

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 1 NOTES

### Every Trip is a Quest (Except When It's Not)

#### Elements of a Quest

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

#### **Example** - *Lord of the Rings*

1. Frodo Baggins
2. Mount Doom
3. Frodo must destroy the \_\_\_\_\_ of Sauron
4. \_\_\_\_\_, the ring's possessive powers, Gollum, corrupted men and other creatures trying to \_\_\_\_\_ the ring, etc.
5. Frodo gains his \_\_\_\_\_ and finds a \_\_\_\_\_ in life (finishes Bilbo's book, moves with the elves); strengthens \_\_\_\_\_ with hobbits and other creatures

**What quest examples can you think of? Remember, "The real reason for a quest is always self-knowledge" (p. 3).**

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 2 NOTES

### Nice to Eat With You: Acts of Communion

Whenever people \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ together, it's \_\_\_\_\_." (8)

Use this space to record notes from the YouTube video

**Read the excerpt from Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*.**

At the beginning of the meal, how is this an act of communion?

What kinds of walls are being broken down, particularly if you've read the book and are familiar with the stigma of the Cunningham family?

How does Scout break up this communion, and what lesson does Calpurnia try to teach her in the kitchen?

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 3 NOTES

### Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires

“Ghosts and vampires are never \_\_\_\_\_ about ghosts and vampires” (18).

“In those works that continue to \_\_\_\_\_ us, however, the figure of the \_\_\_\_\_, the vampire, the succubus, the \_\_\_\_\_ announces itself again and again where someone grows in \_\_\_\_\_ by weakening someone else” (22).

• Consider how the “\_\_\_\_\_” archetype functions in the following books and movies, despite the lack of \_\_\_\_\_ vampires or ghosts

#### Books

- *The Scarlet Letter*
- *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*
- *Othello*
- *Lord of the Rings*
- *A Series of Unfortunate Events*

#### Movies

- *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith*
- *Rain Man*
- *The Help*
- *Tangled*

**What other examples of books and movies can you think of?**

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 4 NOTES

### Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?

“There’s no such thing as a wholly \_\_\_\_\_ work of literature” (24).

References can be to literature or history, for Foster says, “\_\_\_\_\_ is a story, too” (27).

\_\_\_\_\_ : the ongoing interaction between poems or stories.

“The more we become aware of the possibility that our \_\_\_\_\_ is speaking to other texts, the more similarities and correspondences we begin to notice, and the more \_\_\_\_\_ the text becomes” (29).

Intertextuality is a broad term which includes \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and directly \_\_\_\_\_ other people or characters.

Looking for literary \_\_\_\_\_ and intertextual references can sometimes lead a reader down the rabbit hole, so don’t become too \_\_\_\_\_ with them.

The \_\_\_\_\_ ones aren’t hard to find.

Many great and long-standing works are used constantly, including \_\_\_\_\_ plays, references to The \_\_\_\_\_, and Homer’s The \_\_\_\_\_.

### Finding Allusions in Textual Excerpts

Take a look at three different textual references in the handout. One is the original text from Genesis of Cain and Abel.

The second two are from *Beowulf* and *East of Eden*.

**What examples of intertextuality can you find?**

**Were these references difficult or easy to spot?**

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 5 NOTES

### When In Doubt, It's From Shakespeare

“You’ll be \_\_\_\_\_ by the dominance of the \_\_\_\_\_. He’s everywhere, in every \_\_\_\_\_ form you can think of” (33).

Referencing Shakespearean words, plots, or characters not only lends a text some credibility, but it is almost like building on a \_\_\_\_\_ text or myth. Shakespeare is so entrenched in our \_\_\_\_\_ identity of literature that he is hard not to connect to. That is why he connects to many different novels, plays, movies, songs, poems, etc.

“Name another \_\_\_\_\_ to whom high schoolers are subjected in each of four years” (37). This Ted Talk from Christopher Gaze explains Shakespeare’s lasting influence even 400 years after his death.

Notes from the Ted Talk:

Can you name the Shakespearean work that connects to these modern titles?

- *The Lion King*
- *West Side Story*
- *House of Cards*
- *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*
- *She’s the Man*
- *10 Things I Hate About You*
- *Kiss Me Kate*
- *Forbidden Planet*
- “Sigh No More” by Mumford & Sons
- *House*

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 6 NOTES

### ...Or the Bible

The Bible contains hundreds of \_\_\_\_\_, storylines, and literary devices rich with \_\_\_\_\_. Writers, both Christian and non-Christian, recognize that potential and allude to or \_\_\_\_\_ the Bible frequently.

Foster says that adding references to the Bible add \_\_\_\_\_ to the story, using the example from James Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues." By adding biblical elements, "the story ceases to be locked in the middle of the \_\_\_\_\_ century and becomes timeless and \_\_\_\_\_, speaking of the tensions and difficulties that exist always and everywhere between \_\_\_\_\_, with all their caring and pain and guilt and pride and love. And that story never grows \_\_\_\_\_" (51).

Many people are more familiar with the Bible than they think, even those who have never \_\_\_\_\_ it at all.

