

*Fairfield Ludlowe High School*

*785 Unquowa Road*

Fairfield, Connecticut 06824-5001

Phone: 203-255-7201 Fax: 203-255-7213



---

**June 11, 2015**

**Dear 2015 – 2016 Advanced Placement Literature Students:**

Welcome to AP Literature. 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.

You are asked to read three books: Two will be common reading experiences (*To the Lighthouse* and *A Visit from the Goon Squad*). These works illuminate the first thematic unit of study for the course: “The Artist, Beauty, and Aesthetics.” The third book you will select from a list of choices. See below.

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.

**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. For this reason, we are not assigning any formal summer writing.** You will have a lot of writing to do once the year begins, so please work on your college applications over the summer.

**PART ONE:**  
**AP Literature and Composition Summer Reading**

**1. *To the Lighthouse*, by Virginia Woolf (fiction)**

One of the finest and most renowned novels of the twentieth century, *To the Lighthouse* is an impressionistic portrait of the Ramsay family in the time immediately before and after World War I. The Ramsays are a British family with a summer house off the coast of Scotland, and their home and its setting (the rocky beach, the incessant ocean waves, and – of course – the distant lighthouse) become an integral part of this finely wrought vision. Eudora Welty, a famous author in her own right, once wrote:

*To the Lighthouse* is at once ethereal and firm, as perhaps only a vision can be. It is an exertion, a vaunting, a triumph of wonder, of imaginative speculation and defiance; it is that bolt of lightning Virginia Woolf began with, an instantaneous burst of coherence over chaos and the dark. She has shown us the shape of the human spirit.

**2. *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, by Jennifer Egan (fiction)**

This recent Pulitzer Prize winner for fiction is already on its way to becoming a post-modern classic. In her review for *The Observer*, Sarah Churchwell explains:

[*A Visit from the Goon Squad*] is a book about memory and kinship, time and narrative, continuity and disconnection, in which relationships shift and recombine kaleidoscopically...The "goon squad"...is one character's name for time: "Time's a goon, right? You gonna let that goon push you around?" Everyone in the book is pushed around by time, circumstance and, occasionally, the ones they love... Characters who are marginal in one chapter become the focus of the next; the narrative alternates not only between first-person and third-person accounts, but – perhaps just because she can – Egan throws in a virtuosic second-person story as well...

**3. Book of Choice:**

Select one of the following options. Please note that the starred texts are available in the FLHS book-room. Be aware that if you select one of the books without a star, you will be responsible for acquiring a copy on your own. (Some of these books are also available electronically.) Also note that if you choose to read plays, you are required to read more than one because they are significantly shorter.

\**One Hundred Years of Solitude*, by Gabriel García Márquez

\**Crime and Punishment*, by Fyodor Dostoevsky

*Invisible Man*, by Ralph Ellison

*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, by Thomas Hardy

*Moby Dick*, by Herman Melville

*Othello* and *The Winter's Tale*, by William Shakespeare

\*The three Theban plays: *Oedipus Rex*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*, by Sophocles

*The Portrait of a Lady*, by Henry James

*Persuasion*, by Jane Austen

\**Wuthering Heights*, by Emily Brontë

**PART TWO:**  
**AP Literature and Composition**  
**Summer Note-taking: *To the Lighthouse* and *A Visit from the Goon Squad***

The summer reading for AP Lit is an integral part of the course. We will be spending a good deal of time with these books in class, so it really is essential that you read them carefully and bring them with you to class. You may choose to purchase the summer reading books. Owning the books will enable you to highlight passages and take notes in the margins as you read. However, you can get copies of the books from the FLHS library. We will expect you to demonstrate familiarity with the texts and to be able to turn to direct passages with facility.

In addition to your own observations, please take notes on the topics below as you read *To the Lighthouse* and *A Visit from the Goon Squad*:

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

Who are the narrators of each work? To what extent is each reliable or unreliable? When do any switches in point-of-view occur? What do they signify?

**2. Use of Time**

Note the way that each of the author employs time in his or her work. How much time is covered in each of the works? (Be specific.) When does the action begin and/or end? How are flashbacks and/or flash-forwards employed? What thematic purposes do they serve? How does time move—chronologically, cyclically, and/or chaotically?

**3. Interstices and Pauses**

Examine the function of spaces between (times, and places, and people) in both of these works. To what extent are distances overcome and/or bridged? What happens in the pauses?

**4. Art, the Artist, and Aesthetics**

Examine the relationship among artist, subject, art, and life. What kinds of art are created by the characters in these works? What is the value of art, for the artists and for their audiences? How might these authors define the relationship between artistic beauty and truth?

**PART THREE:**  
**AP Literature and Composition**  
**Summer Note-taking: Book of Choice**

Again, select and read one of the following books:

- \**One Hundred Years of Solitude*, by Gabriel García Márquez
- \**Crime and Punishment*, by Fyodor Dostoevsky
- Invisible Man*, by Ralph Ellison
- Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, by Thomas Hardy
- Moby Dick*, by Herman Melville
- Othello* and *The Winter's Tale*, by William Shakespeare
- \*The three Theban plays: *Oedipus Rex*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*, by Sophocles
- The Portrait of a Lady*, by Henry James
- Persuasion*, by Jane Austen
- \**Wuthering Heights*, by Emily Brontë

One of the essay prompts on the AP Literature and Composition exam asks students to write about a thematic or stylistic element in a literary book of the students' choosing. The prompts give a general direction, and students are expected to develop insightful and compelling analysis by citing detail from an appropriate book. Follow the link below to see a list of all prompts that have been used on the exam through the years.

[http://mseffie.com/AP/Open\\_Questions.pdf](http://mseffie.com/AP/Open_Questions.pdf)

As you are reading your book of choice, scan the list of prompts to find the best matches for your book. By the time you are done reading, select and print the three prompts which you believe would lead to the most productive writing about your book, and bring them to class with you on day one. These prompts can also serve as lenses for your notes on this book.

For your book of choice, you should also take general notes to help you recall and understand the book's setting, key characters, central conflicts, imagery, symbolism, and themes. Consider – what do you have to say about the meaning of this book, as a whole?