E419: AP Literature and Composition
Summer Reading Assignment 2026-2027

Your summer reading assignment requires reading, annotating, and completion of guided notes. Please review all information below.

Book

- Read the following chapters from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster (available online via Google search and in bookstores). Numbers inside parentheses indicate updated chapter numbers for the third edition published in 2024.
    - Chapter 2: "Nice to Eat With You: Acts of Communion"
    - Chapter 14: "Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too" (the 2024 version does not have this chapter)
    - Chapter 19 (18): "Geography Matters…"
    - Chapter 22 (20): "He's Blind for a Reason, You Know"
    - Chapter 26 (23): "Is He Serious? And Other Ironies"

Short Stories

- Read and annotate the following short stories:
    - "Sonny's Blues" by James Baldwin
    - "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" by Flannery O'Connor
    - "A Temporary Matter" by Jhumpa Lahiri

Required Notes

- This packet also contains required notes, as explained in the subsequent pages.

In-Class Writing

- You will use your prepared notes and annotations to complete timed, in-class writing during the first few days of class. The writing assignment will require thoughtful, analytical, and well-edited AEC paragraphs. We expect abundant and properly formatted, specific textual evidence to back up your assertions. Your commentary should engage with the evidence and explain how it proves your assertion. If you've completed your charts thoughtfully, they should be useful to you in answering the writing prompts.

Due Date

Your completed notes are due on the first day of class without exception. Even if you complete your work digitally, you should bring printed copies to class. Late schedule changes do not excuse late or missing work. You–not your teachers, your counselors, or your parents–are responsible for making sure your work is complete and ready on the first day.

Academic Integrity

This assignment lays the foundation for the analytical, scholarly work we will be doing in AP Literature. Though the notes do not require your own commentary, the subsequent in-class writing assignments *will* require serious, analytical work. Should you find the summer reading tasks overwhelming, you may wish to examine other senior English courses. Should you find the desire to *plagiarize* overwhelming, you should reevaluate your course readiness and college aspirations, as such behavior can and has resulted in failure of the assignment and/or course, removal from NHS, and–at the collegiate level–expulsion from university coursework. We cannot stress enough the importance of completing the assignment entirely and producing your independent, authentic work. **Do not complete this assignment using peers, tutors, the internet, Artificial Intelligence, or any other sources. We take academic integrity very seriously, and failure to complete authentic, original work will result in failure on this assignment.**

REQUIRED NOTES

"Sonny's Blues" by James Baldwin

First, read Foster's chapter "Geography Matters.…" Then, read "Sonny's Blues," annotating it as necessary, and complete this chart, which we expect to be **thorough** and **comprehensive**, covering **varied and multiple places in the story**. Just a few entries is not enough. These charts do not require your commentary. Just the evidence is fine.

Quote passages (at least five) from *Foster's chapter* that help in analyzing the setting of "Sonny's Blues"	**Specific evidence from the *story.* For some Foster quotes, you'll want to include several different quotes from the story–again, be thorough (at least eight).**
1) "Joseph Conrad, England's greatest Polish writer, sends his characters into hearts of darkness (as he calls one tale of a trip into Africa) to discover the darkness in their own hearts" (178-179).	1) Sonny says, "I'm all right now and I think I'll be all right. But I can't forget where I've been...and what I've been" (43).

Quote passages from *Foster's chapter* that help in analyzing the setting of "Sonny's Blues"	**Specific evidence from the *story.* For some Foster quotes, you'll want to include several different quotes from the story–again, be thorough.**

“A Good Man Is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor

First, read Foster’s chapters “Yes, She Is a Christ Figure, Too” and “Is He Serious? And Other Ironies.” Then, read “A Good Man Is Hard to Find,” annotating it as necessary, and complete the two separate charts below, which we expect to be **thorough** and **comprehensive**, covering **varied and multiple places in the story**. Just a few entries is not enough. These charts do not require your commentary. Just the evidence is fine.

Chart 1

Of the 18 Christ-figure traits that *Foster* identifies in his list, which does the Misfit invert or warp? List as many as apply from his chapter.	**Specific evidence from the *story* that demonstrates the warped or inverted traits you identified to the left.**

Chart 2 (Different from Chart 1)

List examples/evidence from the story that show what the grandmother thinks it means to be "good."	**List examples/evidence from the story that reveal the grandmother's *negative* character traits.**

“A Temporary Matter” by Jhumpa Lahiri

First, read Foster’s chapters “He’s Blind for a Reason, You Know” and “Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion.” Then, complete this chart, which we expect to be **thorough** and **comprehensive**, covering **varied and multiple places in Foster’s chapters**. Just a few entries is not enough. You do not need evidence from the Lahiri story for this chart, nor do you need commentary. Just put evidence from the Foster chapters in the relevant column.

“He’s Blind for a Reason” While no one in this story is actually blind, Foster’s ideas still apply. Quote key ideas in Foster’s chapter on blindness that communicate his central arguments about the varied ways in which blindness, sight, light, or dark can function in literature.	**“Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion”** Quote key ideas in Foster’s chapter on meals that communicate his central arguments about the varied ways in which meals / food can function in literature.

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