

'24/25 FCHS AP Literature and Composition Summer Reading Assignment

Modeled after the type of close reading and critical writing asked of students at four-year universities, AP Literature and Composition requires students to work with theory to analyze a text (novel or body of plays/poetry). In preparation for success in this class, it is beneficial to get some experience reading through a theoretical lens.

Before making your decision about the pairing below, visit the [Purdue OWL resource](#) dedicated to literary theory and schools of criticism. Do not worry if you do not completely understand all of the concepts the OWL elucidates; choose one that sounds interesting and approachable to you. Also, if you like, read a summary of the novel to make sure the story interests you.

The Assignment

Choose a pairing (just one novel with its related theory) from this list:

Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie—Postcolonial criticism
The Centaur by John Updike—Formalism
In Dubious Battle by John Steinbeck—Marxist criticism
The Defense by Vladimir Nabokov—Postmodern criticism
In the Time of the Butterflies by Julia Alvarez—Feminist or Gender criticism
Middlemarch by George Eliot—Feminist or Gender criticism
North and South by Elizabeth Gaskell—Marxist criticism
A Passage to India by E. M. Forster—Postcolonial criticism
The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver—Formalism
Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi—Postcolonial criticism
There There by Tommy Orange—Postcolonial criticism
To the Lighthouse by Virginia Woolf—Postmodern criticism
The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath - Psychoanalytical criticism

You are free to propose your own pairing if you like; these are just a few sensible suggestions.

Explore the theoretical lenses:

In explaining each of the theories, the OWL offers a set of typical questions. You will need to look at the typical questions for your choice of theory. Reference the OWL resource and address relevant questions to your text.

Read your novel through the lens:

As you read, keep your theoretical questions in mind (or, even better, next to you on your desk or in the grass), and prepare a set of annotated quotations in answer to the questions. For example, if I were working with *Frankenstein* and psychoanalytic criticism, one annotated quotation in answer to the question (How do the operations of repression structure or inform the work?) might look like this:

Quotation (from the novel with in-text citation)

“Fear overcame me; I dared not advance, dreading a thousand nameless evils that made me tremble, although I was unable to define them. I remained two days at Lausanne, in this painful state of mind. I contemplated the lake: the waters were placid; all around was calm; and the snowy mountains, ‘the palaces of nature,’ were not changed. By degrees the calm and heavenly scene restored me, and I continued my journey towards Geneva” (Shelley 51).

Annotation (*My own words in answer to the question based on what I see in the quotation*)

Nature seems to be almost a tool to help Victor Frankenstein repress his fears. His conscious mind knows he is responsible for creating the creature who has wreaked havoc on the world around him and his family, but he doesn't want to admit his role in his own tragedy. The "nameless evils" are easy to define, but it is too painful for Victor to admit he is the catalyst for all that befalls him. Instead, he turns his attention to the lake and shifts his focus to the "placid...calm...and heavenly."

The Basics

- Type your quotations and annotations (it helps if you include the questions)
- You need **a minimum of 20** annotated quotations
- Your quotations should be drawn from throughout the novel (not just the first 50 pages)
- Each annotation should be brief (50-75 words), but clearly in answer to one of your theoretical questions and based directly on the evidence you chose to quote.
- Annotations should be original throughout without the assistance of AI or language models.
- I know that literary theory is new to many of you, so don't worry if you don't completely understand your theory; just do your best, and look up terms like "repression" if you don't know what they mean
- You should also provide an MLA-format works cited page for your novel

Grading and Due Date

This assignment is essential for us to determine your current abilities regarding theory application and literary analysis; therefore, it will essentially be a completion grade worth 50 points. Please have your work ready to turn in and share on the following dates:

Fall Semester: Friday, Aug. 16th

Spring Semester: Wednesday, Jan. 8th.

We look forward to working with you and will do everything we can to help you be successful this semester - in preparation for the AP exam. Have some fun with this assignment and if questions occur as you are working on the assignment over the summer, email either kguest@psdschools.org or mschneid@psdschools.org

Sincerely,

Ms. Guest & Mr. Schneider