**Consider these Bible stories that are commonly alluded to. Are you familiar with them?**

#### Old Testament

- The Creation story (Adam & Eve, Forbidden Fruit, serpent as a symbol, etc.)
- Cain and Abel
- Noah's Ark
- Tower of Babel
- Lot and his wife (Sodom and Gomorrah)
- Abraham and Isaac
- David & Goliath
- The story of Job

#### New Testament

- Jesus' birth (virgin birth, the wise men, Jesus born in a manger, etc.)
- Parables: The Good Samaritan, The Prodigal Son, The Parable of the Mustard Seed, etc.)
- Jesus' miracles (feeding 5000, water into wine, walking on water, etc.)
- Jesus' betrayal, crucifixion, and resurrection
- Revelations (four horsemen of the apocalypse, etc.)

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTERS 7-8 NOTES

### Hanseldee and Greteldum

This chapter explains that many tales are inspired or influenced by common \_\_\_\_\_ stories and \_\_\_\_\_ tales from our upbringing.

Foster suggests taking a classic fairy tale as a \_\_\_\_\_ for a story and changing enough \_\_\_\_\_ that it becomes new.

“We’re not trying to re-\_\_\_\_\_ the fairy tale here. Rather, we’re trying to make use of \_\_\_\_\_ or patterns, portions of some prior story...to add \_\_\_\_\_ and texture to your story, to bring out a \_\_\_\_\_, to lend irony to a statement, to play with readers’ \_\_\_\_\_ ingrained knowledge of fairy tales” (56-57).

### It's Greek to Me

“Myth is a \_\_\_\_\_ of story that \_\_\_\_\_.”

This chapter concludes a 4 chapter \_\_\_\_\_ explaining the top four sources for literary \_\_\_\_\_ and symbols:

- 
- 
- 
- 

### Webquest: Theseus and the Minotaur

Many stories are based on myths that people don’t even know about anymore, but the storylines are still there. Foster says, “There is, in fact, no form of \_\_\_\_\_ family or personal denigration of character for which there is not a Greek or Roman \_\_\_\_\_” (67).

In small groups or individually, research the story of Theseus and the Minotaur.

There are several variations of this myth, although Plutarch’s text is probably the most respected (and one of the longest!)

Summarize what happens in the story, and compare the parts where the details changed, depending on the source of your myth.

Afterwards, consider: what story (or maybe what movie) does this myth remind you of...?

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 9 NOTES

### It's More Than Just Rain or Snow

Foster says that a story's weather contains potential for thematic or symbolic interpretations. "It's never just rain" (70).

Consider the following movie scenes and the symbolic meaning that the weather could have:

#### ***The Notebook* (2004)**

Noah and Allie were childhood sweethearts. When Allie went away to college her mother stole Noah's letters to her, causing them to drift apart without explanation. When Allie confronts him about it, years

later, he finally tells her that he wrote her every day for a year, without one letter in return. Right before this scene he says, "It wasn't over. It's still not over."

What does the rain add to the story?



#### ***Singin' in the Rain* (1952)**

Don and Kathy stay up all night concocting a plan to save his latest movie, with Kathy's help. As he walks her home in the early hours of the morning, they exchange their first kiss. On his way back to his house, he begins singing and tap dancing in the pouring rain, embracing it rather than using his umbrella.

What does the rain add to the story?

#### ***The Lion King* (1994)**

Simba returns from a years-long exile after the death of his father. He grapples in a violent battle with his uncle, who killed the former king, and finally reclaims the throne. During this fight, the kingdom is burning from a lightning storm, until a torrential rain puts out the flames. Soaking wet, Simba mounts Pride Rock and lets out a triumphant roar.

What does the rain add to the story?



# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 9 NOTES

### It's More Than Just Rain or Snow

#### *Forrest Gump* (1994)

When Forrest is serving in Vietnam, he says, “One day it started raining. And it didn’t stop for four months.” He describes walking, crawling, and sleeping through the rain. As they walk through a field, the rain suddenly stops, leaving the men in awe. Immediately, they all

take fire from the Vietcong, and many die because of this battle.

What does the rain add to the story?



#### Other weather meanings

**Rain:** Rain can be used to cleanse a character, make someone \_\_\_\_\_ or depict misery, or act in a \_\_\_\_\_ way to indicate growth or change.

**Rainbows:** The rainbow was a symbol of a \_\_\_\_\_ from God to Noah in Genesis, and it still stands as a symbol of \_\_\_\_\_ in literature.

**Fog:** Fog is used to indicate \_\_\_\_\_ or to add an atmosphere of anxiety or \_\_\_\_\_.

**Snow:** Foster says, “You can do just about \_\_\_\_\_ with snow.”

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 10 NOTES

### Never Stand Next to the Hero

This chapter explains the purpose of \_\_\_\_\_ characters, especially those close to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the story.

While the hero cannot \_\_\_\_\_ in the middle of the story, many times the writer will kill off the hero's \_\_\_\_\_ so that the hero can develop further. "The plot needs something to happen in order to move forward, so someone must be \_\_\_\_\_."

#### Examples of Doomed Sidekicks

*The Hunger Games* – Rue

*The Iliad* – Patroclus

*Top Gun* – Goose

*Captain America* – Bucky

*Gilgamesh* – Enkidu

*Romeo and Juliet* – Mercutio

#### ***Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead***

The other part of this chapter focuses on the fact that \_\_\_\_\_ are not \_\_\_\_\_.

If you haven't heard of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, it discusses this \_\_\_\_\_ at length.

