



2026 Summer Reading

AP Literature

How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster

Choose a book from this website: Albert IO – The Ultimate AP English Literature Reading List
<https://www.albert.io/blog/ultimate-ap-english-literature-reading-list/>

*You may choose any book except *Frankenstein* because we will be reading that in class

Journal Questions Directions: Choose FIVE chapters from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* that you think apply to your novel, and analyze your novel using the literary techniques you learned about in Foster’s book. Respond to the prompts corresponding to the chapters you choose. Discuss the application to your novel by using specific textual evidence from both books to support your interpretation. Avoid listing or just “pointing out” information you should analyze and look for the larger meaning created via the use of literary techniques (why or how is it important to the overall understanding or meaning of the novel?) You may organize your analysis in any way you choose, but it should be typed and formatted following MLA format. Each answer should be at least a half page long.

In addition: You will need to complete a rough draft of your Common Application Essay. This is something that you will be working on with the counselor to use for college applications, so it is important to finish this by August because there will be a workshop at that time that will assist you in revising and editing your draft. For this draft, respond to one of the following prompts on this website (Common App’s 2026-2027 Essay Prompts): <https://www.commonapp.org/blog/announcing-2026-2027-common-app-essay-prompts>

Introduction: How'd He Do That? Using your summer choice novel, what memories, symbols, and patterns do you recognize from other works of literature, film, or music?

Chapter 1: Every Trip Is a Quest (Except when it's not) List FIVE aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to your summer choice novel; you should use pages 3-5 of Foster's book.

Chapter 2: Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion Is there a "communion" scene in your summer choice novel? Is it a bonding for the characters or a failure? Describe the scene and how it contributes to the overall meaning of the novel.

Chapter 3: Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires What are the essentials of the vampire story and what do they represent? Apply this to your summer choice novel.

Chapter 4: Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before? Define "intertextuality." Discuss an example that has helped you relate to your student choice novel.

Chapter 5: When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare Discuss how your summer choice novel alludes to or reflects Shakespeare and show how the author uses this connection thematically. Reread pages 39-41 carefully. In these pages, Foster shows how Fugard reflects Shakespeare through both plot and theme. In your discussion, focus on theme.

Chapter 6. . . Or the Bible What are some of the ways that your summer choice novel alludes to the Bible?

Chapter 7: Hansel and Gretel How does your summer choice novel reflect a fairy tale? Discuss the parallels. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation?

Chapter 8: It's Greek to Me What are some of the ways that your summer choice novel alludes to mythology?

Chapter 9: It's More Than Just Rain or Snow Discuss the importance of weather in your summer choice novel and how it applies to the plot.

Chapter 10: Never Stand Next to the Hero Describe a flat/static character from your novel and discuss the importance of his or her relationship with the main character.

Chapter 11: . . . More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence Present examples of the kinds of violence found in your summer choice novel.

Chapter 12: Is That a Symbol? What's the difference between symbolism and allegory? How does the author of your summer choice novel use symbolism/allegory in the text?

Chapter 13: It's All Political Assume that Foster is right and "it is all political." Use his criteria to show that your summer choice novel is political.

Chapter 14: Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too Apply the criteria on page 126-129 to a major character in a significant literary work and discuss how he or she fits the criteria of a Christ Figure.

Chapter 15: Flights of Fancy Explain how your summer choice novel has a scene in which flight signifies escape or freedom. Explain in detail.

Chapter 18: If She Comes Up, It's Baptism Is there a "baptism scene" in your summer choice novel? How was the character different after the experience? Discuss.

Chapter 19: Geography Matters . . . Discuss at least four different aspects of your summer choice novel that Foster would classify under “geography”.

Chapter 20: . . . So Does Season If your summer choice novel mentions a specific season, then discuss how the author uses the season in a meaningful, traditional, or unusual way.

Interlude: One Story Write your own definition for archetype. Identify an archetypal story and apply it to your summer choice novel.

Chapter 21: Marked for Greatness Figure out Harry Potter’s scar, then select another character (from your summer choice novel) with a physical imperfection and analyze its implications for characterization.

Chapter 22: He’s Blind for a Reason, You Know What does physical blindness mirror in one of the characters in your summer choice novel?

Chapter 23: It’s Never Just Heart Disease. . . What are some of the symbolic possibilities associated with the heart? How is it manifested in a character from your summer choice novel?

Chapter 24: Don’t’ Read with Your Eyes How did your summer choice novel force you to not read with your eyes?

Chapter 25: It’s My Symbol and I’ll Cry if I Want To What private symbol is used in your summer choice novel? Explain its significance and how the author uses it in the novel.

Chapter 26: Is he Serious? Does your summer choice novel adhere to the phrase “Irony trumps Everything” Explain how the author uses irony in the novel?

Rubric

Criteria	Points
MLA Format: the correct header is used, correct font and size, double spaced, page numbers	10 points
Length: each answer should be at least half a page long	25 points (5 per chapter)
Answers the question fully: each answer should address all points in the chapter’s prompt	55 points (11 per chapter)
Grammar and Spelling: generally free of grammatical and spelling errors.	10 points