

## AP English Literature Summer Reading Assignment 2020

1. Your mission, Part 1 is to read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster. I know, it sounds boring, but it is surprisingly entertaining—and you’ll find yourself referring back to it throughout the year in AP Lit. There is more than one edition out there; it doesn’t matter which one you choose. It is also available online as a PDF.
2. Your mission, Part 2 is to read any ONE novel from the following list:

*All the King’s Men* (Robert Penn Warren)  
*All the Pretty Horses* or *The Road* (Cormac McCarthy)\*  
*Catch-22* (Joseph Heller)\*  
*Cry, the Beloved Country* (Alan Paton)  
*East of Eden* (John Steinbeck)\*  
*Emma, Persuasion, or Pride and Prejudice* (Jane Austen)  
*Great Expectations* (Charles Dickens)  
*Jane Eyre* (Charlotte Bronte)  
*Never Let Me Go* (Kazuo Ishiguro)\*  
*The Bluest Eye* (Toni Morrison) \*  
*The Handmaid’s Tale* (Margaret Atwood)\*  
*The Underground Railroad* (Colson Whitehead)\*  
*The Unvanquished* (William Faulkner)

(\*indicates mature themes; make sure your parents approve your choice)

**OR, if there is a novel you have been wanting to read, email me and I will approve it if I think it is suitable for the demands of the AP Lit exam.**

- “How do I know which novel to choose?” you may ask. Go to amazon.com and read a synopsis of the novels. If you read a plot summary on Sparknotes, you will ruin your reading experience by already knowing how the novel ends. Bad idea!
3. “Why did you choose these particular novels?” you might also ask. I chose them because each one is an excellent novel to have read for the AP Literature exam. They also represent a variety of authors, styles, and time periods, so you should all find something you will like on the list.
  4. As you are reading your novel, keep Foster’s book in mind and note passages that illustrate the concepts he explains. Mark those passages with a marginal note or Post-it so that you can find them later. **You are looking for a minimum of TEN passages from throughout the novel, illustrating at least FIVE of Foster’s concepts.**

5. Create a document in which you type (or copy and paste) each of the ten passages from your novel and add explanations of how they connect to Foster's book. Here is an example:

**PASSAGE:**

Mick went into the closet of Bill's room and brought out some other pictures she had done in the class--some pencil drawings, some water-colors, and one canvas with oils. They were all full of people. She had imagined a big fire on Broad Street and painted how she thought it would be. The flames were bright green and orange and Mr. Brannon's restaurant and the First National Bank were about the only buildings left. People were lying dead in the streets and others were running for their lives. One man was in his nightshirt and a lady was trying to carry a bunch of bananas with her. Another picture was called 'Boiler Busts in Factory,' and men were jumping out of windows and running while a knot of kids in overalls stood scrouged together, holding the buckets of dinner they had brought to their Daddies. The oil painting was a picture of the whole town fighting on Broad Street. She never knew why she had painted this one and she couldn't think of the right name for it. There wasn't any fire or storm or reason you could see in the picture why all this battle was happening. But there were more people and more moving around than in any other picture. This was the best one, and it was too bad that she couldn't think up the real name. In the back of her mind somewhere she knew what it was. (*The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, Carson McCullers, p. 44)

**EXPLANATION:**

In his chapter on symbolism, Foster says, "If we want to figure out what a symbol might mean, we have to use a variety of tools on it: questions, experience, preexisting knowledge" (56). In this passage, Mick's depictions of chaos might relate to her life in a boarding-house--a place in which she rarely has time or space for herself. That is our "pre-existing knowledge." If we question the images of fire, death, and fighting, we can guess Mick's restlessness and desire to escape the life she has. Finally, although this is early in the novel, we also see how important art is as an outlet for Mick, knowing from experience that all sorts of creative expression provide an outlet for pent-up emotion.

You may use any formatting you choose, and you do not have to quote directly from Foster's book. Include page numbers, but this is not an exercise in documentation, so do not worry about using MLA style. Again, be sure that you use passages from the entire novel, not just one section. Share your document with me by the **first full day of class**.

6. Bring both books and your laptop to the **first full day of class**. You will be writing an in-class essay in which you apply a concept from Foster's book to your novel.

7. Get a head start on those college applications. Go ahead and write an admissions essay (or two). You'll be glad you did once the first deadlines roll around in October.
8. Email me if you have any questions ([kkay@jp2falcons.org](mailto:kkay@jp2falcons.org)), and have a lovely summer!