This play contains strong themes of \_\_\_\_\_, which discusses a person's existence in relation to \_\_\_\_\_. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern struggle when they learn that their existence is completely \_\_\_\_\_ on the main character of their story, and they are not \_\_\_\_\_, their \_\_\_\_\_ is not in their own hands. They have no free will.

Read the excerpt from this play. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have been hired by King \_\_\_\_\_ to spy on Hamlet and report his doings. They are discussing their strategies for next actions, in order to remain \_\_\_\_\_ to Hamlet.

What lines indicate that this is more than just spying, but a statement on their purpose in the play, and in life? Discuss what lines could be studied under an existentialist lens.

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## INTERLUDE & CHAPTER 11 NOTES

### Interlude: Does He Mean That?

Foster's interludes serve as small \_\_\_\_\_ between his main points to address questions the readers may be thinking, or to remind the reader of the \_\_\_\_\_ point of the book.

Here he addresses the age-old \_\_\_\_\_, that literature professors invent symbols, \_\_\_\_\_, and other literary devices that the writer could not possibly have intended.

While it may be true that not everything is \_\_\_\_\_, most of it likely is.

Foster reminds you that \_\_\_\_\_ are smart and well-read.

He also says, "We readers sometimes forget how long literary \_\_\_\_\_ can take and how very much \_\_\_\_\_ thinking can go on in that amount of time" (93).

### ...More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence

Violence in literature...while it is \_\_\_\_\_, is usually also something else" (95).

There are two categories of violence:

\_\_\_\_\_ violence: "The specific \_\_\_\_\_ that authors cause characters to visit on one another or on themselves, and the narrative violence that causes characters \_\_\_\_\_ in general" (96).

\_\_\_\_\_ violence: "The death and \_\_\_\_\_ authors introduce into their work in the interest of plot advancement or thematic \_\_\_\_\_ and for with they, not their characters, are \_\_\_\_\_" (97).

"\_\_\_\_\_ do happen in real life, of course. So do \_\_\_\_\_. But when they happen in \_\_\_\_\_ they're not really accidents" (102).

What acts of violence or suffering can you think of from literature, and what literary purpose do they serve?

Foster discusses *Beloved* many times in his book, but his analysis of its violence is probably the most profound.

Read the excerpts from *Beloved* and complete the discussion questions as a group. Record your notes here:

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 12 NOTES

### Is That a Symbol?

#### Allegory

Uses symbols that can only stand for one thing

1:1 ratio

**Example:** *Animal Farm* by George Orwell

- Napoleon = Stalin
- Snowball = Trotsky
- Boxer = Working class

#### Symbol

Uses symbols that are abstract and can have "a range of possible meanings and interpretations" (105).

1:? Ratio

**Example:** *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

The green light on Daisy's dock could symbolize:

- Gatsby's hopes
- Impossible dreams
- The will to keep trying
- The American Dream

#### Analyze the possible meanings behind the symbols in these movies

##### *Signs* (2002)

\_\_\_\_\_ have invaded earth and are attacking a family in their farmhouse.

The father, played by Mel Gibson, has been struggling with a loss of \_\_\_\_\_ after the death of his wife. Everyone has been telling him that \_\_\_\_\_ has a purpose, but he cannot find it.

They discover the alien's weakness is \_\_\_\_\_, and fortunately his daughter has a tendency to take one sip of water and leave \_\_\_\_\_ out everywhere.

Watch these scenes and discuss, what could water be a symbol for? Ask yourself, why something as simple as water?

##### *Inception* (2006)

Inception deals with \_\_\_\_\_ within dreams and it is easy to lose grip on \_\_\_\_\_.

Those who go in and out of reality each have a \_\_\_\_\_, which is explained in this clip. It helps them understand if they are currently in a dream or in \_\_\_\_\_.

The famous ending scene of Inception shows Cobb's spinning top—but we never see if it \_\_\_\_\_.

What could this totem symbolize beyond its explanation in this clip, particularly with the ending of the movie?

##### *Schindler's List* (1993)

This clip shows a little girl wandering the \_\_\_\_\_ as people are rounded up and even shot.

Her innocence captivates Schindler, and she visually arrests the viewers being the only object filmed in \_\_\_\_\_.

This moment changes him, and he begins hiring more \_\_\_\_\_ and actively working to save them from concentration camps.

At the end of the movie, Schindler sees the girl again in a heap of \_\_\_\_\_ bodies.

What does she symbolize, and why the color red?

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 13 NOTES

### It's All Political

“Writing that engages the \_\_\_\_\_ of its world—that thinks about human problems, including those in the social and political realm, that addresses the \_\_\_\_\_ of persons and the \_\_\_\_\_ of those in power—can be not only interesting but hugely \_\_\_\_\_” (117).

According to Foster’s application of the descriptor “\_\_\_\_\_,” any book dealing with a social issue can be considered “political.” By that measure, “nearly all writing is political on some \_\_\_\_\_” (118).

**Consider what political statement may be behind these classic tales:**

#### *Gulliver’s Travels*

Gulliver embarks on a voyage and winds up washed ashore on an island where everyone except Gulliver is six inches tall. His next stop is in a land where he is the tiny one and everyone is ten times his size. After that he travels to an island floating in the clouds, and finally to a land where horses rule and people are savage ape-like creatures.

