

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) ENGLISH LITERATURE
SUMMER READING REQUIREMENTS Revised 5/09

Wilmington Christian School
Mrs. Sherrie Gumienny, Instructor

Dear Student - Advanced Placement English is a rigorous and rewarding class that prepares high-level students to take the English Literature Advanced Placement College Board exam with confidence. The practical goal of this *college level* course is for students to “skip” a college English course, providing the economic advantage of earning college credits while still in high school. The even greater advantages of this experience, however, are the invaluable skills acquired in critical analysis while maintaining a careful balance of Christian discernment.

In AP English we will dissect modern and classic literary masterworks from various genres and explore the themes and issues these works bring to light. What will emerge is a WCS student ready to engage his or her culture for Christ with intelligence, energy, and insight.

It all starts with summer reading.

As our course deals heavily with literary analysis and advanced essay writing, the **AP Summer Reading** assignments will give you the opportunity to kick-start your best analytical skills. Because these authors and their works appear regularly on suggested College Board AP reading lists, we know they will greatly enhance your preparation for the course and the exam. They also happen to be great “reads”!

NOTE: You will receive your copies of these texts before you leave for summer break or you may purchase these on your own; however, these *specific* editions are required so that we will all *literally* be on the same page for ease in class discussions and continuity in classroom seminar discussions, which will commence with the first day of school. [If you already own any or all of these *specific editions* and are prepared to write in them, you will receive a discount from your course fee.]

1. [Due 1st day of school with essay #1] Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (African Writers Series paperback). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996.

2. [Due 1st day of school with essay #1] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Norton Critical Edition Paperback 4th Edition). New York: W.W. Norton, 2005.

3. [Due Fri., 9/25 with essay #2] F. Scott Fitzgerald, **The Great Gatsby* (Scribner Paperback Edition). New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.

[NOTE: *Yes, you've read *Gatsby* before, but never as a 12th grade AP student. You are a different person now - more insightful and mature. You will “see” things this time around that you did not the first time. Furthermore, what defines “great” literature from “pop” literature is that it does not yield all its treasures the first time through; therefore, it demands a re-read! ©]

GRADE ASSESSMENT FOR SUMMER READING

Summer Reading work will count as 3 test grades and 2 quiz grades. Your book annotations will each count as a test grade (see sample rubric at end of this handout), and the essays will be each be a quiz grade.

BOOK ANNOTATIONS:

Each novel will be GRADED as to your notations throughout. The following account from *How to Read a Book* explains the process:

If you have the habit of asking a book questions as you read, you are a better reader than if you do not. But . . . merely asking questions is not enough. You have to try to answer them. And although that could be done, theoretically, in your mind only, it is easier to do it with a pencil in your hand. The pencil then becomes the sign of your alertness while you read.

When you buy a book, you establish a property right in it, just as you do in clothes or furniture when you buy and pay for them. But the act of purchase is actually only the prelude to possession in the case of a book. Full ownership of a book only comes when you have made it a part of yourself, and the best way to make yourself a part of it -- which comes to the same thing -- is by writing in it. Why is marking a book indispensable to reading it?

- *First, it keeps you awake -- not merely conscious, but wide awake.*
- *Second, reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The person who says he knows what he thinks but cannot express it usually does not know what he thinks.*
- *Third, writing your reactions down helps you to remember the thoughts of the author.*

-Mortimer Adler & Charles Van Doren

For these reasons among others (namely, this is a crucial skill for college courses), you are to annotate. Your copies of the novels will be collected the first day of class and then graded according to frequency and depth of annotations. "How do I annotate?" Glad you asked!

HOW TO ANNOTATE

For the sake of standardization and for grading purposes, your book notes should follow this format:

Inside Front Cover (*Or insert long post-its if you feel you need more space): Create a character list as you read along. *Next to each name insert adjectives or short phrases to describe each major character and "significant" minor character - NOT long, involved sentences.* [Ex. *Hamlet* – heir to throne of Denmark - moody, grief-stricken, procrastinates killing uncle, loyal & witty, humble (talks with commoners as if on same level)]

Inside Back Cover (*Same idea as above): Create a list of *motifs* (recurring images such as blood, hearts, the color yellow, etc.), *theme statements* (These are always written in complete sentences such as "Life is unpredictable."), *epiphanies* ("Ah ha!" moments – "We can *never* really 'go home' again" – pg. 47."), *author's stylistic devices* (such as – "uses short, choppy sentences" or "talks to readers"), etc. List and add page references - adding to these notes as you read.

Bottom and Side Page Margins: Interpretive notes, questions you have, or remarks that relate to some occurrence on that page. "Talk back" to the author or characters ☺ [Ex. *Gatsby's* trying to "fix" the past - is that possible?!] Also, add notes to tie in with information on the inside back cover. [Examples: *Motif of time* OR *Theme* – We rarely take time to really notice how precious our loved ones are till they are taken from us.]

