

How to Read Literature Like a Professor: Summer Reading Assignment

Address ten of the following chapter prompts with developed and thoughtful responses.

Please type and double-space all responses in 12-point Times New Roman.

You will be required to enter your work into turnitin.com during the first week of the fall semester.

Introduction: "How'd He Do That?"

How do memory, symbol, and pattern affect the reading of literature? How does the recognition of patterns make it easier to read complicated literature?

Discuss a time when your appreciation of a literary work was enhanced by understanding symbol or pattern.

Chapter 1—"Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not)"

List the five aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to something you have read (or viewed) according to the criteria on pages 3-5. Be sure to articulate how this text works as a quest for all five aspects.

Genius Bonus: Try to write this in the voice of the author of our book, Thomas Foster. Think about his tone, diction choices, and attitude towards his readers.

Chapter 2—"Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion"

Choose a meal from a literary work and apply the ideas of Chapter 2 to this literary depiction. How does this fit into the notion of communion?

Chapter 3—"Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires"

What are the essentials of the Vampire story according to our author? Apply this to a literary work you have read or viewed.

Chapter 4—"If It's Square, It's a Sonnet"

Select three sonnets (you can cut-and-paste them into your document) and show which form they are. Discuss how their content reflects the form. (Submit copies of the sonnets, marked to show your analysis). A useful website to locate great poetry, including sonnets specifically, is the Poetry Out Loud website.

Chapter 5—"Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?" Define intertextuality.

Discuss three examples that have helped you in reading specific works.

Chapter 6—"When in Doubt, It's from Shakespea"

Discuss a work that you are familiar with that alludes to or reflects Shakespeare. Show how the author uses this connection thematically. In this chapter, Foster shows how Fugard reflects Shakespeare through both plot and theme. In your discussion, focus on theme.

Chapter 7—"Or the Bible"

On the Internet, locate and print a copy of the James Joyce short story "Araby," which is briefly mentioned in this chapter. Read the story once for understanding, then look through to see if you can locate any Biblical allusions that Foster does not mention. Look at the example of the "two great jars." Be creative and imaginative in your connections and flag any words that seem odd and potentially symbolic. Then research these phrases or key words. (If you are totally unfamiliar with the Bible, read the first book, Genesis, online. It is the beginning of the Old Testament, which is read by Christians, Muslims, and Jews

and is considered the cornerstone of Western Literature. If you plan to read Western Literature, being familiar with the biblical stories in Genesis—the creation of the world and humanity, the significance of the Garden of Eden, the problem of free will, and the introduction of evil to the world—will be helpful in your understanding of our culture.)

Chapter 8—"Hansel and Gretel"

Think of a work of literature (not a television show or film) that reflects a fairy tale. If you haven't read any fairy tales, take a break and enjoy a few. Discuss the parallels. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation? How?

Chapter 9—"It's Greek to Me"

Write a free verse poem (if you are not sure what this means—look it up) of at least 14 lines that is derived or inspired by characters or situations from Greek mythology. If you aren't familiar with myth, check out one of Edith Hamilton's guides to Greek myth: she is considered the premier woman classicist scholar. Be prepared to share your poem with us.

Chapter 10—"It's More Than Just Rain or Snow"

Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work, beyond mere plot. Interlude—Does He Mean That?

Chapter 11—"More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence"

Present examples of the two kinds of violence found in literature. Show how the effects are different.

Chapter 12—"Is That a Symbol?"

Use the process described on page 113-114 and investigate the symbolism of the fence in "Araby." (Mangan's sister stands behind it.)

Chapter 13—"It's All Political"

Assume that Foster is right and "it is all political." Use his criteria to show that one of the major works you have read is political.

Chapter 14—"Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too"

Apply the criteria on page 126 to a major character in a significant literary work (not a film). Try to choose a character that will have many matches. This is a particularly apt tool for analyzing film—for example, Star Wars, Cool Hand Luke, Excalibur, Malcolm X, Braveheart, Spartacus, Gladiator and Ben-Hur. 4

Chapter 15—"Flights of Fancy"

Select a literary work, other than Song of Solomon, in which flight signifies escape or freedom. Explain in detail. If you can't come up with any ideas, go to the library and read Ralph Ellison's short story "Flying Home," and African-American literary classic.

Chapter 16 - 17 Skip these chapters

Chapter 18—"If She Comes Up, It's Baptism"

Think of a "baptism scene" from a significant literary work, other than Song of Solomon. How was the character different after the experience? Discuss in writing.

Chapter 19—"Geography Matters"

Discuss at least four different aspects of a specific literary work that Foster would classify under “geography.”

Chapter 20--“So Does Season”

Find a poem that mentions a specific season (Poetry Out Loud website is helpful). Then discuss how the poet uses the season in a meaningful, traditional, or unusual way. (Submit a copy of the poem with your analysis.) Interlude—One Story Write your own definition for archetype. Then identify an archetypal story and apply it to a literary work with which you are familiar.

Chapter 21—“Marked for Greatness”

Figure out Harry Potter’s scar. If you aren’t familiar with Harry Potter, select another character with a physical imperfection and analyze its implications for characterization.

Chapter 22—“He’s Blind for a Reason, You Know”; Chapter 23—“It’s Never Just Heart Disease; And Rarely Just Illness”

Recall two characters who died of a disease in a literary work. Consider how these deaths reflect the “principles governing the use of disease in literature” (222-224). Discuss the effectiveness of the death as related to plot, theme, or symbolism.

Chapter 24—“Don’t Read with Your Eyes”

After reading Chapter 24, choose a scene or episode from a novel written before the twentieth century (*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Scarlet Letter*, or *Les Miserables* are good choices). If you haven’t read one yet, this might be the best summer to read *Tom Sawyer* or *Jane Eyre*. Contrast how it could be viewed by a reader from the twenty-first century with how it might be viewed by a contemporary reader. Focus on a specific assumption that the author makes, assumptions that would not make it in this century.

Chapter 26—“Is He Serious? And Other Ironies”

Select an ironic literary work and explain the multivocal nature of the irony in the work.

Chapter 27—“A Test Case”

(This chapter prompt counts as two if you fully complete it) Read “The Garden Party” by Katherine Mansfield, the short story starting on page 262. Complete the exercise on pages 282-283, following the directions exactly. Then compare your writing with the three examples. How did you do? What does the essay that follows comparing Laura with Persephone add to your appreciation of Mansfield’s story?

“Envoi”

Choose a motif not discussed in this book and note its appearance in three or four different works. What does this seem to signify?

Adapted from Assignments originally developed by Donna Anglin. Notes by Marti Nelson,

A= Ten chapter prompts addressed with developed and thoughtful responses 90-100 points

Type and **double-space** all responses in **12-point Times New Roman**.

A= Ten prompts have well-developed, insightful, thoughtful responses. 100-90 points

B= Only eight to nine prompts have well-developed, insightful, thoughtful responses, but writer attempted all. 89-80 points

C= One or two prompts missing responses, but the remainder are addressed adequately. 79-75 points

D= Gaps, missing chapters, incomplete but at least five prompts attempted 74-70

F= Fewer than five prompts addressed. Little to no real thought or effort/Work not completed by deadline 69-0 points

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