

June 2024

Dear Student,

You have elected to study 12 AP English Literature and Composition this coming academic year. This is a college course that stresses challenging reading, in-depth analysis, and advanced written responses. You will be reading novels, plays, poems, etc. by great authors from various time periods.

The literary works that appear on the Advanced Placement Readings list are *challenging, college-level reading for mature, discerning students*. The purpose of a literary work is not to please, but to make the reader think; not to affirm the reader's beliefs, but, rather to challenge them, so that they might be affirmed or rejected. Each work of art is an expression of the *human experience in all its richness—its diversity—its conflicting opinions*. Some literary works at this level may be seen by some as dark and depressing; however, a mature reader knows that light and dark, pleasure and pain, joy and sadness are inextricably intertwined as part of the human experience, each defining and making possible the alternative. The themes of these diverse works attempt to question life's important issues —*the nature of humankind, the purpose of life, the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom, the moral dilemma of good and evil and more*.

The AP Literature course is a demanding as well as rewarding one, and you are to be congratulated for your initiative. The work listed below is required summer reading for all AP students.

READINGS: While not required, it is suggested that you purchase your own copy of the novel so that you can make notations concerning style, characters, plot, themes, rhetoric, literary devices, and whatever else strikes you as important in remembering the piece of literature for further discussion. Post-its are a great way to keep track of ideas as well. The assignment will be collected and graded in the first **week** of school. Final assessment for the summer assignment will result in at least one essay based on the novel during the first two weeks of school.

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

Copies of the novel and assignment can be checked out from the school library.

Copies of the assignment are also on the MacArthur High School website

ASSIGNMENT:

In The Writing of Fiction (1925), novelist Edith Wharton states the following. At every stage in the progress of his tale the novelist must rely on what may be called the illuminating incident to reveal and emphasize the inner meaning of each situation. Illuminating incidents are the magic casements of fiction, its vistas on infinity. Choose 5 “illuminating” episodes or moments that function as a “casement,” a window that opens onto the meaning of the work as a whole.

Annotate **5** scenes you feel best support the prompt. Scenes can be from 1- 4 pages long. Photocopy or take a picture and print so you can annotate. All annotations must demonstrate **meaningful dialogue** with the text. This means that notes reflect a thorough analysis of what this scene is “illuminating”. What are the bigger ideas/themes being conveyed? Underlining and highlighting, while important, do not solely demonstrate this type of interaction. It will be your handwritten notes in margins and due to limited space in margins, any additional notes on a separate document that show meaningful engagement with the text. You will submit your scenes with annotations when we return. A sample is shown below of how to annotate a text (note* additional notes and theme connections have not been included)

ANNOTATING means marking the page as you read with comments or notes. Marking key ideas will enable you to discuss the reading with more support, evidence, and proof than if you rely on memory.

Use highlighting and underlining sparingly. Never underline or highlight something without including a written note that explains the reason for its significance. Feel free to use different color pens, highlighters or any other symbols to help keep you organized.

Mark key passages, words, or descriptions:

1. Any time you read a section that is significant to the plot or character development, underline it and write a brief note to yourself in the margin describing the section and/or why it is important.

React to what you read:

2. If something in the text strikes you, surprises you, troubles you, or even makes you laugh, mark it and write your reaction in the margin. Make predictions, characterizations and record questions you may have. Often these passages are intentionally written to elicit such a response, so they can prove important later.

Track themes:

3. As you read, you will begin to discern the text’s topics/themes. Begin marking them every time they occur. This is especially valuable when it comes time to write an essay on the book. Themes are often developed through the characters, point of view, symbols, setting, etc.

Label Literary Elements, Figurative Language, Diction:

4. When you come across literary devices, underline/highlight/bracket them and label them. Literary devices include things like symbols, motifs, foreshadowing, and any figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification, alliteration, imagery, etc.).
5. Diction (effective or unusual word choice) Syntax (order or words, phrases, or sentences; punctuation)

Notes at the end of each scene:

6. You should take a few minutes at the end of each one to list its most important plot events. That way, when you remember a key plot event but do not remember where in the text it occurs, or when you cannot recall which event occurs before which, you have a resource for easy reference instead of having to thumb through the entire book.

Happy reading! Have a great summer!

Ms. D'Amico / Ms. Roddini

Tone: Celebratory
Admiration

Form: Freeform
Broken down
resembles
Sonnet

Digging = extended metaphor of digging and roots.
Heaney digs into his roots, his heritage

Language: technical
Colloquial
Conversational
monosyllables

Digging

Pen fat
with what?

opening - coming to terms with self?
Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; as snug as a gun.

home
Power
Violence?
protection
A natural extension?
rasping connotes a
living thing

Speaker - male
patriarchal traditions
Reverent attitude

Memory #1
his window -
ownership
threshold to
his heritage

Under my window a clean rasping sound
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:
My father, digging. I look down - remembering /

to look down on has negative con.
but the poem is positive +
celebratory

In rhythm =
In touch with
In agreement
with

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
Bends low, comes up twenty years away
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
Where he was digging.

connections with the past, former
generations, traditions
survival
warming
potatoes
nourishment

The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft
Against the inside knee was levered firmly.
He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep
To scatter new potatoes that we picked
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

homely
- in control, precise
Skill, pride, dignity
- bragging rights

Symbol: peat
living roots
digging
squat pen
Why squat?
crouching
ownership

Admiration
Colloquial
language

Transition

By God, the old man could handle a spade,
Just like his old man.

Memory #2

My grandfather could cut more turf in a day
Than any other man on Toner's bog.
Once I carried him milk in a bottle
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up
To drink it, then fell to right away
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods
Over his shoulder, digging down and down
For the good turf. Digging.

worked hard - work ethics
Strength - technique

Turning
Point
heritage

The cold smell of potato mold, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

- negative images
traditions / livelihoods destroyed
No longer available

an awakening
of what?

Follow in what way?

Closure -

Acceptance

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

- weapon - tool

Follows tradition of fathers
using the tools available
to him.

Seamus Heaney

Reminders of home
+ hearth
rests, snug,
nestled

2 separate memories:

Father digging potatoes
Grand father digging turf - peat bogs

Onomatopoeia
rasping
squelch
slap
gravelly

The pen is mightier than the sword.

