

**Summer 2010 Reading Assignments  
Advanced Placement Senior Literature**

**Collins Hill High School  
Mrs. Silver**

Please read through these assignments carefully. Since you will need to have access to the works you read during the school year, I encourage you to purchase a copy from a used bookstore or to borrow one from a friend or family member, rather than borrowing one from the local library. If you have any questions as you work, please feel free to call me (Mrs. Silver 770 339 9485 ). I will be out of town part of the summer. **Please read the attached essay by Adler about the importance of marking up your books as you read.**

**Materials**

- Copies of at least five poems by your favorite poet
- *Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
- A copy of your novel of choice
- The “Explicating Poetry” handout (attached)

**Assignments**

**I. Poetry—Due Monday of Week 1**

**Submit in this order: 5 poems; your original poem; your analysis.**

Check out from a library, purchase, or copy from a book at least five poems by one of the following poets. Keep all work for the poetry assignment together in your notebook, and clearly label parts A, B, and C.

Maya Angelou  
Matthew Arnold  
W. H. Auden  
William Blake  
Gwendolyn Brooks  
Robert Browning  
Elizabeth Barrett Browning  
Billy Collins  
Countee Cullen  
Emily Dickinson  
John Donne  
Robert Frost

James Weldon Johnson  
John Keats  
Edgar Lee Masters  
Sylvia Plath  
Edwin Arlington Robinson  
Carl Sandburg  
William Shakespeare  
Percy Bysshe Shelley  
Alfred, Lord Tennyson  
Dylan Thomas  
Walt Whitman  
William Wordsworth

- A. Read, analyze, explicate, and evaluate at least five poems by the same author. Use the “Explicating Poetry” handout to facilitate your study. You may also want to read criticism and biographical information about your selected poet. (This is your preparation for a more formal response to the poet’s work in parts B and C.) **You do not have to make this part of the assignment a formal piece of writing; this part will not be graded, except as it relates to your understanding of the poet’s work.** Notes will be fine.
- B. Write an original poem in the style of your studied poet. Attempt to imitate the poet’s characteristic style and typical thematic intent. If the poet uses strong formal elements, such as rhythm and rhyme scheme, pay close attention to these as well. If the poet normally writes in iambic pentameter, for example, you must use that meter, or if you are studying 5 sonnets by a poet, use the sonnet form. (Take this assignment seriously.)

- C. Write a short (500-word maximum), first-person essay in which you discuss both your poet's style, themes, etc., and specifically how you attempted to imitate this style in your original poem.

## II. Novel: *Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini —Due Tuesday of Week 1

As you read this novel, mark it carefully in the manner suggested by Adler's essay. (Since this is a favorite used by the College Board in the AP lit exam, you want to take very good notes on this novel.) Secondly, write down at least 5 good, open-ended discussion questions to be used in our discussion of this novel. You may expect an objective test over this novel sometime after the first week of school. This will be the first novel that we study in class.

## III. A Choice Novel—Due Monday of Week 2

- A. Choose a novel from the following list and be ready for a creative assessment when you return. Again, read with pen and highlighter in hand as you read this novel. It will be part of the evidence that you have read it.

*Lords of Discipline* by Pat Conroy  
*Ordinary People* by Judith Guest  
*One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey  
*Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison  
*Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison  
*Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin  
*The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway  
*The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* by Carson McCullers  
*Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck  
*Passage to India* by E. M. Forester  
*Till We Have Faces* by C. S. Lewis (Lewis fans will love this one!)  
*The Power of One* by Bryce Courtney  
*Native Son* by Richard Wright  
*The Kitchen God's Wife* by Amy Tan  
*The Atonement* by Ian McEwan  
*All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy  
*Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* by Anne Tyler  
*In the Time of Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez  
*The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien  
*A Thousand Acres* by Jane Smiley

