AP Literature & Composition
Summer Reading 2012

✦ Whole-class Read

✓ Read *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley.

✓ While you read, carefully and thoroughly annotate the novel for characterization (how the author shows what a character is like) by keeping a dialectical journal. You must complete 25 entries for the novel, focusing entirely on **Victor Frankenstein** and **The Monster**. Don’t worry about separating your entries by character—it is important for you to note their simultaneous character development throughout the novel. Your character journal must be typed using the Character Journal Template located on the AP Lit & Comp section of our Wiki: [www.mssmithenglish.wikispaces.com](http://www.mssmithenglish.wikispaces.com). Your journal is due on the first day of school.

✓ There will be a timed in-class essay during the first week of school and a number of tasks for this novel in the weeks that follow.

✦ Choice Read

✓ Read one novel from the list below:
  - *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya
  - *The Handmaid’s Tale* by Margret Atwood
  - *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte
  - *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad
  - *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens
  - *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison
  - *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer
  - *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway
  - *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac
  - *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* by Ken Kesey
  - *Angela’s Ashes* by Frank McCourt
  - *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak

✓ While you read, carefully and thoroughly annotate the novel for literary elements and devices (you may want to use sticky notes or keep a reading log/dialectical journal). These annotations will help you to read closely and prepare for your essay.

✓ Choose one of the following essay prompts and type a well-developed essay. Use all MLA standards and formal conventions for writing ([http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/)). At the bottom of your heading, please indicate the number of the prompt that you are addressing through your essay. Your essay is due on the first day of school.

1. The significance of a title such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is so easy to discover. However, in other works (for example, *Measure for Measure*) the full significance of the title becomes apparent to the reader only gradually. Choose a work and show how the significance of the title is developed through the author’s use of devices such as contrast, repetition, allusion, and point of view.
2. An effective literary work does not merely stop or cease; it concludes. In the view of some critics, a work that does not provide the pleasure of significant closure has terminated with an artistic fault. A satisfactory ending is not, however, always conclusive in every sense; significant closure may require the reader to abide with or adjust to ambiguity and uncertainty. In an essay, discuss the ending of a novel of acknowledged literary merit. Explain precisely how and why the ending appropriately or inappropriately concludes the work. Do not merely summarize the plot.

3. A recurring theme in literature is the classic war between a passion and responsibility. For instance, a personal cause, a love, a desire for revenge, a determination to redress a wrong, or some other emotion or drive may conflict with moral duty. Choose a literary work in which a character confronts the demands of a private passion that conflicts with his or her responsibilities. In a well-written essay show clearly the nature of the conflict, its effects upon the character, and its significance to the work.

4. A critic has said that one important measure of a superior work of literature is its ability to produce in the reader a healthy confusion of pleasure and disquietude. Select a literary work that produces this “healthy confusion.” Write an essay in which you explain the sources of the “pleasure and disquietude” experienced by the readers of the work.

5. In many works of literature, a physical journey - the literal movement from one place to another - plays a central role. Choose a novel in which a physical journey is an important element and discuss how the journey adds to the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

6. Critic Roland Barthes has said, “Literature is the question minus the answer.” Choose a novel, or play, and, considering Barthes’ observation, write an essay in which you analyze a central question the work raises and the extent to which it offers answers. Explain how the author’s treatment of this question affects your understanding of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

7. A symbol is an object, action, or event that represents something or that creates a range of associations beyond itself. In literary works a symbol can express an idea, clarify meaning, or enlarge literal meaning. Select a novel and, focusing on one symbol, write an essay analyzing how that symbol functions in the work and what it reveals about the characters or themes of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

8. In *The Writing of Fiction* (1925), novelist Edith Wharton states the following: At every stage in the progress of his tale the novelist must rely on what may be called the illuminating incident to reveal and emphasize the inner meaning of each situation. Illuminating incidents are the magic casements of fiction, its vistas on infinity. Choose a novel that you have studied and write a well-organized essay in which you describe an “illuminating” episode or moment and explain how it functions as a “casement,” a window that opens onto the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.
Activity Two: Character Analysis Journal

Procedure:

**In the left column**
- Record evidence about the character (words, actions, reactions).
- Select evidence that directly describes a character, evidence that shows what he or she says or does, how he or she acts or reacts, and what other characters say about him or her. Below the quotations from the text, note the context of the quote.
- Use quotation marks around quotes and cite page numbers.

**In the right column**
- Based on the evidence, make an inference about the character (underlined).
- Write commentary that explains how and/or why the evidence leads to or supports the inference.

