

AP English Literature and Composition Summer Work
Instructor: Ms. Lisa Branno

Hello, Seniors:

Welcome to your last year of high school! I look forward to spending a year delving into literary masterpieces with you and hearing your insights on poetry, short prose, as well as on novels and plays. As you know, one of the goals of the course is to prepare for the rigorous exam put forth by the College Board. The real aim of the class, however, transcends the limitations of any test. You will certainly learn new terms and hone your analytical writing skills, but ideally you will also learn about the canonical works that can teach you about something much more powerful and long-lasting--humanity itself.

Before you think that the year will be filled with boring tasks simply to complete, let's not forget that literature can be fun too. Hamlet will hurl insults that rival any comedian's one-liners and Robert Frost will sardonically tell us the real motive behind "the road not taken." Do not be intimidated by reading lists or writing assignments (or the fear that you must always find a "deeper meaning"). Our mantra of the year will be: "Go literal first!" If you can find an author's literal meaning and comprehend a few literary techniques, everything else that you need to know will fall into place. The classroom environment will be serious, but relaxed, and will focus more on individual progress than competition. To quote Hemingway, "There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow man; true nobility is being superior to your former self." I will strive to improve along with you.

In order to keep your readers' eyes focused over the summer, you will have an optional task and one required task to complete before you return in August. Your optional task will not be graded or evaluated in any way, but will reward you throughout the course via increased vocabulary. Your required task will be graded in the form of a writing assignment and discussion that you will complete at the start of the first quarter.

Optional Assignment:

1. Obtain a copy of NTC's Dictionary of Literary Terms by Kathleen Morner and Ralph Rausch. This is available for about \$10 on Amazon.com. Though you may not get through the whole volume, try to master at least a dozen *new* literary terms that you could define, use, and recognize in context. Make flash cards with the terms, definitions, and examples so that you can have an easy way to review the terms.

Required Assignment:

Obtain a physical (not digital) copy of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain. I highly recommend the Norton Critical Edition of the novel that is available on Amazon, as that edition has helpful definitions and notes that will help you navigate the text; this edition is not required, though. You must have a hard copy of the book because

you will need to reference specific pages for your written and participation grades. You should also highlight any scenes in which new characters appear, quotes that develop theme, and any major plot developments for easy reference. You would be wise to use three different colored highlighters for this task (i.e. orange for characters, yellow for thematic quotes, and pink for plot points). You can, of course, develop your own color code, as long as it is familiar to you. Your first assignment when you return will focus on the themes that Twain explores in the novel; you will save yourself time and energy if you already have quotes that further the themes highlighted.

While you may know that this is the most frequently banned book throughout the past century due to racially sensitive language, I am confident that your maturity and intuitiveness as AP students and college-level readers will allow you to engage with the book for the message that Twain conveys.

As our class will rely heavily on discussion, you will be required to share your impressions, answer and ask questions, and justify your opinions with text-based support on the novel (as well as others we will read throughout the year). I trust that these discussions will stay respectful and focused on the novel.

If you have any questions over the summer, please email me at lisa.branno@yourcharlotteschools.net

I am excited to see many of you again and eager to meet some new students too. Have a wonderful summer and happy reading!