

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

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 two required tasks 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 completed discussion guide will be due on the first day of school and will be graded.

Optional Assignment:

1. Obtain a copy of NTC's Dictionary of Literary Terms by Kathleen Morner and Ralph Rausch. This is available for about \$11 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 Assignments:

1. 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.

2. Use those highlighted quotes to help you complete the Discussion Guide assignment below (on the next page). Your answers should have text-based support and should not be based on your opinion; rather, you will answer based on how the characters in the novel would respond to the thematic statements. Be prepared to submit your typed answers to these discussion questions on the first day of school. You will be graded on your written responses and your verbal participation in discussions on the themes (hence the assignment is called a “Discussion Guide”). This type of assignment is indicative of the type of work you should expect throughout our course.

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-penwell@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!

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Discussion Guide

Directions: For each of the general statements below, find whether the statements are true or false, using the novel as your guideline. You should use text-based evidence (quotes and page numbers) to answer the questions based on the world that Twain creates in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

Remember that you don't have to personally agree or disagree with the statements; you're seeking answers to whether the characters in the novel would agree or disagree. Of course, depending on whose perspective you take, you can reach different conclusions. These different perspectives should keep our discussion interesting, as you may look at each statement from whichever character's point of view you choose (the character you are thinking about should be clear in your explanation.)

1. Personal responsibility is more important than social responsibility.
2. The natural world offers more freedom than the civilized world does.
3. Selflessness is an important indicator of emotional maturity.
4. Stereotypes are usually accurate.
5. Even socially-accepted "good" people can display prejudices.
6. It is morally right to disobey immoral laws.
7. Speech patterns reveal a person's intelligence
8. Pragmatic ideas are superior to imaginative worldviews.
9. Deception is acceptable in some circumstance.
10. Hypocrisy is part of human nature.

Written response: 100 points

Verbal participation: 50 points

Due: August 10, 2018