#### **How could this be political?**

Many people do not realize it, but Jonathan Swift wrote *Gulliver’s Travels* as a work of \_\_\_\_\_ against the British government and its \_\_\_\_\_ of almost everything. He also criticizes \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and pretty much anyone and everyone else.

Each place he visits represents \_\_\_\_\_ in the way he sees them. For example, in Lilliput they are all \_\_\_\_\_, acting like vermin. Later, they are all huge like \_\_\_\_\_. When they float in the sky, they have their “\_\_\_\_\_.” And when they run about naked like animals, they are aptly named “\_\_\_\_\_.”

#### *Fahrenheit 451*

In a futuristic world, firemen are employed to burn books, not put out fires. Free speech is eliminated and everyone spends their free time tuned into government-controlled wall-sized televisions or chasing down pedestrians in their cars.

#### **How could this book be political?**

Ray Bradbury wrote this book in a time when the \_\_\_\_\_ was becoming a fixture in every \_\_\_\_\_ home.

He viewed the television as a \_\_\_\_\_ end to recreation and even a threat to the \_\_\_\_\_ unit. He envisioned a world where it could be used to control the population and breed violent and dangerous \_\_\_\_\_.

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTERS 13-14 NOTES

### It's All Political

#### ***The Road***

Cormac McCarthy's Pulitzer-Prize winning book tells a straightforward tale about a boy and his father struggling to survive in a post-apocalyptic world.

The landscape is smoking and the land is barren. Everyone is wary of each other and the world is dying and dangerous.

#### **How could this be political?**

McCarthy's novel avoids describing what led to the \_\_\_\_\_, but it's clear that \_\_\_\_\_ caused the destruction and are only making it \_\_\_\_\_.

The novel shows a lack of family \_\_\_\_\_ (except for the boy and his father) and many humans have lost all sense of \_\_\_\_\_.

The story inevitably makes the reader wonder if we truly \_\_\_\_\_ the planet we live on, and who we \_\_\_\_\_ it with.

### Yes, She's a Christ Figure Too

Foster points out that although not all texts have \_\_\_\_\_ undertones, most British and American works do, as they reflect cultures built on Christian \_\_\_\_\_.

The use of a Christ figure is a common literary technique to create a unique \_\_\_\_\_ type.

Remember, Christ figures do not need to possess all of \_\_\_\_\_ attributes, and they may possess a strange \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ's qualities. "No literary figure can ever be as \_\_\_\_\_, as perfect, as \_\_\_\_\_ as Jesus Christ" (129).

#### **Textual Excerpt—*Lord of the Flies***

Read the excerpt from William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.

This novel makes frequent use of \_\_\_\_\_, so it is a highly suggested read for AP students.

In this excerpt, what evidence can you find to support Simon as a Christ figure? Underline evidence as you find it.

Afterwards, discuss why Golding may employ Simon as a Christ figure in this text? How does his character differ from the other boys'?

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 15 NOTES

### Flights of Fancy

“In general, flying is \_\_\_\_\_, we might say, freedom not only from specific circumstances but from those more general \_\_\_\_\_ that tie us down. It’s escape, the flight of \_\_\_\_\_” (135). When a character flies in a \_\_\_\_\_ sense, that is obviously important. But any kind of \_\_\_\_\_ or even falling often carries significance as well. “As thrilled as we are by the \_\_\_\_\_ of flying, we are also frightened at the prospect of \_\_\_\_\_, and anything that seems to defy the inevitability of a plummeting demise sets our \_\_\_\_\_ working overtime” (139).

### Icarus

One of the most common tales of flight is the \_\_\_\_\_ of Dedalus and Icarus, as discussed in Foster’s book.

This chapter discussed two poems based on the fall of Icarus, by William Carlos Williams and W. H. Auden. Read these two poems, plus two more poems by James Hoch and Michael Hamburger.

As you read, examine this painting by Breughel, which reflects the myth and is directly correlated with more than one of these poems.

### Discussion Questions

Discuss the treatment of Icarus in each of the poems. How do others react? What scope does each poem include, and how far does it reach?

If you had to apply a theme to each poem, what would it be? Or, instead, what symbol does Icarus serve in each poem?

Go back to look at Foster’s claims about flight, and its correlation with falling. Why do so many writers gravitate to the story of Icarus in particular? How does flight and falling relate to the feelings of the universal human?

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTERS 16-17 NOTES

### It's All About Sex...

Foster's chapter explains that since \_\_\_\_\_ Interpretation of Dreams taught everyone about sexual meaning in every day images and in the \_\_\_\_\_, many writers use nonsexual images to \_\_\_\_\_ discuss sex.

"Critics and readers are learning that sexuality may be \_\_\_\_\_ in their reading, while writers are learning that they can encode sexuality into their \_\_\_\_\_" (144).

Because of \_\_\_\_\_ laws, many writers couldn't depict sex openly in their writing, so they had to \_\_\_\_\_ it as something else.

"Another reason is that scenes in which sex is coded rather than \_\_\_\_\_ can work at multiple levels and sometimes be more intense than literal depictions. Those multiple levels have \_\_\_\_\_ been to protect innocents" (149).

### ...Except Sex

As you read more \_\_\_\_\_ fiction, a mature content and adult themes will be included in more of your books. The key to being a mature reader and \_\_\_\_\_ of literature is learning how to filter this content and consider \_\_\_\_\_ the author is including it.

