critical thinking and writing process for yourself. In short, have a great summer!

Reading, Thinking, Analyzing, and Noting:

Text I
Assignment -- Read *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver

For this, I do recommend having your own copy of the book. Used copies are readily available online through Amazon used books, Thriftbooks, Goodwill, and AbeBooks. Or at local bookstores like: Book Gallery, Bookmans, Half Priced Books, and thrift stores. It is *highly* encouraged to annotate. You will use the book in class for activities, assignments, and the assessment. However, specific notes that coordinate with book flags can serve a reader well.

Your main assignment: As you read and annotate, then create at least four pages of notes about the book. How you organize those four pages is up to you. I know that this is vague and undefined, but look at it another way; I am empowering you to do what you feel is right, to structure your notes in a way that you find useful. You may be as artistic as you like. You have the freedom to do what you want within the context of literary analysis.
What you should consider for your notes are: character outlines/sketches; note motifs, symbols, allusions, imagery, the structure of the novel, point of view, and other aspects of literary analysis with page numbers. You may want to consider connections you make as you read. Be sure to note quotes and other aspects of the novel that resonate with you. Write a bit about them. All I'm asking you to do is create four analytically interesting pages of notes about your reading experience that includes your literary analysis finds.

Why it is important -- A mature thinker chooses and develops his or her own criteria in order to evaluate the quality of texts. I respect your ability to make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, and personal experiences and when you have control over how you do that, you often exceed my expectations. So do it. Still feel a bit unsure on how to analyze? Maybe this will help.

Text 2 – Poetry Foundation Poem of the Day

Assignment -- Poetry Foundation features a poem each day from a diverse list of present and past poems. Choose a poem from any date over the summer and create a thorough page of notes. The notes should focus on an analysis of the poem. Consider who the speaker is, who could they be speaking to? Analyze the diction, imagery, figurative language, possible message. Look for parts that are interrelated. Find the individual aspects of the poem that give it meaning.
Here is a good example of a complex analysis of a popular poem. A more in-depth video analysis of an Emily Dickinson poem can be found here.

Why it is important -- Thoughtful readers write to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately by selecting apt and specific evidence, organizing the evidence into broader ideas, and conveying the impact of its meaning. Poetry is an important aspect of this class. Embrace it, play with it, there is nothing to be intimidated about. We will do all kinds of activities where we play with words, their arrangement, and the images and emotions they create.

Feel free to email me with any questions.
See you in August!

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