

Advanced Placement English: Literature & Composition
2023 Summer Reading Assignment
Lassiter High School

Welcome to Advanced Placement Literature & Composition! As a student in this course, you will engage in the careful reading and analysis of extraordinary and classic literary works. In order to begin the 2023-2024 school year on a positive note, finish the following readings and be prepared to complete corresponding assignments during the first few weeks of school.

Assignment I: *How to Read Literature like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster*

Don't be turned off by the title—this is an entertaining and insightful foray into the meanings of literature beyond the literal. It really gets you thinking about literature in a “deeper” way.

- Carefully **read and annotate** Foster's book-- there will be a project assigned the first week of school.

Assignment II: Analysis of the Novel

- Select one of the five novels listed below (this means doing some background research on which novel you think best suits your interests) and read it. As you read, **ANNOTATE &/or TAKE NOTES on the literary elements/motifs presented in Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* that you notice.**

Select and read **one novel** from the list below*

Wide Sargasso Sea

All the Pretty Horses

The Bonesetter's Daughter

Great Expectations

The Story of Edgar Sawtelle

Jean Rhys

Cormac McCarthy

Amy Tan

Charles Dickens

David Wroblewski

You will be assigned an essay during the first few weeks of school in which you will be asked to apply the concepts from Foster's book to a “deeper,” more figurative understanding of the novel you have chosen.

Enjoy your summer reading! The books are outstanding, and we believe that you will find them engaging. If you have any questions regarding the summer reading assignments, please feel free to email us at:

todd.henry@cobbk12.org or hilary.minich@cobbk12.org

Rationale/Explanation:

Thomas C. Foster's best-selling *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* is an entertaining and informative discussion of classic literature's underlying patterns, influences, and figurative meanings. Foster urges and encourages novice readers to embrace and emulate the process of reading literature like a seasoned veteran, and he shows them how.

See descriptions and rationales for novels on next page

Wide Sargasso Sea

“She seemed such a poor ghost, I thought I'd like to write her a life,” author Jean Rhys explains of Antionette, aka, Bertha - the first wife of Edward Rochester from Charlotte Brontë's classic 1847 novel, *Jane Eyre*. *Wide Sargasso Sea*, published in 1966, functions as a prequel to *Jane Eyre*. In Brontë's classic, Jane, a disenfranchised orphan / governess falls in love with Edward Rochester, a wealthy brooding Englishman. In this novel, we also learn of Bertha, Rochester's “mad” first wife who has been locked away in the attic due to her dangerous lunacy. However, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, written a century later, reveals the early heartbreaking life of Antionette and her journey from the Caribbean to England as Rochester's wife. *Wide Sargasso Sea* has forever changed the way we read *Jane Eyre*. In fact, as author Danielle McLaughlin put it, writing for *The Paris Review*: “The novel didn't just take inspiration from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, it illuminated and confronted it, challenged the narrative.” Or, to quote novelist Michele Roberts, “Rhys took one of the works of genius of the 19th Century and turned it inside-out to create one of the works of genius of the 20th Century.” The College Board has used *Wide Sargasso Sea* on the AP Literature and Composition exam 5 times.

All The Pretty Horses:

The national bestseller and the first volume in Cormac McCarthy's Border Trilogy, *All the Pretty Horses* is the tale of John Grady Cole, who at sixteen finds himself at the end of a long line of Texas ranchers, cut off from the only life he has ever imagined for himself. With two companions, he sets off for Mexico on a sometimes idyllic, sometimes comic journey to a place where dreams are paid for in blood.

Cormac McCarthy's contemporary classic novel *All the Pretty Horses* introduces students to the postmodern genre through McCarthy's spare and powerful prose (the style for which McCarthy won the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award). In addition, the novel exposes students to themes related to coming of age and man's quest for meaning. Several of the motifs and figurative constructs discussed in Foster's book are manifest in McCarthy's novel, and The College Board has used *All the Pretty Horses* on the AP Literature and Composition exam 8 times.

The Bonesetter's Daughter:

Amy Tan is a celebrated and best-selling contemporary American novelist. In her novel *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, Ruth Young and her widowed mother, LuLing, have always had a tumultuous relationship. Now, before she succumbs to forgetfulness, LuLing gives Ruth some of her writings, which reveal a side of LuLing that Ruth has never known.

In a remote mountain village where ghosts and tradition rule, LuLing grows up in the care of her mute Precious Auntie as the family endures a curse laid upon a relative known as the bonesetter. When headstrong LuLing rejects the marriage proposal of the coffinmaker, a shocking series of events are set in motion—all of which lead back to Ruth and LuLing in modern San Francisco. The truth that Ruth learns from her mother's past will forever change her perception of family, love, and forgiveness. The College Board has used *The Bonesetter's Daughter* 4 times on the AP Literature exam.

Great Expectations:

Great Expectations is the thirteenth novel by Charles Dickens and his penultimate completed novel. It depicts the education of an orphan nicknamed Pip (the book is a bildungsroman, a coming-of-age story). It is Dickens's second novel, after *David Copperfield*, to be fully narrated in the first person.

Great Expectations follows the childhood and young adult years of Pip, a blacksmith's apprentice in a country village. He suddenly comes into a large fortune (his great expectations) from a mysterious benefactor and moves to London where he enters high society.

The College Board has used *Great Expectations* on the AP Literature and Composition exam 18 times.

The Story of Edgar Sawtelle:

Born mute, speaking only in sign, Edgar Sawtelle leads an idyllic life with his parents on their farm in remote northern Wisconsin. For generations, the Sawtelles have raised and trained a fictional breed of dog whose thoughtful companionship is epitomized by Almondine, Edgar's lifelong friend and ally. But with the unexpected return of Claude, Edgar's paternal uncle, turmoil consumes the Sawtelles' once peaceful home. When Edgar's father dies suddenly, Claude insinuates himself into the life of the farm—and into Edgar's mother's affections.

Grief-stricken and bewildered, Edgar tries to prove Claude played a role in his father's death, but his plan backfires—spectacularly. Forced to flee into the vast wilderness lying beyond the farm, Edgar comes of age in the wild, fighting for his survival and that of the three yearling dogs who follow him. But his need to face his father's murderer and his devotion to the Sawtelle dogs turn Edgar ever homeward.

David Wroblewski is a master storyteller, and his breathtaking scenes—the elemental north woods, the sweep of seasons, an iconic American barn, a fateful vision rendered in the falling rain—create a riveting family saga, a brilliant exploration of the limits of language, and a compulsively readable modern classic based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.