

## AP Literature Summer Reading Assignment: 2023

In order for the participants in the AP Literature and Composition course to cover the necessary scope of literature before the exam in May, they will participate in summer reading.

*Please be aware that your teacher is keenly aware of web-based study guides for these texts and will be able to tell if you rely primarily on Sparknotes or Cliffnotes to fulfill the assignment. YOU **MUST** READ THE WORKS WITHOUT ASSISTANCE FROM ONLINE SOURCES TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS LITERATURE COURSE!*

**Most importantly:** Every year, there are a few students who choose to plagiarize their essays. This is an assignment that requires you to consult **nothing** but the two works themselves; you should not consult **any** published writing about the titles. If you choose to reference something specific from Foster's book, you must cite it in the essay. Remember, plagiarism is the inclusion of **any** ideas or any portions of ideas found in someone else's work, printed word-for-word **OR** otherwise, without proper citation. Your instructor is adept at spotting this and will punish the behavior to the fullest extent of BCPS policy, including **a 0 on the assignment, a disciplinary referral, detention, and notifying home.**

---

**Due:** Both texts **MUST** be read **before the beginning of the school year**, as the **first couple of weeks** will focus on deep-dives into the literature paired with introductory AP skills and concepts. **The essay, however, will be collected during the LAST WEEK of SEPTEMBER 2023.**

**STEP ONE:** Obtain a copy of Thomas Foster's fantastic book *How to Read Literature like a Professor*. This can be found at your public library or easily purchased on Amazon or other online book sellers (**always** opt for the cheaper used copies rather than the new expensive ones). This is an entertaining book that introduces readers to several tried-and-true methods of analyzing literature. It is written for casual readers, so it is not as "dense" as you may expect. Be sure to read it **all**, including the **preface** and the **introduction** - we will *continue* to discuss the ideas in the Foster text and connect those ideas to our in-class novels throughout the year (*feel free to take notes on these chapters if that will help you, though notes will not be collected*). Note: some references made may be outdated – do your best to utilize them for 2023 regardless! You will need to prepare to reference and discuss 3+ key chapters of this work in your essay.

**STEP TWO:** Obtain and read *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien. This is one of Ms. Donahue's favorites **EVER**. This text is a collection of short stories (*metafiction*) focused on his personal experience as a soldier with the 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry during the Vietnam War. *While you can feel free to read up on O'Brien and this text to better understand how it is written, avoid reading analysis of the stories so your essay is all your own analysis rather than online sources.* This text can be found through the Baltimore County Public Library or easily purchased online (please consider looking for a cheap copy to save money).

**Disclaimer:** *The Things They Carried* is a mature text. This collection of stories – like many stories we will read together this upcoming year – may use language deemed inappropriate in other school settings, may discuss mature and sexual content, and may include viewpoints that you personally do not share. **AP Literature is an elective, college course that is not required for you to take and therefore no alternative texts will be provided.** It is our jobs as scholars to maturely discuss all texts, opinions, and viewpoints, even if we do not share them. **Here is CollegeBoard's direct language:** "Issues that might, from a cultural view, be considered controversial, including depictions of nationalities, religions, ethnicities, dialects, gender, or class, are often represented artistically in works of literature. AP students are not expected or asked to subscribe to any one specific set of cultural or political values, but are expected to have the maturity to analyze perspectives different from their own and to question the meaning, purpose, or effect of such content within the literary work as a whole" (AP Literature Course and Exam Description 2019). *Thank you.*

**STEP THREE:** Using the insight you've gained from *How to Read Literature like a Professor*, write a **3-5-page essay** in which you analyze the stories of *The Things They Carried*.

- Be sure to anchor your analysis with a main thesis/claim that expresses the **meaning of the text as you see it** (the less-obvious, the better – we are aiming for that sophistication point which requires analysis of unique, well-developed perspectives). *In AP Literature, we will ALWAYS discuss the meaning of the work as a whole statement, rather than a simple 'theme' statement.*
- While you do not need to discuss EACH story in *TTTC*, you should **discuss multiple at length (3+ stories/chapters)** and perhaps *reference the others* that you deem most important.
- In your analysis essay, connect aspects of Foster's text to the meaning you've stated in the thesis. Ideally, **you should discuss 3+ chapters (with insights, not just summary) of Foster's text for deep analysis of TTTC and your related thesis.**
  - In other words, determine the **deeper meaning of O'Brien's text**, referencing and explaining the insights learned from **Foster's text** to unpack and support the deeper meaning you have found.

### EXAMPLE THESES:

“Khalid Hosseini examines the effect of remorse and guilt over time and suggests that the human spirit inevitably seeks redemption.” (*The Kite Runner*)

“Khalid Hosseini challenges power disparity among ethnic and religious groups and exposes its ability to undermine family bonds.” (*The Kite Runner*)

### PAPER REQUIREMENTS:

Your paper **MUST**:

- Be typed in complete MLA format (use Purdue Owl online for help)
- Be 3-5 pages long
- Avoid mere plot summary (focus on ANALYSIS and MEANING instead)
- Include direct textual evidence used for analysis, NOT summary
- Include direct and indirect references to Foster's texts and ideas (connections!)
- Include in-text parenthetical citations for all quotations
- Include a Works Cited page (not included in page length requirement)
- Show an attempt to break free from the traditional 5-paragraph structure, and an attempt to break free from 'basic' analysis – move into deeper level commentary and analysis, in which you develop a unique perspective on the text and discover significant meanings within
- Be free of spelling, grammatical errors

**DUE:** Both texts **MUST** be read before the beginning of the school year, as the first couple of weeks will focus on deep-dives into the literature paired with introductory AP skills and concepts. **The essay, however, will be collected during the LAST WEEK of SEPTEMBER 2023.**

Please submit to Schoology **and** bring a printed copy if possible.

Please contact me with any questions.  
[sdonahue@bcps.org](mailto:sdonahue@bcps.org) / through Schoology.  
 Have a great summer and happy reading!  
 - Ms. Donahue