Summer Reading for
AP English Literature and Composition Students
(Grade 12)

Students planning to take AP English Literature and Composition (AP/GT 12) must use their summer to prepare for this demanding course. As the course title indicates, this course will focus on reading literature and composing analyses. Therefore, students will have some required reading and an assignment to complete before school opens in the fall.


Assignment:  Some common themes in literature include revenge, man versus man, and man versus society. After reading the two works of high literary merit listed above, compose a 4-6 page (double-spaced, of course; one-inch margins; proper MLA format)-paper in which you present a convincing argument that one of those three themes is prominent in BOTH of the works. Students are expected to construct a clear, concise thesis statement; make assertive points about each work, including thorough, documented support from the works; and prepare an accurate bibliography.Parenthetical citations and bibliography entries should conform to proper MLA format. Students may consult sources of literary criticism, but any material (including the required readings) used must be cited. Students should be prepared to turn in this assignment the first week of school (due: first Friday of the school year—Sept. 2—by 2:15 pm). Hard copies of the paper are expected; if students need printing assistance, they should follow the instructions I provide the first week of school. I will address any and all questions or concerns on the first day of class. However, students with questions or concerns over the summer may email me at klewis2@bcps.org; I will check my email periodically over the summer and get back to students as soon as possible.

For clarification purposes (learn from the mistakes of previous generations!):

- Focus on only one theme...and yes, you must choose from the three provided.
- There is no wrong answer. A credible argument could be made for any of the themes. What I am looking for (and grading you on) is how well you make your argument. Convince me. Be assertive. Support your points. Make your case.
- Refer to the Spec Sheet. Notice the breakdown of points. Clearly the argument must be strong as it is worth more than half the points. Your analysis of the works is what you will use to support your contention. Your job is to use that analysis to answer the task (i.e., that ______ theme is prominent is both works; this means you should be telling me how it is prominent as well). Do NOT fall into the trap of plot summary. Assume your reader is familiar with the works; there is no need to summarize them. Keep focused on your analysis and bring in only the textual evidence that supports your argument.
- Make sure you think about what prominent means. If a theme is prominent, what does that mean to the work and how can that help your argument? This is a vital piece! (Don’t forget the why/how aspect after you assert your theme is prominent. This should be clear in your thesis!)
- I strongly urge you to review the Analytical Writing Musts before you begin composing. Those “musts” are NOT optional, and I expect you to adhere to them in all of your writing.
- Once again, do not be shy. If you have questions, email me (do not forget the “2” in my email!).
## AP Summer Reading Assignment
### Spec Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points Worth</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student submitted a 4-6-page paper in <strong>correct MLA format</strong> with spec sheet stapled behind it.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student included a bibliography in <strong>correct MLA format.</strong> <em>(Note: there is a difference between a bibliography and a Works Cited page!)</em></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student offers a clear, concise, effective thesis statement that sets up student’s argument and fully answers the task given.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student organizes an argument in a manner that makes his/her <strong>analysis convincing.</strong> Student’s analysis is <strong>clear and coherent.</strong> <em>Student must make strong, clear points about each work, explicitly linking analysis to the thesis. Build your case!</em></td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student correctly uses parenthetical citation to cite quoted and/or borrowed material.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student’s paper is free of spelling and grammatical errors.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL = 95**
Analytical Writing Musts

1)  Tone.  All assignments for this course are academic assignments, and as such, you must use an appropriate tone.  Do not be conversational!  Keep your editorial comments to yourself.

2)  Avoid clichés and colloquialisms.  That ties in with tone.  Do not be conversational!

3)  Avoid contractions.  They are inappropriate for academic papers.

4)  Avoid pronouns.  Do not use "you", "your", "we", "our", etc.  It weakens your argument.  You may always use "the reader".

5)  Avoid pronoun confusion.  Be wary of confusing usage of multiple "he"s in a sentence.

6)  Word choice.  You are high school seniors.  "Bad," "good," "thing," etc. are not acceptable.  You can do better, so do better!

7)  Tense is very important.  Be consistent.  Stories should be described in the present tense.

8)  Never refer to an author by his first name.  You don't know him personally, and you are not friends.  Also, do not use Mr. and Mrs. either!  Simply use the last name.

9)  Organization.  Unless SPECIFICALLY told that structure does not matter, always observe organizational rules.  This means that you must formulate a strong, clear thesis and include an introductory paragraph, body paragraphs with strong analytical points and textual evidence as support, and a conclusion paragraph.  This is not optional.

10)  Treat every response like an argument.  All academic papers are arguments, for your task is always to prove something.  Therefore, build your case with strong analytical points and convincingly support these points with reliable textual evidence.

11)  Avoid "I".  Do not use "I think," "I feel," "I believe," or anything of that ilk.  Duh.  You wrote this.  Of course, you think it, feel it, believe it.  It is unnecessary and only serves to weaken the argument.

