

AP Literature and Composition Summer Assignments 2023

This summer, I'd like you to read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, and a work of your choice from the included list. Please pay attention to what needs to be completed for each reading. You will also need to find some scholarship prompts which will be used in our first unit.

For *The Great Gatsby* and *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*:

Annotate. Use sticky notes or a double-sided journal to take notes and record your thoughts on important, confusing, interesting, and/or thought-provoking passages.

Quizzes. Be prepared for multiple-choice quizzes *and* short answer quizzes over both books on the first day of class and during subsequent class periods. I read Sparknotes and Shmoop, too—I'll ask questions these don't cover.

Writing assignments. Be prepared for writing prompts related to both books in the first days of the semester.

For the additional work:

Complete a **novel review**. See the example included and the instructions for writing a theme statement. This is due on the first day we meet for this class. (We will turn it in on Canvas.)

For college prep:

You *must* come to class with at least three writing prompts for college applications or scholarships that are available to you. You do not need to write any essays; just bring the prompts. If you are having trouble finding prompts, check the Common App and applications for honors or leadership programs at KU, KSU, or whatever college you might attend.

Finally, try to relax and reflect a bit this summer. I look forward to working with you in the fall.

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These are the choices for your additional work. These vary greatly in length and complexity. For example, plays are, as a rule, fairly short. Choose something that is right for you and your schedule. If you need help, see me.

All the Light We Cannot See
All My Sons (play)
Anna Karenina
A Thousand Acres
Atonement
Beloved
Black Boy
Brave New World
Crime and Punishment
Dracula
Emma
Exit West
Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close
Fences (play)
Great Expectations
Hedda Gabler (play)
Invisible Man
Jane Eyre
King Lear (play)
Long Day's Journey into Night (play)
Middlemarch
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
One Hundred Years of Solitude
Snow Falling on Cedars
Song of Solomon
The Alchemist
The Bonesetter's Daughter
The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao
The Children's Hour (play)
The Cider House Rules
The Color Purple
The Count of Monte Cristo
Their Eyes Were Watching God
The Grapes of Wrath
The House of Seven Gables
The Mayor of Casterbridge
The Piano Lesson (play)
The Picture of Dorian Gray
The Poisonwood Bible
The Remains of the Day
The Sun Also Rises
This Side of Paradise

**Novel Review over Work of Your Choice:
Instructions and Examples (Based upon *A Raisin in the Sun*)**

Type the following information over the book of your choice. Print and bring to class on the first day. This review will serve as study material for you at the end of the school year.

- A. Meaningful quotations (short and easy to use): 6 or more

Ex. "He finally come into his manhood today, didn't he?" (151)

- B. Names of all main characters along with appositive phrases or identifying adjectives: 6 or more descriptors per character

Ex. Walter: Entrepreneurial, impatient, frustrated dreamer, trapped, lonely, well-intentioned

- C. Plot (specific scenes that are full of meaning and worthy of close analysis- describe the scene and why it mattered): 3 or more

Ex. Mr. Lindner Scenes 1 and 2:

Mr. Lindner offers the Youngers money for their new house on two occasions in order to convince them not to move into the white neighborhood. The Youngers eventually refuse the money. This shows that the new house doesn't guarantee happiness. The Youngers face resistance to their plan from both inside and outside of their community. However, the Youngers still believe in dignity and pride as more important than self-preservation.

- D. Techniques, including symbols, images, literary techniques, and their meaning/significance: 3 or more

Ex. Mama's plant:

Mama spends the entire play looking after a plant that is wilting and dying in its current environment despite her best efforts. The plant represents her children who need more sunlight and space to grow. It represents her dreams for her family, which also need nurturing.

- E. Subjects (a list of topics that relate to the work): 10 or more

Ex. Segregation, Poverty, Racism, Pride, The American Dream, Feminism, Capitalism, Family Bonds, Identity, Manhood

- F. Themes: 2 or more

Ex. Advancement is only possible when those in conflict come together towards a common goal.

How to Write a Theme Statement

How to Determine the Theme

1. To discover the theme of a story, the reader must try to discover the author's central purpose. Ask yourself, "Why did the author write this story" and "What comment is the author making about life or human nature?"
2. In order to understand the theme, you must have a good grasp of the plot and characters, especially the central conflict. The theme usually concerns the main character and the changes he or she undergoes as a result of engaging in conflict with an opposing force. What the protagonist learns, suffers, or experiences is key to the theme.
3. Examine the story's title. Titles often provide clues as to the author's focus and intent.

Characteristics of a Good Theme Statement

1. Theme must be expressed in a complete sentence. "Love and rejection" is not a theme statement. It is just an indication of the topic of the story. What in particular is the author saying about love and rejection?
2. Theme should describe the general meaning of a story, not specific events, actions or characters. Do not use the names of characters in the story when stating the theme.
3. The theme must hold true for the story as a whole, not just part of it. Pay particular attention to the story's conclusion to make sure that the outcome matches what you think the theme is.
4. Avoid using familiar statements, or clichés (such as "honesty is the best policy") to express the theme.
5. The theme should not be stated as advice, so do not use the word **you**. Also, do not use the words **should** or **ought**.
6. The theme should be what the author believes/communicates, not what a particular character believes/communicates.
7. Themes avoid absolute terms such as **all**, **none**, **everything**, **nothing**, **always**.