



**AP English Literature & Composition Grade 12
Summer Reading Assignment 2018
Ms. Beverly Cardino**

All students enrolled in AP English Literature & Composition are required to read three books and a film before September. It is best that you have your own copy of each book as they will serve as texts we will use during the first unit of study and will constitute the first major grade of the marking period. Be forewarned...this course is labor intensive and is the equivalent of a freshman literature course at a four-year university. Please also be aware that you will be required to take the College Board AP exam in May.

The summer assignment will be the initial focus of the course. Failure to complete the summer assignment will seriously threaten your grade. Your summer reading assignment for each book will be due the first week of class. These are the texts and the assignments:

***Hamlet* by William Shakespeare – 1996 film version by Kenneth Branagh**
***How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster**
***The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka**
***Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte**

**Assignment for *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster and
The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka (Numbers 1-5)**

(Credit: schools.friscoisd.org)

Before beginning this assignment, you need to have read and considered both Kafka's *Metamorphosis* and Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. This assignment should be typed in MLA format and printed out for submission the first week of school.

Please do not discount the importance of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* in completing this assignment. It is a good reference for unlocking the pattern of symbolism present in the novella. I especially suggest reviewing Chapter 26 BEFORE you begin to answer any of the following questions. It will help you to mix an understanding of how Kafka develops irony into your understanding of the symbolism of the *Metamorphosis*.

Text evidence from both works is required in your answer for each question.

Please remember that sufficient (approximately three instances from the novella), apt text evidence is preferred over sparse or verbose evidence. Successful completion of the following questions will prepare you for success on both major and minor assessments related to these works which will take place in the fall.

1. Chapter 2 of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* deals with “Acts of Communion.” Refer to it as you look for the meaning behind food and the family table in *The Metamorphosis*. Find three instances where food, meals, the family table or other related elements of meals of communion enter *The Metamorphosis*. Using these instances, **explain the pattern of symbolism developed around communion.** (Note: I’d stay away from the apple... it’s not really symbolic food.)

2. The different yet similar “Acts of Vampires” are the topic for chapter 3 of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. **After reviewing the acts of symbolic vampires, apply this to three elements of the novella that reference possible vampirism.** Be sure to establish a pattern of symbolism.

3. Chapter 7 of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* discusses Biblical allusion. Consider the meaning of the apple in *The Metamorphosis*. **Is this a deliberate allusion to the Bible? If so, how? What does Kafka imply by invoking this allusion? Are there any other Biblical allusions present in the novel?**

4. Christ figures are the topic of chapter 14 of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. Refer to this chapter to determine what elements transform a character into a Christ figure. **Does Gregor Samsa display any of these elements? Discuss to what extent Gregor is a Christ figure.**

5. How did Gregor die? What did his illness and death mean in the *Metamorphosis*? Use chapters 23 and 24 of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* to help you answer the questions regarding the **symbolism of Gregor’s “illness” and eventual death.**

You do not have to answer questions 6, 7 and 8 on paper. Think about the questions for a discussion the first week of school.

6. Try interpreting this story in a variety of ways:

- As a look into Gregor’s inner psyche (and as a look into the psyche of modern man)
- As a comment on a crushing, impersonal world
- As very dark comedy
- Your own interpretation (what does this story say to you about life, people, etc.?)

7. Kafka creates a frightening, surreal world in which people can turn into insects and chief clerks come to a person’s house when they are an hour late. **What is the effect on the reader? Why might Kafka have chosen this technique rather than a realistic style to convey his ideas?**

8. Kafka relates the nightmarish events of the novel in a journalistic, matter-of-fact prose. **What is the effect of this contrast between the content and the form of the novella? What does this contrast suggest about modernity?**

Assignment for *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte (Must be printed out for submission for the first week of class)

Provide a 1-2 page typed response in MLA format to ONE of the following topics:

(Credit: <https://www.ectorcountyisd.org>; some of these topics were created by Mary Heidorn)

1. **Byronic Hero:** What is the definition of a Byronic hero? How does Rochester compare/contrast with this definition? Why?

2. **Settings:** How does each place Jane finds herself affect her and the actions she chooses to perform?
3. **Coming of age:** How does Jane's experience influence the person she eventually becomes? Who does she lean on? How and why does she change?
4. **Religion:** The nature of Christianity is deeply explored in this novel. We know that Bronte was quite religious herself, but that doesn't mean that all of her "religious" characters are good people. Analyze the roles religion plays in different characters' lives and try to identify Bronte's message about faith.
5. **Social Status:** Victorian England was characterized by a rigid social system controlled by money. People are respected according to the balance in their bank accounts rather than their individual characters. They are either wealthy or dependent upon the wealthy to earn money. Analyze the significance of social status in this novel and in Jane's life.
6. **Independence and Freedom:** Jane values her independence. She could even be described as an early feminist. Analyze the effect this characteristic has on her life. Are there other strong, independent women in the novel? Are there women who fail to assert their independence and suffer the consequences?

Assignment for *Hamlet (the 1996 film)*

View the film in its entirety. It would be great to watch it with other members of the class. Pay attention to the setting, costumes, colors and directorial choices that Branagh made. You will write a response to the film the first week of class in September.