LA: Advanced Placement English

## Explicating Poetry

- 1. Preview the poem.**
  - What do you know about the author?
  - Does the title convey meaning?
  - Is the form stanzaic or fixed?
  - Is the language archaic or modern?
  - Does it have meter and rhyme, or is it in free verse?
- 2. Read the poem out loud (seriously!).** When reading for *meaning*, read like prose.
- 3. Paraphrase the poem.**
  - Change sentences into normal word order: subject-verb-object
  - Pay close attention to punctuation for sentence/syntactical sense.
  - Be sure you know what pronouns refer to and what phrases modify.
  - Look up unfamiliar words and words used in unusual contexts.
  - Try to make literal meaning out of figurative language.
- 4. Note the narrative elements of the poem:** characters, time and place setting, and point of view.
- 5. Look for levels of meaning.** Although poetry may be simply an imaginative expression of a literal event, more often it attempts to communicate a more profound meaning. A poem may imply a deeper meaning in several ways; for example:
  - as a poetic expression of a fictitious character or event from which to draw meaning about all men
  - as a symbolic or metaphorical representation of something greater
  - as an ironic comment about man and his situation
  - as an attempt to convey a broad theme through a specific event or example.
- 6. Paraphrase the poet's theme.** Put in your own words what you believe the poet intends to communicate. Consider how biographical information and historical events impact upon interpretation. Read the poem again.
- 7. Look at how the separate elements of the poem contribute to the whole.** Analyze how the author achieves tone and how stylistic choices contribute to meaning and affect the strength of thematic impact. Consider sound devices, rhythm, meter, diction, syntax, imagery, connotations, symbols, allusions, personification, irony, similes, metaphors, choice and arrangements of details, form, etc.
- 8. Evaluate how well the poem achieves its intended effect.**
- 9. Personally respond to the poem's strength and appeal.**

## From “How to Mark a Book” by Mortimer J. Adler

There are two ways in which one can own a book. The first is the property right you establish by paying for it, just as you pay for clothes and furniture. But this act of purchase is only the prelude to possession. *Full ownership comes only when you have made it a part of yourself*, and the best way to make yourself a part of it is by writing in it. An illustration may make the point clear. You buy a beefsteak and transfer it from the butcher’s ice-box to your own. But you do not own the steak in the most important sense until you consume it and get it into your bloodstream to do you any good.

. . . *The soul of a book CAN be separated from its body.* A body is more like the score of a piece of music than it is like a painting. No great musician confuses a symphony with the printed sheets of music. However, the reason why a great conductor makes notations on his musical scores—marks them up again and again each time he returns to study them—is the reason why you should mark up your books. If your respect for magnificent binding or typography gets in the way, buy yourself a cheap edition and pay your respects to the author.

Why is marking up a book indispensable to reading it? First, *it keeps you awake.* (And I don’t mean merely conscious; I mean wide awake.) In the second place, *reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written.* The marked book is usually the THOUGHT-THROUGH BOOK. Finally, *writing helps you to remember the thoughts you had*, or the thoughts the author expressed.

If reading is to accomplish anything more than passing time, it must be active. You can’t let your eyes glide across the lines of a book and come up with an understanding of what you have read. The physical act of writing, with your own hand, brings words and sentences more sharply before your mind and preserves them better in your memory. To set down your action to important words and sentences you have read, and the questions they have raised in your mind, is to preserve those reactions and sharpen those questions.

. . . Best of all, your marks and notes become an integral part of the book and stay there forever. You can pick up the book the following week or year, and there are all your points of agreement, disagreement, doubt, and inquiry. It’s like resuming an interrupted conversation with the advantage of being able to pick up where you left off.

### **And that is exactly what reading a book should be: a conversation between you and the author.**

Devices for notating: 1) *underlining*: of major points, of important statements; 2) *stars or asterisks* for important sentences; 3) *Circling* key words or phrases; 4) *writing in the margin* or at the top of the page (or bottom) for the sake of: recording questions (and perhaps answers) which a passage raised in your mind; reducing a complicated discussion to a single statement; recording the sequence of major points through the book; [4] *highlighting* significant lines or passages.

### **Sample cueing questions:**

- As you think ahead to your next day’s reading, what possible directions might the story take? How do you hope the story will unfold?
- What surprised you about the section you read today? How does this change affect what might happen next in the story?
- As you read today, what feelings did you experience in response to events or characters (e.g., irritation, wonder, disbelief, recognition, dislike), and why do you think you responded this way?
- What questions do you hope to have answered the next day as you read?

- What startling/unusual/effective words, phrases, expressions, or images did you come across in your reading today that you would like to have explained or clarified? Which ones would you like to use in your own writing?
- If the setting and characters were changed to reflect your own neighborhood and friends and acquaintances, how would the events of the story also have to change and why would that be so?
- After reading this far, what more do you hope to learn about what these characters plan to do, what they think, feel, believe, or what happens to them?
- With which characters do you identify most closely or feel the most sympathy? What is it about these characters that makes you feel this way?
- How much do you personally agree or disagree with the way various characters think and act and the kinds of beliefs and values they hold? Where do you differ and why?
- What issues in this novel are similar to real-life issues what you've thought about or had some kind of experience with? How has the story clarified or confused or changed your views on any of these issues?
- What characters and situations in the story remind you of people and situations in your own life? How are they similar and how do they differ?
- How did the characters or events in this book remind you of characters or events in other books you've read or movies or television shows you've seen? Do you prefer one of these treatments over the others? If so, why?

