

Summer Reading Assignment: AP English Literature and Composition

AP English Literature and Composition is a skills based course teaching you how to read and write clearly about novels, poetry, and drama. The course is designed and organized to help you achieve a high score on the AP Exam in the spring. I am only assigning you two books to read this summer, but you can do yourself a favor by reading as much as you can.

1. First, read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas Foster. This is a helpful guide to reading literature independently. It will help you learn how to find the kinds of depth a lot of stories and poetry has on your own. When you read, pay particular attention to his introduction. His purpose is described there, and finding and understanding it will help you understand the reasons behind his reading strategies.
2. Read George Orwell's *1984* or J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. These two thoughtful novels have been influential for decades. *1984* is very political. It is about a man living under a tyrannical government. *The Catcher in the Rye* is about a young man growing up in the 1950s, who has to navigate his teenage angst, relationships, and mental illness without many supportive family ties. Use Thomas Foster's ideas about reading literature to guide your interpretation of your reading.
3. Write an essay about the novel you chose. Here are the parameters of the essay:
 - A. Write an argument about the novel. This is the role of your thesis statement. The thesis statement makes a claim about the novel.
 - B. Use quotes and evidence from the novel to support your argument.
 - C. Organize your thoughts into multiple paragraphs dealing with different aspects of your argument.
 - D. Include a conclusion. Remember, you are writing an *argument*. Think about what you're writing and ask yourself *so what? Why does this matter at all?* The answer to that question should be your conclusion. Make a connection to the world outside of the pages of the text.
 - E. Edit and revise your essay draft once you've finished writing it. Your essay shouldn't have any spelling errors or any serious grammar errors. You can have someone help you proofread it before you turn it in.
 - F. The essay should be no less than 1,000 words. You will submit it to [turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) before Monday, August 17th, at 7:30 AM.

The essay is worth 20 writing category points, the most heavily weighted category in my class. There will be time given during the first two days of school for you to ask clarifying questions about the assignment, or to come in and receive help revising.