12)  Thoroughly respond to all tasks of the prompt/question.  If a question asks you to describe why you would choose a particular character as a friend, you cannot merely describe that character.  You must CLEARLY provide justification for why that character's traits and/or actions appeal to you.  Or, if the task is to argue that a particular theme is prominent in a work, merely asserting that it exists in the work is not answering the task.

13)  Effectively build your case.  Always lead with analysis.  Open body paragraphs with strong analytical points that also link to your task (set up the point you will prove).  Then thoroughly discuss, analyze, and support with textual evidence that point.  Finally, end body paragraphs with a strong summative statement that again connects clearly to your task.  Basically, show your reader that you are building your case.

14)  Connect your analysis to your task.  Always make clear connections (or links) to your thesis statement so that your reader is certain that you are indeed making your case.  Your reader should not have to work hard to make the connections; make them for him!

15)  Do not rely on quotes to make your argument for you.  Quotes from the text should not comprise the bulk of your argument.  They are merely support.  Consider them to be like spices.  Use them sparingly but effectively, as they pack a punch.

16)  Do not rely on plot summary.  Assume you have an educated reader.  Do not waste time summarizing whole stories.  Keep it analytical and focused on what proves your case.  Focus on your points and then bring in the appropriate textual evidence.

17)  Set up your quotes well.  You must introduce a quote; you cannot simply stick it in the midst of your analysis without introducing and assume your reader will make the leap you want him to.  Example:  Throughout the series of awakenings experienced by Edna Pontellier, both the audience and the characters in the story are given strong hints of what is to come.  A perfect example is something Edna says to Madame Ratignolle that clearly takes issue with Victorian societal ideals for women:  "I would give my life for my children, but not myself" (Chopin 98).

18)  Cite your quotes correctly.  Follow MLA format (no commas!) and always include a bibliography if you cite anything.

19)  Proofread.  Typographical errors are inexcusable.  Be wary of typing the wrong words as well.  It makes you, the writer, look careless, and your argument weaker.  In addition, a lack of proofreading equates to a lack of respect for your reader, and you NEVER want to convey that!
Instructions on How to Type Finished Papers in the MLA Format

Your papers should look professional and consistent in format (1-inch margins all around; I adjusted them here to fit the document on one page!). Therefore, keep this sheet in your notebooks all year for reference. You will lose points by failing to type your papers in accordance with these guidelines.

Look at the upper left corner of this sheet. Your papers should always contain the information typed there in that order (first page only!). Notice that the heading, like the rest of the page, is double-spaced to be consistent with the rest of the paper. (Be careful here. Some Autoformats mess up the double-spacing, and you should not add a space after each paragraph.) The only exception to this format is if I request a separate title page. In that case, your title page should contain your title centered about halfway down the page. The information in the upper left corner of this sheet should also be centered but at the bottom of the page. Your text should then begin at the top of the next page without repeating the identifying information.

Now, look in the upper right corner of this sheet. Your last name followed by the page number should appear on every page. There is no punctuation between the two items in this heading. Most computer word processing programs are formatted to do this automatically (check Insert - Page Number; it must be in a Header). Consult your Help program or me if you are unsure.

Next, notice the title of the paper is not bold, underlined, or altered in any way. It is simply typed in twelve point Times New Roman—Times is also acceptable—like the rest of the paper, and a simple double space before and after the title is correct. Use this font and size only!

There will be times this year when you want to/need to cite specific material from another resource, particularly in your research paper. Imagine, for instance, that you are writing a paper.
about William Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily.” In that paper, since you are a skilled writer, you want to include a quote from the story to strengthen your point. The following sentences contain two ways to cite this material. William Faulkner writes that a “thin, acrid pall as of the tomb seemed to lie everywhere” (60). This sentence includes the author’s name, so only the page number is needed in parentheses before the final punctuation. Here is another example: In the story, a “thin, acrid pall as of a tomb seemed to lie everywhere” (Faulkner 60). This sentence does not include the author’s name, so you must include the name in the parentheses with the page number.

One final method of citing information from another source is to include the information in a block quote. Use of block quotes is for passages that are more than four full typed lines in length. The passage is indented one inch on the left (the equivalent of two paragraph indentations) and double-spaced. For example, read the following passage in which William Faulkner is quoted:

William Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily” tells the tale of an unfortunate woman who, despite material advantages in the post-Civil War South, lacks the basic understanding of human interaction. When she finds an unreciprocated connection with another soul, Homer Barron, the results are disastrous, for her and for others. (Gwynn and Blotner 87-88)

Notice that there are no quotation marks surrounding the passage in a block quote. The indenting tells the reader that it is a direct quotation. Notice also the lack of punctuation after the citation.

Your papers will be graded on several criteria, one of which is the format and look of your finished product. Keep this sheet close as you prepare your writing assignments for this class.

The dashed line above represents a page break. I was trying to save paper. References should always be on a separate page!!!

Works Cited


Gwynn, Frederick, and Joseph Blotner. Faulkner in the University: Class Conferences at the University of Virginia, 1957-58. Univ. of Virginia Press, 1959.