Foster says, "The \_\_\_\_\_ is that most of the time when writers deal with sex, they \_\_\_\_\_ writing about the act itself...The further truth is that when they write about sex, they're really writing about \_\_\_\_\_ else" (152).

There are two \_\_\_\_\_ works of literature that portray sex scenes, and both have been heavily \_\_\_\_\_ because of it.

### Two Banned Books About Sex

#### *Lolita*

Lolita is told from the point of view of a pedophile who falls in love with the 12-year-old \_\_\_\_\_ of a female friend, whom he \_\_\_\_\_ to remain close to.

The \_\_\_\_\_ slowly begins a pattern of sexual abuse on the girl, whom he nicknames \_\_\_\_\_, who reveals she has already experienced sex at the age of 11. As the two begin their \_\_\_\_\_, it becomes clearer to the reader that Lolita, really named Delores, is making decisions based on fear and misplaced \_\_\_\_\_ because of her early experiences with sex and sexual \_\_\_\_\_.

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 17 NOTES

### ...Except Sex

#### The Literary Merit

Lolita was \_\_\_\_\_ almost everywhere and labeled as “\_\_\_\_\_.”

While it depicts little actual descriptions of sex, the pedophilia and sexual abuse is obviously disturbing \_\_\_\_\_ for a reader.

When asked about his \_\_\_\_\_ for the novel, Nabokov claimed that he read an article about an \_\_\_\_\_ being studied for research. After months of training and coaxing from scientists, the ape produced the first \_\_\_\_\_ drawing done by an animal.

The drawing was of the \_\_\_\_\_ on the ape’s \_\_\_\_\_.

This shows that Nabokov is not trying to share a \_\_\_\_\_ tale about sex, but discuss the results of \_\_\_\_\_ abuse on an unprepared young girl.

#### Lady Chatterley’s Lover

Lady Chatterley’s Lover depicts the life of Constance Reid, whose \_\_\_\_\_ suffered a spinal injury during the Great War. This injury also creates a rift in their \_\_\_\_\_, leaving Constance both physically and emotionally \_\_\_\_\_.

Constance begins an affair with a \_\_\_\_\_ named Oliver Mellors, making her realize that marriage should have both a mental and physical \_\_\_\_\_.

#### The Literary Merit

While this book does \_\_\_\_\_ several more sexual scenes than Lolita, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* was banned more for its use of strong \_\_\_\_\_.

This book is ahead of its time and arguably a \_\_\_\_\_ text, exploring the physical needs of women, a rather \_\_\_\_\_ topic considering its publication in 1929, and still in \_\_\_\_\_ during its famous trial.

It also heavily explores themes of class \_\_\_\_\_, since Constance was upper class and her lover is of the \_\_\_\_\_ class.

D. H. Lawrence, a prudish fellow as Foster describes him, explains that it was a difficult but \_\_\_\_\_ story for him to tell.

*“It’s what the world would call very improper. But you know it’s not really improper—I always labour at the same thing, to make the sex relation valid and precious, instead of shameful. And this novel is the furthest I’ve gone. To me it is beautiful and tender and frail as the naked self is, and I shrink very much even from having it typed. Probably the typist would interfere.”*

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTERS 18-19 NOTES

### If She Comes Up, It's Baptism

Foster lays out several \_\_\_\_\_ for finding instances of symbolic baptism in texts:

The character has to go through some kind of \_\_\_\_\_, where their lives alter drastically

The character's \_\_\_\_\_ or even drowning should include some element of \_\_\_\_\_—characters do not get baptized on \_\_\_\_\_

Along the same lines, the character must be \_\_\_\_\_ to undergo a change.

While instances of baptism all serve the same \_\_\_\_\_ (to evoke character change), instances of \_\_\_\_\_ are equally significant but mean many different things. Foster says, “The rebirths/baptisms have a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ threads, but every \_\_\_\_\_ is serving its own purpose: character revelation, thematic development of violence or failure or guilt, plot complication or denouement” (169).

### ***The Shawshank Redemption* (1994)**

One of the best symbolic baptism scenes in film is Andy's \_\_\_\_\_ at the end of *The Shawshank Redemption*.

This clip details how Andy escaped, but if you haven't seen the movie, the context is important too.

Andy was being \_\_\_\_\_ to launder dirty money into the prison to pay the warden, and any reward of parole or release was \_\_\_\_\_ to him.

Furthermore, Andy's escape happened after serving \_\_\_\_\_ years in prison. He worked on his tunnel for almost \_\_\_\_\_ years.

After his \_\_\_\_\_, Andy collects the warden's stolen money and drives to Mexico. It is also worth noting that Andy never committed the \_\_\_\_\_ that he was serving time for, so to collect the stolen money seems almost like a deserved \_\_\_\_\_ for 20 years of false imprisonment.

### Geography Matters...

“Geography is \_\_\_\_\_, but it's also (or can be) \_\_\_\_\_, attitude, \_\_\_\_\_, industry—anything that place can \_\_\_\_\_ in the people who live there. Geography in literature can also be more. It can be revelatory of virtually any \_\_\_\_\_ in the work. \_\_\_\_\_? Sure. Symbol? No problem. \_\_\_\_\_? Without a doubt” (174).

Basically, the geography described in the story makes up the \_\_\_\_\_ of the work, representing the \_\_\_\_\_ of the characters and the nature of the story you will encounter. It can be one of the most important, and most \_\_\_\_\_, elements in a story.

