

AP LITERATURE & COMPOSITION SUMMER ASSIGNMENTS

Glen Rock High School

Ms. Wechtler

Welcome to AP Literature and Composition. Starting now, we're preparing for the test in a university-level setting. Together, we will dive deeply into literature, the issues that drive writers to express themselves, and our own processes and identities as readers, thinkers, and writers. Be prepared to be challenged in this class: you will be writing critically and analytically *often*, and you will be reading high volumes purposefully through inquisitive eyes. Growth in this class takes commitment and a desire to consider multiple perspectives, to listen to one another's interpretations, to strive to improve our skills as writers, and to energetically engage in the work with a wide variety of texts.

I look forward to meeting you in September once you have **thoroughly** completed the summer assignments listed below. Be ready to submit work and use the reading beginning on our **first day** of class.

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I. Reading Assignments (Part 1): *Frankenstein* & *Exit West* + Notes

Students hoping to score high on the AP Literature exam are well-read. The exam's literary content spans generations, cultures, genres, and historical periods. For this reason, there is a considerable amount of reading material assigned over the summer, including *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid (plus a third book listed below).

Required Notes: The goal of your notes is *NOT* to write down every last plot point and detail, but rather to interact with the text; notes must reflect active thinking and observation -- if you want plot points, Google them. Interactive notes require and reflect close reading with the original text - an online summary could never suffice.

As you read both *Frankenstein* **and** *Exit West*, write notes that observe and reflect the following required content:

- Big picture (cultural, historical, literary, etc) questions the text raises and how it reflects on/answers them.
- The author's command and style of language via details, figurative language, literary devices, structure, etc.
- The organization and structure of the text as a whole - consider timelines, flashbacks, POV(s), memories, asides, setting changes, etc. Sometimes this is obvious and sometimes it's so subtle, it can be missed.
- Patterns that emerge - stylistically, structurally, thematically, and how those patterns are maintained or disrupted.
- The way in which characters are developed to be complex (*Frankenstein*: focus on Victor and the creature; *Exit West*: focus on Saeed and Nadia).
- 5 quotations that bear significance on the meaning of the text as a whole.

****Note:** You are encouraged to include observations and reflections that go beyond the above-required content. If you notice something significant in the text that perhaps does not fall into one of the above categories, do not be afraid to include it. Be on the lookout for SHIFTS (changes) throughout each text.

Suggested method for interacting with the text:

Read in chunks (ex. 10-15 pages or 1-2 chapters), then pause to write down *reflective* and *observational* notes. As you read, pop in small Post-it notes to mark "important ideas." Upon completion of the chunk, decide what "makes the cut" to add to your notes. **WARNING:** If you write pages of notes for a very short span of reading, you may actually go insane.

*****Notes must be handwritten.** It is highly suggested that you purchase your spiral notebook for our class IN THE SUMMER and complete your notes in there. **Maximum:** 10 pages PER book.

II. Reading Assignments (Part 2): Choice text & *Hamilton*

- A. **One book of choice from the list:** While you do not need to turn in a set of notes for the *choice* novel, please realize you will be asked to write about the novel in September; therefore, do any preparations needed to successfully and deeply write about your choice novel.

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce

Brave New World	<i>Brave New World</i> is a dystopian novel by English author Aldous Huxley, written in 1931 and published in 1932. Largely set in a futuristic World State, inhabited by genetically modified citizens and an intelligence-based social hierarchy, the novel anticipates huge scientific advancements in reproductive technology, sleep-learning, psychological manipulation and classical conditioning that are combined to make a dystopian society which is challenged by only a single individual: the story's protagonist.
Invisible Man	First published in 1952 and immediately hailed as a masterpiece, <i>Invisible Man</i> is one of those rare novels that have changed the shape of American literature. For not only does Ralph Ellison's nightmare journey across the racial divide tell unparalleled truths about the nature of bigotry and its effects on the minds of both victims and perpetrators, it gives us an entirely new model of what a novel can be. As he journeys from the Deep South to the streets and basements of Harlem, from a horrifying "battle royal" where black men are reduced to fighting animals, to a Communist rally where they are elevated to the status of trophies, Ralph Ellison's nameless protagonist ushers readers into a parallel universe that throws our own into harsh and even hilarious relief. Suspenseful and sardonic, narrated in a voice that takes in the symphonic range of the American language, black and white, <i>Invisible Man</i> is one of the most audacious and dazzling novels of our century.
The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man	The portrayal of Stephen Dedalus's Dublin childhood and youth, his quest for identity through art and his gradual emancipation from the claims of family, religion and Ireland itself, is also an oblique self-portrait of the young James Joyce and a universal testament to the artist's 'eternal imagination'. Both an insight into Joyce's life and childhood, and a unique work of modernist fiction, <i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i> is a novel of sexual awakening, religious rebellion and the essential search for voice and meaning that every nascent artist must face in order to blossom fully into themselves.

- B. **Hamilton:**

[*Hamilton*](#) will serve as an anchor text throughout our studies in AP Literature & Composition. We will return to it time and time again as a reference as we explore a wide range of literary and poetic devices. In 2016, Lin Manuel-Miranda was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *Hamilton*. It is important that you are familiar with the characters and storyline of *Hamilton*.

- **READ:** Use this [PDF](#) to read through the lyrics as you listen and/or watch the musical.
- **LISTEN:** Access the soundtrack online (Soundcloud, Spotify, iTunes, Youtube) *for free* and listen to it at least 2x through.
- **WATCH:** If you have access to Disney Plus, watch it! Gather your friends and family to make a night out of it. If you do not have Disney Plus, don't panic. We will watch scenes throughout the year.

Summer Assignments in Checklist Form:

- READ** *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
- WRITE** handwritten notes on *Frankenstein*
- READ** *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid
- WRITE** handwritten notes on *Exit West*
- READ** 1 book of choice (*Brave New World*, *Invisible Man*, or *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*)
- Be prepared to write about the choice book - notes are optional, but not a bad idea ;)
- READ / LISTEN TO / WATCH** *Hamilton*

III. [Contacting Ms. Wechtler](#)

While this summer's assignment is certainly heavy-duty, leave time for yourself. Do things that make you smile and bring you joy - the small stuff, the big stuff, and everything in between. **Pro-tip:** Trying to rush all your summer work for this class at the end of August will *NOT* work. A little every few days is a good plan! Leave space to dedicate quality time to each book and assignment - ***enjoy the process*** (*even the parts that are difficult*). Starting now, we are training and building our endurance for the 3-hour exam in May.

You may email me at wechtlers@glenrocknj.org this summer (please do not send me a Schoology message as I won't be visiting the website). It may take me up to a week to respond, so don't panic if you don't immediately hear back.

See you in September.