

AP Literature

Prerequisite Work for Summer 2017

Welcome to Advanced Placement Literature and Composition! I'm looking forward to meeting you all and working together next year. Our class will be both intellectually rigorous and stimulating. In past years, students have enjoyed hundreds of pages in novels and plays and completed dozens of essays both in and out of class . . . and survived it all! You will too, and I'm here to help.

AP Lit. requires summer work so that we can begin with a common focus from the first day of class. Below is an outline of two summer assignments that are required for the class – one for a novel and one for poetry. My focus in putting this together has been to keep assignments meaningful (I hate busywork too). Please read the information carefully. Contact me with any questions at connie.dignan@camas.wednet.edu. While I do not read e-mail daily during the summer months, I will check frequently. Do not wait until the week before class to contact me.

Summer Reading: The Novel

- A. Read either *The Brothers K* by David James Duncan OR *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver. Read closely, and mark the text with your own notations as you discover interesting, questionable, or well-written passages. You may also want to mark symbols, motifs, interesting syntax and diction. **Please bring the book to class for the first several days, and be ready to discuss it and your marked passages in depth.** Because you'll want to mark in the text, and because we'll refer to previously-read texts all year, I encourage you to purchase your own copy of this and of other books we read this year. Used copies are fine. If you borrow from the library or a friend, use Post-its liberally, and be sure that you can have the book for the first days of class. **CHS owns several copies of these novels, and you may check one out from the CHS library before the end of the year.** Have time to read both books? Please do! Already read one? Read the other! Compare styles as you do.

B. **Searching for Self-actualization:**

Self-actualization" is a term coined by Abraham Maslow to describe the highest pinnacle of human achievement. It is "the desire to become . . . everything that one is capable of becoming." As Maslow puts it, "A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is ultimately to be at peace with himself. What a man can be, he must be." Becoming self-actualized involves realizing your potential and developing it to the full by accepting ever-greater challenges and learning from mistakes. People who achieve self-actualization are wise, peaceful, in harmony with the world, creative, very efficient, and self-fulfilled. Whether we realize it or not, we are all striving for self-actualization. This is true of the main characters in almost every work of literature, and it is true of characters in *The Brothers K* and *Poisonwood Bible*.

1. **Select ONE key character from your novel and do the following:**

- a. **List at least five internal forces that prevent self-actualization and five external forces (circumstances outside his or her control) that prevent self-actualization.** Briefly explain how each force limits the character by identifying a negative mindset or character, a plot point or the limiting circumstances. Note that physical characteristics such as being small, plain, or young are not personality traits.
 - b. **List at least five internal and five external forces that advance or aid in that same character's self-actualization and explain each briefly.**
- When finished, you should have four labeled lists of five phrases for your selected character, for a total of 20 phrases.

Summer Reading: Poetry

1. Please **print, read and annotate** each of the five poems included here. By “read”, I mean more than once – silently, aloud, to someone else, listen while someone reads to you. By “annotate”, I mean jot your thoughts and ideas all over them. Define terms that you think you know (and certainly those you don’t). Write connections you make and questions you have. Talk to other people about the poems. Make notations about their thoughts. You may have called it talking to the text. Show me your thinking.

At all costs, **avoid searching through online sources** for “the answers”. Those “answers” leak into your writing, and into your friend’s, and his friend’s, and . . . well, you know. The only answers are in your own interpretations. Trust yourself.

After reading each poem, **complete the statement: This poem is about _____**. Fill in the blank with only a word or a short phrase. Force yourself to be concise and clear.

When you have read all five poems, **write a statement about what ideas seem to connect these pieces**. Again, be concise. Make this one clear statement.

Do all of the above work **on the poems themselves, not in a notebook**. Your poems should be littered with notes, ideas, definitions, connections. Messy. I love it. Enjoy!

Again, I’m excited to meet you! I know that we’ll have a productive and successful year together.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Dignan

Infant Sorrow

My mother groaned, my father wept,
Into the dangerous world I leapt;
Helpless, naked, piping loud,
Like a fiend hid in a cloud.

Struggling in my father's hands,
Striving against my swaddling bands,
Bound and weary, I thought best
To sulk upon my mother's breast.

William Blake

“The School Children” by Louise Glück

The School Children by Louise Glück

The children go forward with their little satchels.

And all morning the mothers have labored
to gather the late apples, red and gold,
like words of another language.

And on the other shore
are those who wait behind great desks
to receive these offerings.

How orderly they are – the nails
on which the children hang
their overcoats of blue or yellow wool.

And the teachers shall instruct them in silence
and the mothers shall scour the orchards for a way out,
drawing to themselves the grey limbs of the fruit trees
bearing so little ammunition.

[in Just-]

By [E. E. Cummings](#)

in Just-

spring when the world is mud-

luscious the little

lame balloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come

running from marbles and

piracies and it's

spring

when the world is puddle-wonderful

the queer

old balloonman whistles

far and wee

and bettyandisbel come dancing

from hop-scotch and jump-rope and

it's

spring

and

the

goat-footed

balloonMan whistles

far

and

wee

Hours Continuing Long

HOURS continuing long, sore and heavy-hearted,
Hours of the dusk, when I withdraw to a lonesome and unfrequented
spot, seating myself, leaning my face in my hands;
Hours sleepless, deep in the night, when I go forth, speeding swiftly
the country roads, or through the city streets, or pacing miles
and miles, stifling plaintive cries;
Hours discouraged, distracted--for the one I cannot content myself
without, soon I saw him content himself without me;
Hours when I am forgotten, (O weeks and months are passing, but I
believe I am never to forget!)
Sullen and suffering hours! (I am ashamed--but it is useless--I am
what I am;)
Hours of my torment--I wonder if other men ever have the like, out of
the like feelings?
Is there even one other like me--distracted--his friend, his lover,
lost to him?
Is he too as I am now? Does he still rise in the morning, dejected,
thinking who is lost to him? and at night, awaking, think who
is lost?
Does he too harbor his friendship silent and endless? harbor his
anguish and passion? 10
Does some stray reminder, or the casual mention of a name, bring the
fit back upon him, taciturn and deprest?
Does he see himself reflected in me? In these hours, does he see the
face of his hours reflected?

Walt Whitman

The Plain Sense of Things

Wallace Stevens, 1879 - 1955

After the leaves have fallen, we return
To a plain sense of things. It is as if
We had come to an end of the imagination,
Inanimate in an inert savoir.

It is difficult even to choose the adjective
For this blank cold, this sadness without cause.
The great structure has become a minor house.
No turban walks across the lessened floors.

The greenhouse never so badly needed paint.
The chimney is fifty years old and slants to one side.
A fantastic effort has failed, a repetition
In a repetitiousness of men and flies.

Yet the absence of the imagination had
Itself to be imagined. The great pond,
The plain sense of it, without reflections, leaves,
Mud, water like dirty glass, expressing silence

Of a sort, silence of a rat come out to see,
The great pond and its waste of the lilies, all this
Had to be imagined as an inevitable knowledge,
Required, as a necessity requires.