Foster's plethora of examples also explain the \_\_\_\_\_ for understanding when you know a bit about the writer's hometown. For example, Seamus Heaney, William Wordsworth, and Theodore Roethke all wrote magnificent \_\_\_\_\_, which are expressive of their \_\_\_\_\_. By knowing this, we understand what \_\_\_\_\_ the speaker there in the first place.

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 19 NOTES

### Geography Matters...

#### Going South

Foster continues, saying there is a noted \_\_\_\_\_ among characters who move \_\_\_\_\_.  
“When writers send characters south, it’s so they can run \_\_\_\_\_...We might add, if we’re being generous, that they run amok because they are having direct, raw encounters with the \_\_\_\_\_” (179).

Some titles that prove this tendency include:

#### Textual Excerpt – *In the Lake of the Woods*

Read the excerpt of the first two pages of Tim O’Brien’s *In the Lake of the Woods*.

Try to piece the plot and story together based on this information alone.

When reading this, use the geography details to build information about the setting.

#### Context and Details

These pages present John Wade and his wife Kathy as they find solitude in a rented cabin in \_\_\_\_\_ northernmost point, Lake of the Woods.

John recently lost the election running for \_\_\_\_\_ after details from his time spent in the \_\_\_\_\_ War came to light, particularly his involvement in the My Lai \_\_\_\_\_.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of this book follows various hypotheses on what happened to \_\_\_\_\_, as she disappears days after the events in these pages. Some \_\_\_\_\_ include Kathy running off with a lover, her \_\_\_\_\_ in the lakes and bogs around their cabin, or John \_\_\_\_\_ her and hiding her body.

#### Use the Geography to find MORE

Reread the excerpt, using the context and background details to find more evidence and literary analysis.

How does the description of the lake and surrounding area of the cabin reflect the couple’s marriage?

Knowing the fate of Kathy, what evidence of foreshadowing can you find in the geography?

Can you use any of the tips from the chapter on rain and weather to help you build theme and find symbols?

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 20 & INTERLUDE NOTES

### ...So Does Season

Foster explains that writers have attached \_\_\_\_\_ meanings to the temperate change of seasons since the time of \_\_\_\_\_ myths.

There is no origin for this understood metaphor, but it is “\_\_\_\_\_” into our brains as readers.

In general, the symbolic meanings behind seasons are:

- Spring:
- Summer:
- Autumn:
- Winter:

### Seasons in Songs and Poetry

You may have thought Foster was exaggerating about how \_\_\_\_\_ match up with themes.

There are \_\_\_\_\_ of poems and songs alone that prove this to be true.

Read the poems included in the handout. How do the expressed feelings match with the season?

What other poems and songs can you think of that relate to seasons?

What about books, television, and film?

### ...So Does Season

#### There's Only One Story

Foster's claim may ruffle some feathers, but he is essentially saying that all stories \_\_\_\_\_ and echo one another.

We have been story-telling for as long as we could \_\_\_\_\_, and it has been written down for \_\_\_\_\_ years. Frankly, every trick has been used, in some capacity.

However, this does not take away the joy of \_\_\_\_\_. Instead, by reading more and more, we find \_\_\_\_\_ to other works we've read, adding layers and \_\_\_\_\_ to literature.

“The work actually acquires \_\_\_\_\_ and resonance from the echoes and chimes it sets up with \_\_\_\_\_ texts, weight from the accumulated use of certain basic patterns and tendencies” (195).

Write the transition sequence shown and consider if you would be able to make one for what you have read.

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 21

### Marked For Greatness

To make a list of characters who are “\_\_\_\_\_,” either physically or mentally, would be \_\_\_\_\_.

Foster says, “...in literature we continue to understand \_\_\_\_\_ imperfection in symbolic terms. It has to do with being different, really. Sameness doesn’t present us with \_\_\_\_\_ possibilities, whereas difference—from the \_\_\_\_\_, the typical, the expected—is always \_\_\_\_\_ with possibility” (202).

Encountering a character with a physical marking is like the \_\_\_\_\_ signaling you to pay attention to this character. “Physical markings by their very nature \_\_\_\_\_ attention to themselves and signify some \_\_\_\_\_ or thematic point the writer wants to make” (208).

What physically marked characters are included in the slides, and what others can you think of?

### Close Reading – *Frankenstein*

Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* uses the concept of \_\_\_\_\_ markings in a brilliant way.

The creature, although physically \_\_\_\_\_, does not feel hideous inside. Instead, he learns his \_\_\_\_\_ from men, just as he learns his capacity for \_\_\_\_\_.

Victor Frankenstein, despite being completely \_\_\_\_\_-looking on the outside, has an ambition inside him that cannot be stopped. It causes him to create the \_\_\_\_\_, without proper forethought to the ramifications of his \_\_\_\_\_.

The first excerpt is from the point of view of Victor Frankenstein after he succeeds in his experiment. How does the creature’s physical exterior cloud Victor’s judgment of him?

The second excerpts are from the point of view of the creature as he survives in the woods. How does the creature’s knowledge of his own deformities affect his sense of self-worth?

The juxtaposition of the creature versus Victor makes you question what does make a person monstrous, his exterior or his actions? After reading both of these, which character do you sympathize with and why?