Top Margins: Plot notes -- words or short phrases that summarize key events that occur on those pages. [Ex. *Hamlet* learns uncle murdered his father!]

***Not every page needs to be marked, but you should have a combined mix (bottom/side/top of page) of 8-10 notations per chapter.**

SAMPLE ANNOTATIONS: Insightful entries on a page of *The Great Gatsby* might look like this:

- ✓ **Next to this highlighted quote:** “And I like large parties. They’re so intimate. At small parties there isn’t any privacy.” *Fitzgerald really nails dialogue of rich and empty people.*
- ✓ **Written in sidemargin:** *Irony* – “large parties” being “intimate”!
- ✓ **Written in bottom margin:** *Theme* - We can “hide” in crowds, but in small groups we are “exposed.” *Jordan is so shallow - doesn’t want her sorry self revealed! **

[*Remember – If you had 3 entries on this page, you’d need at least 7 more entries written for other pages from this chapter. AND be sure all entries are READABLE.]

HAVE FUN. These are *your* reactions. You will use these notations to lead and/or participate in class "Seminar" discussions and to refer to for future essays. So, it is *very important* that you are thorough and insightful.

HERE’S HOW I’LL GRADE YOUR BOOK ANNOTATIONS

As explained in handout, grades are based on: thoroughness (*minimum 8-10 annotations per chapter, PLUS front/back cover notes*), depth of insight, AND readability.

100 A+

Wow! Superior Job

- ___ went above and beyond all requirements
- ___ thorough – all annotations in place
- ___ highly perceptive - interacted with text on personal level
- ___ presented all material in neat, readable fashion

95 A

Excellent Job

- ___ completed all required annotations
- ___ thorough – all annotations in place
- ___ insightful – interacted with text throughout
- ___ presented material in neat, readable fashion

88 B

Good Job

- ___ completed most all required annotations
- ___ provided annotations, but with less involvement with text
- ___ presented material in readable fashion

78 C

Average Job

- ___ completed *most* required annotations
- ___ provided annotations with insufficient depth of involvement with text
- ___ presented material in careless, unreadable manner in spots

72 D

Minimum Effort

- ___ missed many required text annotations
- ___ provided few annotations with little involvement with text
- ___ presented material in careless or unreadable manner throughout

Zero

No Summer Reading turned in [*The horror! The horror!* ☹]

ESSAYS

These essays are designed to help me determine your writing strengths and weaknesses as we begin this course. **Follow the format below.** This will also tell me if you adhere to directions, which is crucial to your success in AP English Literature.

- **Type [double space], 12 point font**
- **Keep your essays to no more than 1 to 1 ½ pages. AP-style essays *do not ramble*.**
- **Be sure to have:**
 - **an engaging opening (which encourages the reader to “read on!”)**
 - **a clear thesis (so clear that the reader can tell what the original question was by reading your thesis statement!)**
 - **all your points supported consistently and fully from the text *and remember to continue to refer back to your original thesis***
 - **a *non-formulaic* conclusion (some overall insight you've gotten from exploring your thesis – NOT *just a restatement of your thesis points*)**

Essay # 1: [For *Things Fall Apart* and *Heart of Darkness*] - due **1st day of school**

Change and *alienation* are themes that are featured frequently in literature. In a thoughtful and well-written essay, *compare* and *contrast* the characters of Okonkwo and Marlowe as they experience change and alienation in their lives.

Essay #2: [For *The Great Gatsby*] due **Friday, 9/25**

Study the poem by D’Invillers under the title page. Based on your knowledge of the novel, in a thoughtful and fully supported essay, state why you suppose Fitzgerald chose that particular poem to introduce the book.

- ❖ Summer Reading annotations and essays are due either the first day of school (*Things Fall Apart & Heart of Darkness*) or 9/25 (*The Great Gatsby*). Late work will be reduced –8 first day, and -5 each day thereafter [according to the WCS English Dept. lateness penalty policy].
- ❖ I will be available to you throughout the summer should you have any questions about the works or the assignments. Please do not hesitate to phone me at **856-241-1007 - *before 8 pm*** [leave a message if I’m not in] any day except Sunday (Sabbath day of rest ☺).
You may also e-mail me at sagumienny@yahoo.com. IF YOU E-MAIL ME, though, be sure to state “**AP Summer Reading question**” in the subject line OR your e-mail may be deleted as SPAM. Some of your e-mail addresses are quite “unique,” and I will probably assume you are some evil virus ☹.
- ❖ We are in for an incredible adventure together. I will be keeping you in my prayers and looking forward to seeing you soon.

In His love and service,

Mrs. Gumienny