SY 2026-2027 Summer Assignment

AP Literature and Composition:

Welcome to AP Literature and Composition. I am so excited to have you in my class this school year and I look forward to helping you grow, learn, and achieve your fullest potential! The summer assignment with explicit instructions is below. You will submit the assignment on the first day of the school year so please work diligently this summer to complete it and ensure you can submit it on time. Have a great, restful, and productive summer!

During the first week of school, all students will be required to complete a writing task based on the assigned novel for the summer assignment.

Directions: You will read Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison for the summer assignment and complete the guided reading questions as you read the novel. The guided reading questions are meant to help guide your thoughts, provide context, and help you to understand the meaning of the novel.

Please note: *Turnitin will be utilized to check both submissions for the discussion questions and the essay. Plagiarism of any kind including the use of AI will not be tolerated or accepted and will result in a zero for the assignment.*

Guided Reading Questions: Each response should effectively and sufficiently respond to all questions based on the corresponding chapters. To effectively respond to the questions, **your responses MUST be in complete sentences only.** Please refrain from writing responses in incomplete sentences or 'bullet point' format.

Chapter 1: Battle Royal

1. How does the "battle royal" scene function as a ritual of power and dehumanization?
2. How does Ellison use irony and characterization to highlight the tension between the narrator's aspirations and the expectations imposed upon him by the white audience?

Chapters 2-6: College and Dr. Bledsoe

3. Analyze the narrator's relationship with Dr. Bledsoe. How does Bledsoe embody a complex form of authority, and what does his philosophy reveal about assimilation, power, and self-preservation?
4. In the episode with Mr. Norton and Jim Trueblood, how does Ellison complicate moral judgment and social perception? (**Discuss how narrative perspective shapes the reader's understanding of "respectability."*)
5. How does the Golden Day scene function as both chaos and revelation? (*Evaluate its role as a microcosm of society and its symbolic significance in the narrator's development.)*

Chapters 7-11: Expulsion and Journey North

6. How do the letters of recommendation function as instruments of deception and control in the narrator's journey north?
7. In the Liberty Paints factory, how does the slogan "Optic White" operate symbolically? Analyze how Ellison uses the factory and its processes to critique constructions of racial purity and identity.
8. Consider the narrator's hospitalization after the factory explosion. How does Ellison use imagery and dialogue to depict the dehumanization of the narrator and his struggle for self-definition?

Chapters 12-18: Brotherhood and Harlem

9. How does the Brotherhood initially appeal to the narrator's ideals? *(Analyze how language and ideology shape his sense of purpose and belonging.)*
10. Evaluate the role of public speaking in the narrator's development. How does his voice evolve, and what does this suggest about authenticity versus performance?
11. Analyze the character of Tod Clifton. How does his trajectory—from Brotherhood leader to street vendor—serve as a critique of political movements and representational identity?

Chapters 19-23: Disillusionment and Fragmentation

12. Discuss the significance of the Sambo doll performance. How does Ellison use this image to explore themes of manipulation and internalized stereotypes?
13. How does the Brotherhood's shift in priorities reflect broader themes of ideological control and individual erasure? *(Analyze how the narrator's perspective changes as he recognizes these shifts.)*

Chapter 24 to Epilogue

14. In the Harlem riot, how does Ellison use chaos, fire imagery, and shifting perspectives to represent both destruction and revelation?

15. In the Epilogue, how does the narrator reassess his journey and his concept of invisibility? (*Analyze the implications of his decision to remain underground versus re-engage with society.)*