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 22

### He's Blind For a Reason, You Know

When a \_\_\_\_\_ character is introduced, you as a reader need to take notice. Blind characters are almost never included by \_\_\_\_\_ and usually play a symbolic or thematic \_\_\_\_\_ in a story.

“...the author has created a minor constellation of \_\_\_\_\_ for himself by introducing a blind character into the work, so something important must be at stake when blindness pops up in a story. Clearly the author wants to \_\_\_\_\_ other levels of \_\_\_\_\_ and blindness beyond the physical” (210).

Nearly every time a blind character is included in a story, he or she \_\_\_\_\_ sight in some other symbolic way, or leads others despite his or her disability.

### Maurie-Laure in *All the Light We Cannot See*

Maurie-Laure Blanc is an \_\_\_\_\_-year-old blind girl who lives with her father on the fortified town of Saint-Malo in \_\_\_\_\_.

To help her \_\_\_\_\_ through the city, her father makes intricate \_\_\_\_\_ of the town they live in. Maure-Laure \_\_\_\_\_ these with her hands and she learns to walk the streets alone, \_\_\_\_\_.

While her father \_\_\_\_\_ her, Maurie-Laure relies on him and his resources to survive. After he is taken \_\_\_\_\_ in World War II, she must rely on her fortitude and tremendous courage to find her way to safety, and becomes a \_\_\_\_\_ of hope to others.

### Isaac in *The Fault in Our Stars*

Isaac is a friend of Augustus and Hazel and is similar to them as a victim of \_\_\_\_\_.

Issac, who has lost one \_\_\_\_\_ to cancer already, gets cancer in his other eye, resulting in a clean bill of health but full \_\_\_\_\_.

While he could see, he was extremely obsessed with his voluptuous girlfriend, \_\_\_\_\_. The two annoyed others by constantly promising to always stay together.

After he loses his vision, Monica \_\_\_\_\_ him. While he loses his physical sight, he learns the truth about Monica's shallow nature and grows in \_\_\_\_\_ as a character.

### Helen Keller in *The Miracle Worker*

Based on Helen Keller's own \_\_\_\_\_, this story depicts her difficult childhood and miraculous transformation in the hands of a good \_\_\_\_\_.

Born blind and deaf, Helen's parents did little to attempt to \_\_\_\_\_ her communication. They also gave no discipline, and by six years old she was a completely \_\_\_\_\_ child.

Anne Sullivan, her \_\_\_\_\_, took control of her upbringing and finally taught her how to communicate through \_\_\_\_\_ signals.

Helen and Anne's struggle is gritty and \_\_\_\_\_, showing Helen's lack of hope and Anne's refusal to give up. Helen's ability to communicate, however, completely \_\_\_\_\_ her life and demeanor.

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 23

### It's Never Just Heart Disease...And Rarely Just Illness

The first part of the chapter emphasizes that \_\_\_\_\_ is often used in literature because of its metaphorical potential.

"In literature there is no better, no more lyrical, no more perfectly \_\_\_\_\_ illness than heart disease" (216).

Foster explains that because of the \_\_\_\_\_ associated meanings, it can be used in many ways. These include, "bad love, \_\_\_\_\_, cruelty, pederasty, \_\_\_\_\_, cowardice, lack of \_\_\_\_\_. Socially, it may stand for these matters on a larger scale, or for something seriously \_\_\_\_\_ at the heart of things" (217).

#### Tuberculosis

Foster's examples about heart disease are extremely thorough, but there may be even more examples of \_\_\_\_\_ appearing in literature.

Sometimes referred to as the white plague or the "\_\_\_\_\_", tuberculosis had a \_\_\_\_\_, romantic quality because of its eerily beautiful physical symptoms as the victim \_\_\_\_\_.

To learn more about authors affected by tuberculosis, I recommend reading about \_\_\_\_\_ (who lost his mother and wife to the disease) and poor \_\_\_\_\_.

Keats was an incredibly talented \_\_\_\_\_ poet, who seemed genuinely in love with his fiancé, Fanny Brawne. Unfortunately, he died at the young age of \_\_\_\_\_, before he was able to marry. Many of his best poems were written in the \_\_\_\_\_ years of his life, as he faced his own impending \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Close Reading – *Les Misérables*

· Remember Foster's principles on incorporating disease in literature as you read the excerpt from *Les Misérables*. This excerpt meets all of the standards:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Foster says, "when a writer employs TB directly or indirectly, he's making a \_\_\_\_\_ about the victim of the disease" (225).

Read this excerpt and examine the suffering of Fantine in relation to her personal struggles at the end of her life. Consider what metaphorical purpose her tuberculosis serves.

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 24

### Don't Read With Your Eyes

The purpose behind this chapter is reminding you that most stories reflect the time periods and \_\_\_\_\_ they are written in. As time goes by, certain elements can become out of date, becoming a \_\_\_\_\_ for modern readers.

For example, in Kurt Vonnegut's "\_\_\_\_\_ " the parents' stop watching their son on television because the \_\_\_\_\_ in their tube TV burns out. As this was written in \_\_\_\_\_, all TVs required some element of a lightbulb to operate. Nowadays with the flat screen and so many non-television viewing options, this plot event can be \_\_\_\_\_. Foster reminds us we need to look past this and read it with the eyes of someone in 1961.

"We have to try to take the \_\_\_\_\_ as they were intended to be taken" (234).