The following chart shows an example of a student journal. The student examples are based on the short story “The Scarlet Ibis” by James Hurst.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Evidence (quotation or detail and context)</th>
<th>Inference—Commentary</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quotation:</strong> “His eyes were round with wonder as he gazed about him, and his little hands began to stroke the rubber grass. Then he began to cry” (Hurst 191). <strong>Context:</strong> Doodle’s brother has taken him to a beautiful place.</td>
<td><strong>Sensitive, appreciative</strong>—Doodle reacts emotionally to the wonders of nature, moved to tears of joy at the beauty of simple things. He is attuned to nature and in awe of its beauty.</td>
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<td><strong>Quotation:</strong> “My lies were scary, involved, and usually pointless, but Doodle’s were twice as crazy. People in his stories all had wings and flew wherever they wanted to go” (Hurst 193). <strong>Context:</strong> To help pass the time, Doodle and his brother make up stories.</td>
<td><strong>Imaginative, dreamer</strong>—Doodle’s fantasies reveal his vivid imagination as well as his desire to be able to move freely and easily. Through his imagination he can escape the physical handicaps that hold him down in real life.</td>
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Now practice writing this type of journal entry using a passage or text assigned by your teacher. Use the format below.

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<td><strong>Quotation:</strong> Record the evidence and put quote marks around direct quotes (and don’t forget to include MLA in-text citations).</td>
<td><strong>Underline character trait</strong>—Commentary must explain <em>HOW</em> the evidence supports your inference (character trait). See your summer reading packet for examples.</td>
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<td><strong>Character &amp; context:</strong> Name the character that is being characterized and record the context of the quote/detail</td>
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Close Reading: Highlighting & Annotation Tips

✦ Make brief notes at the top of the page or on a sticky note to mark important plot events.

✦ Circle or highlight words that are unfamiliar or unusual. Try to figure out what the words mean through the way they are used; supplement your guesses by discussing the words with a teacher or by consulting a dictionary.

✦ When new characters are introduced, highlight phrases that describe them.

✦ Highlight words, images, and details that seem to form a pattern throughout the text. For example, if a large clock appears in the first chapter, and then you notice the author using the words “timely” or “ticking” in the text, and then an incident occurs in which a character breaks a watch or is late for an appointment, you may have uncovered a pattern of imagery that will lead the close reader to discover a thematic idea. Highlight these related strands and observe the rest of the text closely to see if the author uses other linked words, images, or details.

✦ Highlight passages you think might be symbolic.

✦ Mark key ideas and note briefly your reflections about them.

✦ Highlight passages in which figurative language appears.

✦ When you get an idea while reading the text, note it in a brief form in the margin. You may never think of this idea again unless you write it down.

✦ If you have a question about something in the book, write it on the page when it first occurred to you.

✦ While listening to a lecture or participating in a discussion about the book, write down insights you hear or discover. Writing these notes directly in the text assures you that you will be able to reference the exact passage that triggered the ideas. Also, it is less likely that you will lose track of the notes.

✦ Don’t mark too much. If you mark everything, nothing will stand out.

✦ Use brackets, checks, stars, bullets, or asterisks to mark very important items or things you want to come back to later.

A 9-Point Rubric for writing about literature

An 8-9 essay responds to the prompt clearly, directly, and fully. This paper approaches the text analytically, supports a coherent thesis with evidence from the text, and explains how the evidence illustrates and reinforces its thesis. The essay employs subtlety in its use of the text and the writer’s style is fluent and flexible. It is also free of mechanical and grammatical errors.

A 6-7 essay responds to the assignment clearly and directly but with less development than an 8-9 paper. It demonstrates a good understanding of the text and supports its thesis with appropriate textual evidence. While its approach is analytical, the analysis is less precise than in the 8-9 essay, and its use of the text is competent but not subtle. The writing in this paper is forceful and clear with few if any grammatical and mechanical errors.

A 5 essay addresses the assigned topic intelligently but does not answer it fully and specifically. It is characterized by a good but general grasp of the text using the text to frame an apt response to the prompt. It may employ textual evidence sparingly or offer evidence without attaching it to the thesis. The essay is clear and organized but may be somewhat mechanical. The paper may also be marred by grammatical and mechanical errors.

A 3-4 essay fails in some important way to fulfill the demands of the prompt. It may not address part of the assignment, fail to provide minimal textual support for its thesis, or base its analysis on a misreading of some part of the text. This essay may present one or more incisive insights among others of less value. The writing may be similarly uneven in development with lapses in organization, clarity, grammar, and mechanics.

A 1-2 essay commonly combines two or more serious failures. It may not address the actual assignment; it may indicate a serious misreading of the text; it may not offer textual evidence or may use it in a way that suggests a failure to understand the text; it may be unclear, badly written, or unacceptably brief. The style of this paper is usually marked by egregious errors. Occasionally a paper in this range is smoothly written but devoid of content.

Grade conversion
9 = A+
8 = A
7 = A-
6 = B+
5 = B
4 = B-
3 = C
2 = D
1 = F

Created by Carol Jago