

Wilmington Christian School  
AP English Literature and Composition  
2025 Summer Reading List and Assignments

Summer Assignments

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NOTE: Any student who fails to meet the deadlines for summer work or who submits responses that do not demonstrate the effort, thoughtfulness, and care required of this course will be removed from the course and placed into the appropriate honors course. Exceptions will only be granted for grievous, documented reasons: serious health issues for the student or immediate family members, for example. A two-week vacation is not an acceptable excuse. Plan ahead and submit the work on or before the due date. Written work may be shared or emailed (jmason@wilmingtonchristian.org)

By July 15, complete these two items to give me insight into the class composition and to ensure you are on track.

1. A brief autobiography (see below)
2. A 1-2 paragraph top-of-mind response to *How to Read Literature like a Professor*. What do you like? What do you hate? What have you learned?

Summer autobiography: Think of this as a loosely structured journal response, not a formal piece of writing. I am interested in your interests, your work habits, and your collaboration style.

- A. Tell me about the things that pique your curiosity, about your favorite classes, about non-academic interests, too. Beyond listing these items, try to identify what is so compelling or intriguing about them. Be honest, and don't try to impress me with your wide reading, deep wisdom, or mature spirituality.
- B. Tell me about your work habits. Are you a go-getter, a time-liner, a dead-liner, or some combination? Again, reflect briefly on your approach and how you think this approach helps and hurts your work.
- C. Do you thrive in group projects or are you more of a lone wolf? Do you look to others for help and feedback, or do you tend to be sought out by others, or do you have reciprocal relationships? What might you change about how you work with others?

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Summer reading: (Due the first day of class)

READ THIS BOOK FIRST! *How to Read Literature like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster (Revised Edition)

*The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

*Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe

You are expected to read and annotate the two novels during the summer using the annotations handout as guide. This means you should buy the books and write notes in them. I suggest ordering used copies online or going to a used bookstore. If you cannot purchase the books then you may use post it notes. We will begin the year with *The Great Gatsby* and *Things Fall Apart*. Study guides such as CliffsNotes and Sparknotes may never be used as a substitute for the assigned reading or as a resource, although you will often need to refer to other valid outside sources for the information related to the text for the Data Sheet. Please cite any outside sources you use. See below for instructions for “annotating” Foster.

Summer writing:

Write a one-to-two-page response/commentary for each novel (typed, double-spaced, size 12 font) applying a relevant concept from *How to Read Literature like a Professor* to each of the two novels (*The Great Gatsby* and *Things Fall Apart*). Your commentary need not be a formal essay based on a thesis but should instead be a well-written response to the novel as a whole. Remember to support all your comments and arguments with specific textual detail. All work must be your own words and ideas. Plagiarized or AI-generated assignments will receive a zero. These assignments are to be done individually.

Grading

Summer work will be worth a total of 100 points and is due on the first day of class for full credit. You will lose a grade each class day it is late. Late summer work that is turned in by the end of the marking period will receive half credit. You may be quizzed on *How to Read Literature* during the first two weeks.

One-to-two-page written response applying concepts from Foster’s book to the above novels (40 points each). These essays should be at least three paragraphs (intro, body, and conclusion).

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Rubric:

Essay is typed and double spaced in Times New Roman size 12 font with MLA heading and title (5 points)

One relevant concept from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* is applied to the novel and is clearly identified in the introductory paragraph (10 points)

Specific and relevant details from throughout the novel are used as support in the body (15 points)

Organization/spelling and grammar (10 points)

MLA heading (double spaced, left side of paper):

Student's name

Mr. Mason

AP Literature

Due date

Title (Do not underline or bold)

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Annotations for Foster (*How to Read Literature Like a Professor*) (20 points)

This is a different kind of book. To get the most from your reading and to launch the course in the fall, I want you to create a specific set of notes.

First, let me explain how the book works. Foster focuses on two broad categories in his book that I will call tropes and techniques. *Tropes* are recurring themes or devices that show up in literature. They have a fairly consistent set of meanings and associations, and Foster is very interested in presenting some of the more important ones to you.

*Techniques*, on the other hand, are the methods writers and readers have developed to deepen the meaning of a piece of literature. For example, a quest (Ch. 1) is a *trope* that consistently means the same or similar things where it appears. This quest takes place somewhere, so the *technique* of capturing the setting (Ch. 19 and 20) also gives readers the chance to understand what the story means.

Your assignment is to make 25 note cards (4x6 or 1/2 sheet of paper preferred) for each trope or technique in the table below. The front should have the name of the trope/ technique and whether it is a trope or technique. The back should have A) a description of its use and meaning and B) examples of works that contain them.

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Name	Trope/ Technique	Chapter(s)
Quest	TRO	1
Meals/Eating	TRO	2
Vampires	TRO	3
Intertextuality	TECH	4, Interludes 1 and 2
Allusion: Shakespeare	TECH	5
Allusion: Bible	TECH	6
Allusion: Folktales	TECH	7
Allusion: Mythology	TECH	8
Weather	TRO	9
Characters	TECH	10
Violence	TRO	11
Symbols	TECH	12
Political and Social Context	TECH	13
Christ figure	TRO	14
Flying	TRO	15
Intimacy	TRO	16
Sexuality	TRO	17
Water	TRO	18
Setting: Geography	TECH	19
Setting: Season	TECH	20
Physical Marks	TRO	21
Blindness	TRO	22
Illness/Heart Disease	TRO	23
Sympathetic Reading	TECH	24, 25, Postlude
Irony	TECH	26

Note card samples:

Front:

Quest  (Trope)
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Back:

Every trip is a quest, but the real purpose is ...  <i>Ex: The Crying of Lot 49, The Lord of the Rings</i>
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Of course, I also want you to read the rest of the book to see how Foster applies his approach.