



Dear 2017 – 2018 Advanced Placement Literature Students:

Welcome to AP Literature and Composition. Following is the list of summer assignments. These assignments are designed to prepare you for the kinds of work we will be doing in AP Literature throughout the school year.

1. READING AND NOTETAKING:

First, read *The Tempest*, a play by William Shakespeare, and *Wuthering Heights*, a novel by Emily Brontë. These works will help to frame our discussions about the challenges of determining (or making) meaning out of texts. On the following pages, you will find reading guides for each of these works. Prepare for class discussions by taking notes in response to the prompts on these reading guides. Your notes are for your use and will not be collected.

Under no circumstances should you use SparkNotes or other similar aids in developing your interpretations of the assigned reading. These assignments are prerequisites for the course, and failure to do or have them will result in exclusion from the course. We encourage you to discuss these readings with one another and to share ideas throughout the summer.

2. POETRY:

Additionally, you will complete some assignments in *Sound and Sense*, an instructional book on reading poetry. We highly advise you to get started on this work early and to pace yourself over the summer. Completing the responses to the poems takes more time than it might initially appear.

- **Read the appendix, “Writing about Poetry” (pages 343-373).** We will expect you to apply the instructions in this appendix to your written responses to the poems in *Sound and Sense* and also all future essays about poetry.
- **Read chapters 1 and 2 of *Sound and Sense*. Be sure to READ the chapters.** You will be responsible for their content.
- **Respond (in complete sentences unless otherwise indicated) to the prompts that follow each poems listed below.** These responses must be word-processed and submitted on the first day of class.
 - From chapter 1, poems numbered: 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10,
 - From chapter 2, poems numbered: 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

Responding to the prompts that follow each of these fourteen poems will take some time. Please do not wait until the last minute to get started.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Please start to gather applications for the colleges that interest you. **We highly recommend that you write your college essays before the year begins.** You will have a lot of writing to do once the year begins, so please work on your college applications over the summer.

Reading Guide for *Wuthering Heights*, by Emily Brontë

What happens when any certain meaning crumbles under examination and analysis? This mysterious and inscrutable text presents us with an unreliable narrator and a story that transcends definition, just as its ghosts transcend the physical world. *Wuthering Heights* is one of the most intense, disturbing, and famous love stories in all of English literature. It is Emily Brontë's only novel – and a work of incomparable genius.

We will use *Wuthering Heights* to consider how both the texts and readers are situated socially, culturally, and politically – and how these “situations” affect interpretation and, ultimately, meaning.

As you read *Wuthering Heights*, consider and take notes on (and/or use sticky tabs to mark passages for) the following things. These notes will not be collected; they are for your use and benefit.

1. Narration and Point(s)-of-view

Lockwood is the primary narrator of this novel, but Nelly Dean narrates most of the events of the story. Why? Who is each narrator in relation to the events? What is the significance of the framed narrative structure of the text?

2. Use of Time

Note the way that Brontë structures the plot of the novel. How, when, and why does the story move between the present and the past?

3. The Supernatural and Unrealistic/Supernatural Events

Examine the function of unrealistic and supernatural characters and events in *Wuthering Heights*. What purpose(s) do they serve? Are the ghosts in the story real?

4. The Setting and the Mood

Where and when is the novel set? Note the extent to which the setting is insular. How do Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange serve as binaries in the novel? How does weather contribute to the meaning and mood of the text? What is the thematic significance of the moorlands?

5. Love, Betrayal, and Revenge

Often, people pick up *Wuthering Heights* expecting to find a romantic, if intense, love story. But the novel is filled with anger, violence, and vengeance. To what extent is the novel a love story? To what extent is it a story of revenge? Which dominates the text?

6. Cycles and Generations

Character names and types repeat across generations. What is the significance of this repetition? There are two primary generations in the story (the first including Cathy, Heathcliff, Hindley, Edgar Linton, and Isabella Linton; the second including Cathy, Linton, Hareton.) What is the significance of the early deaths of the parents of those of the first generation? What similarities and differences do you notice among the characters from the two primary generations? How does the second generation repeat and/or break the cycle of the generation before it? What do you make of the ending of the novel?

7. The Significance of Windows

Consider the paradoxical nature of windows. Think about the way they both create a barrier and a way “in.” What is “inside”? What does “inside” represent in this text? What is “outside”? What does “outside” represent in this text? Do close readings of the following moments in particular:

- Lockwood's Catherine Dream
- Catherine and Heathcliff looking in at Thrushcross Grange
- Catherine's Illness
- Death scenes involving windows

Reading Guide for *The Tempest*, by William Shakespeare

1. Consider the **significance of the setting** of the play.
2. Though the play begins with a storm, it is a relatively short-lived event. However, the tempest is clearly central to the meaning of the play. **What might the tempest symbolize?** Interpret its significance. What is the significance of the scene involving the sailors who are only peripheral characters in the story?
3. What is the significance of **MEMORY** in this play? What is Shakespeare saying about memory?
4. Consider the significance of **EXILE** in the play.
5. Trace Shakespeare's use of the word "**BRAVE**" in this play. What is its significance?
6. **LANGUAGE** is very important in the play. Consider the significance of who can speak it, who owns it, who, silences others, who is silenced, etc. Notice which of the characters speak in verse and which in prose. Interpret the significance of these things.
7. Interpret the character of **PROSPERO**. Consider the character of Prospero as a representation of **THE ARTIST**. In what ways is he like an artist?
8. Interpret the character **SYCORAX**, who does not appear in the play. What is her significance? Consider her in relation especially to Caliban (as mother) and Prospero (as rival magician).
9. Interpret the character **MIRANDA**. Consider the significance of her name. What is her relative power in the play? What is her role? Interpret her character from a feminist, allegorical, and psychological perspective.
10. Interpret the characters **CALIBAN** and **ARIEL**. Caliban is clearly an antagonist in the play, but is he meant to be sympathetic or unsympathetic? How can you tell? Consider the significance of his association with the "earth." In what ways are Caliban and Ariel different? Similar? What might Ariel symbolize?
11. There are a lot of **BINARIES** in the play. Consider the significance of each and all of the following:
 - Continent and Island
 - Sailors and Courtiers
 - Air and Earth
 - Master and Servant
 - Bondage and Freedom
 - Monster and Man
 - Chaos (storm) and Order (calm)
 - Society and Isolation
 - Activity and Study
 - Man and Woman
 - Good and Evil
12. Consider the significance of **POWER, BETRAYAL, and REVENGE** in the play. How are these things connected?
13. Many critics believe that Shakespeare was influenced by **Michel de Montaigne's essay "The Cannibals of Brazil"** and the cultural relativism his essay promotes. Read Montaigne's essay (pp. 107 -109). What do you think?
14. Shakespeare's late works are difficult to categorize. They are neither histories nor tragedies, and they are not quite as light as earlier comedies. Often, they are termed "romances" or "tragicomedies." What features of *The Tempest* make it difficult to categorize?

Be sure to consider connections between *The Tempest* and *Wuthering Heights*, including:

- **Stormy weather: Note that both titles (*The Tempest* and *Wuthering Heights*) include references to intense winds**
- **Betrayal and revenge**
- **Devilish characters (Caliban and Heathcliff)**
- **The conflict between reason/civilization and passion/barbarism**
- **Isolated settings**
- **Others...**

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