### Close Reading – *The Taming of the Shrew*

In the case of stories that haven't necessarily "\_\_\_\_\_", Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* often comes to mind.

In this story, a wealthy man is looking for an opportunity to marry off his \_\_\_\_\_, unpleasant daughter so he can collect a large \_\_\_\_\_ on his younger, sought-after daughter. Katerina is married off to Petruchio, a drunken \_\_\_\_\_ who has recently inherited money from a relative and seeking a wife \_\_\_\_\_ for the sake of getting a dowry.

Katerina struggles with Petruchio, \_\_\_\_\_ at him and refusing to change her stubborn ways. So Petruchio sets out to "\_\_\_\_\_" her. He withholds food, claiming it is not \_\_\_\_\_ enough for her. He buys her fine clothes, then rips them up and calling them \_\_\_\_\_. He refuses to take her to her sister's \_\_\_\_\_ until she admits that he is right about everything, even when he is obviously wrong

At the end of the play, the story's three main \_\_\_\_\_ spend time at a wedding banquet. Petruchio is still being \_\_\_\_\_ for having a shrewish wife, but Katerina remains well-behaved.

The women retire to the next room, and the men make a \_\_\_\_\_ among themselves. Whoever's wife returns the \_\_\_\_\_ when bidden will win the wager.

When summoned to their husbands, the first two wives send the \_\_\_\_\_ back, refusing to come when called. But Katerina returns to Petruchio immediately, and drags the other two \_\_\_\_\_ along with her.

Examine her speech, given at the end of the play, and discuss if you think it contains any \_\_\_\_\_ for today's audience. Many readers, especially women, bristle at this play, and particular dislike Katerina's speech where she \_\_\_\_\_ her misogynistic husband.

What happens if you try to read like a citizen in Shakespeare's age? Does the text improve at all?

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 25

### It's My Symbol and I'll Cry If I Want To

While much of this book has been \_\_\_\_\_ to understanding common symbols, patterns, and devices in literature, this chapter is meant to remind you that not every writer follows these \_\_\_\_\_.

While there may be only one \_\_\_\_\_, writers are still producing new material and finding new ways to do so.

Foster says, "In a situation where we encounter purely \_\_\_\_\_ symbols, there are some things we can fall back on" (245).

### Unique Symbols on the AP Exams

In the 2018 AP Lit exam, students were buzzing and meme-ing for days after encountering a strange poem for the poetry question.

Olive Senior's poem "\_\_\_\_\_" expressed how plants are sneaky and can't be trusted. The tone seemed humorous, but it could also have been \_\_\_\_\_.

Students' interpretations went everywhere. Many called it feminist. Some knew that Olive Senior frequently wrote about imperialism, so they called the plants a metaphor for colonists. Some found Christ symbols. And no one could figure out the "right answer."

### Open to Interpretation

Olive Senior tweeted about her poem the following week, and users started to bombard her with questions about what her \_\_\_\_\_ means. Her response summed up exactly what Foster is trying to say, and the whole point behind the AP Lit exam.

Someone asked, "did the plants represent the white colonizers???"

She responded, "Not really. But in the poem plant activities are related to the human. So you can see parallels. Not everything in the poem is revealed to the \_\_\_\_\_. The best poems invite the readers in. Your own \_\_\_\_\_ is valid if you can support it with evidence from the poem."

### Tips for Solving a Difficult Symbol (248-149)

\_\_\_\_\_ – tap into your prior reading experience to think of any similar strategies you may have seen like this.

\_\_\_\_\_ – good writers need to drop some hints at deciphering difficult symbols, otherwise no one would get it. Study the context and go back to the beginning chapters if stumped.

\_\_\_\_\_ – You will always know someone who has read more than you. Trust in what you do know, and work hard to solve the problem rather than comparing yourself or giving up.

# HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR

## CHAPTER 26

### Is He Serious? And Other Ironies

This chapter is placed at the end and has a bolded phrase that means it is one of the most important concepts: \_\_\_\_\_.

This means if you find a symbolic meaning to the \_\_\_\_\_, based on what we learned about weather, but the weather is being used \_\_\_\_\_, that first meaning is eliminated. The \_\_\_\_\_ meaning is always the intended meaning.

Foster's broad definition is excellent. He says, "irony works because the audience understands \_\_\_\_\_ that eludes one or more of the characters" (257).

"Irony works because the \_\_\_\_\_ understands something that \_\_\_\_\_ one or more of the characters" (257).

**Verbal Irony** – When at \_\_\_\_\_ is made that implies the \_\_\_\_\_ of what it means.

The implied meaning is often lost on other characters and is rarely \_\_\_\_\_. You will need to find it yourself!

**Dramatic Irony** - When the reader or audience \_\_\_\_\_ something that the \_\_\_\_\_ do not.

**Situational Irony** – When the reader is led to \_\_\_\_\_ one thing to happen, but the \_\_\_\_\_ happens instead, upending our expectations.

In this case, the meaning may elude all of the characters, or even the reader until the end of the work.

### Close Reading – *The Princess Bride*

- Read the excerpt from William Golding's *The Princess Bride*. (I suggest reading it aloud!)
- Afterward, discuss the \_\_\_\_\_ expectations for the reader in regards to the battle of \_\_\_\_\_ and the iocane powder.
- How does this excerpt show irony and overturn our expectations? Did Westley cheat, or did he truly win the battle of wits?