

AP Literature Summer Assignment

Welcome to Advanced Placement Literature!

If you're anything like me, you need a break from school right now. So, thinking about a summer assignment is difficult. I get it! Hopefully, you'll enjoy the summer assignment this year, and you and I both will come away from it feeling both entertained and enlightened!

ASSIGNMENT RATIONALE

There are many purposes for a summer assignment. One is to keep your skills sharp over the summer, another is to "front load" information that you need before we begin the class, and a third is to provide me with a sample of your *independent* reading and writing skills.

Looking at those three purposes, only one of them is really tied to curriculum. You can practice reading and writing with any material I give you, and then provide me with evidence of your skills. The front loading of information is an entirely different thing—there are specific things that it will be helpful for you to have studied before we start school.

We do not study much theatre at this school. As freshmen and sophomores at SRHS, you should have studied Macbeth and Othello. There is the possibility that you studied The Tempest. You may have studied The Crucible during your junior year. That's it. There is some possibility that you are acquainted with Antigone or Zoot Suit. Given the limitations of your exposure, it's a good idea for you to do some background work with theatre over the summer in preparation for our first unit of study and in preparation for the AP exam.

I like the idea of assigning plays because of the speed with which you can read them. A piece of drama is meant to be experienced over a 2-3 hour time span. For the most part you should be able to read it with the speed it would take actors to perform it. The two plays I'm assigning you to read will lead directly into our first unit of study, provide you with excellent background, and finally, both plays are "whole texts" that are often used on the AP exam itself. Thus, this summer assignment will both prepare you for class in August and add to your knowledge for the exam in May.

ASSIGNMENT

Reading and Note Taking:

1. Check out one of the *Literature* textbooks from the library. Each of these has a section of the book devoted to Drama.
2. Read and take reading notes for the section of the text on Drama. You will have an open note exam on this section of the textbook. Notes should identify important artistic and historic information, as well as essential vocabulary. I will be scoring your notes in an attempt to preview your independent academic skills.
3. Read and take reading notes for two plays in the text. Please read: *Oedipus Rex*, *The Glass Menagerie*. Both are tragedies. In your notes, in addition to tracking essential elements of the plot, you should identify lines and passages from the text that demonstrate both character development and tragic elements.

4. Your notes for this section of the textbook are due with your essay. Notes will be returned to you during the first week of school to be used on an open note test. Students who do not submit notes with their summer assignment essay will not be able to use notes on the test.

Viewing:

1. Identify one **modern** film that is a tragedy. Films should have been made within the last 5 years or so, and may not be adaptations of classical tragedy. Watch the film. As you are watching, take note of the elements of tragic drama that are evident in the screenplay and storytelling. Your choice will demonstrate your ability to discern the difference between what is considered classically “tragic” and that which is just “sad”. You should take notes on the film. These notes are due on the first day of class. If you are concerned about whether or not your film choice is good, please feel free to email me.

Writing:

Essay 1: Write an essay in which you examine the similarities and differences between Greek Tragedy—as demonstrated in Oedipus Rex--and the Tragedy portrayed in The Glass Menagerie. It must be MLA formatted. Essays and Notes are to be mailed to me and postmarked by August 5th, 2016. Please mail to:

Jeannine Thurston

PO Box 694

Forest Knolls CA. 94933

Essay 2: Your second essay will be written in class using your notes (both from the textbook and from watching the film), and it will be focused on examining your movie choice as evidence of interpretation/reinterpretations of classical tragedy in the modern world. You will write this essay during the first week of school.

It’s important that I have an opportunity to watch each of you write an essay in class during the first week. While this will provide you with accountability for completing the additional summer work (film viewing, notes) watching you write in class teaches me how each of you individually approaches his/her work, making me better able to guide your work.

REVIEW of Assignment:

- Textbook/Play Reading Notes: Due August 5.
- Essay #1: Due August 5
- Film Viewing Notes: Due first day of school.
- Essay #2: Open Note, first week of school.