

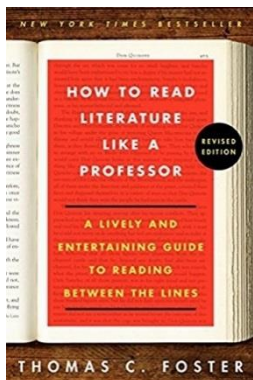
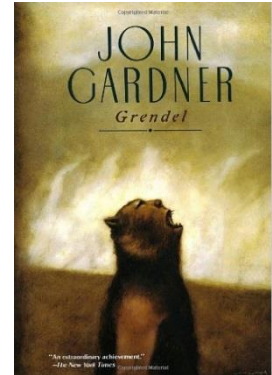
ENGLISH IV HONORS
SUMMER READING 2017

REQUIRED READING:

***Grendel* by John Gardner**

ISBN 9780679723110

The first and most terrifying monster in English literature, from the great early epic Beowulf, tells his own side of the story in this frequently banned book. This classic and much lauded retelling of Beowulf follows the monster Grendel as he learns about humans and fights the war at the center of the Anglo Saxon classic epic (barnesandnoble.com).



***How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster**

ISBN 9780062301673 – make sure you get the revised edition

In this practical and amusing guide to literature, Thomas C. Foster shows how easy and gratifying it is to unlock those hidden truths, and to discover a world where a road leads to a quest; a shared meal may signify a communion; and rain, whether cleansing or destructive, is never just rain. Ranging from major themes to literary models, narrative devices, and form, How to Read Literature Like a Professor is the perfect companion for making your reading experience more enriching, satisfying, and fun (barnesandnoble.com).

YOUR TASK:

- **Read and annotate the two books.** The method of annotation you choose is up to you, but we will expect to see evidence of annotation. You may choose to highlight key passages and make notes in the margins of your book; you may choose to use sticky flags and sticky notes for your annotation; or you may choose to keep a journal.
- **There is no accompanying assignment this summer.** We will begin the year with these two pieces. You can expect a quotations-based assessment during the first week of school as well as a process essay during the first six weeks.
- **We are, however, including some guided questions to help you through the reading.** These are optional, but they may be quite helpful in directing your focus for annotations and preparing you for the assessments.
- **If you choose not to read and are therefore unprepared for the assessments, it is recommended that you reconsider your enrollment in English IV Honors.**

Please email **Beth Oualline** (boualline@csisd.org) or **Heather Strawn** (hstrawn@csisd.org) if you have any questions about this assignment.

For these instructions and other information regarding English IV Honors, check out our websites:

Oualline: ouallinator.com

Strawn: megastrawn.wordpress.com

Optional Guided Reading Questions for *Grendel*:

Many critics have noted that each of the twelve chapters of *Grendel* correspond to one of the twelve signs of the Zodiac. As you read, consider that correlation. The following questions may also help you as you read, but keep in mind that these questions are challenging. You are not expected to spend hours crafting detailed answers to each question, but these questions can help guide your annotations. You might, for example, jot down brief responses to these questions on sticky notes that you attach to relevant passages as part of your annotation process.

Chapter 1: Aries, the Ram.

1. What does Grendel's relationship with nature -- the ram, the sky, grass, the doe, the baby bird, owls, and wolves -- reveal about his own personality?
2. Quote the various phrases Grendel uses to describe himself. What do they reveal about his self-image and how it was developed?
3. What is the significance of the scene wherein Grendel challenges the "dark chasms"?
4. What does Grendel mean when he speaks of "playing cat and mouse with the universe"? What does it mean to "see all life without observing it"?
5. Describe Grendel's mother and his relationship with her.
6. From Grendel's point of view, what is man?

Chapter 2: Taurus, the Bull.

1. In a flashback to his early childhood, what is Grendel's relationship with the "large old shapes" and with his mother?
2. What is the significance of the scene wherein Grendel catches his foot in the crack in the treetrunks and is attacked by a bull?
3. What does Grendel mean when he says, "there was nothing, or, rather, there was everything but my mother"? How is this a loss of innocence?
4. Explain what Grendel means when he says, "I create the whole universe, blink by blink."
5. How does Grendel's first meeting with men affect him? Why does he fear them more than he fears the bull?
6. How is Grendel's world view and self-concept affected by his experience with men? How does this event affect his relationship with the "old shapes" and with his mother?
7. Explain the meaning of "the world is all pointless accident."

Chapter 3: Gemini, the Twins.

1. As a detached observer, what does Grendel learn about Hrothgar and his theories? What shocks Grendel about man's behavior to other men and to nature? Why does Grendel fear Hrothgar?
2. Why is Grendel so impressed and affected by the Shaper? Why does he fear the Shaper?
3. According to Grendel, what is the truth about poetry?
4. Why does Grendel scream "Lost!" and crawl on all fours as the chapter ends?

Chapter 4: Cancer, the Crab.

1. How can (mortality OR morality) be the creation of the Shaper?
2. Why does Hrothgar build Heorot, the Hall of the Hart?
3. What is the power of the "projected possible"?
4. How does the story of Cain and Abel affect Grendel?
5. What is Grendel's "conversion"?
6. What is "the presence" Grendel feels in the darkness?

Chapter 5: Leo, the Lion.

1. Why does Grendel visit the dragon? What does the dragon tell him about himself and about the "word"?
2. How does the dragon's mind differ from Grendel's and from men's?
3. From the dragon's point of view, what is man? What is man's mind?
4. How does the dragon explain the role of the Shaper?
5. Explain the following statements made by the dragon:
 - a. "Knowledge is not cause."
 - b. "Connectedness is the essence of everything."
 - c. "The essence of life is to be found in the frustrations of established order."
 - d. "Novel order (is) a primary requisite for important experience."

- e. "Importance is derived from the immanence of infinitude in the finite."
 - f. "Expression is founded on the finite occasion. It is the activity of infinitude impressing itself on its environment."
6. In his attempt to explain the difference between Importance and Expression to Grendel, the dragon uses the examples of the difference between vegetables and animals and the difference between an angry man and a rock. Explain.
 7. How does Grendel "improve" men?
 8. What is the dragon's ambition? His final advice? His motto?
 9. How is Grendel "caged in a limited mind"?

Chapter 6: Virgo, the Harvest Virgin.

1. How is the dragon's charm a curse?
2. How does Grendel now react to the Shaper's song?
3. How is Grendel "transformed" by his first raid on Heorot? In what sense does he "become" himself?
4. According to Unferth, what is heroism? What is poetry?
5. Why doesn't Grendel kill Unferth? And why is Unferth so bitter?
6. Who or what is the dragon?

Chapter 7: Libra, the Balance.

1. What is Grendel's law? What does it mean?
2. How is Wealtheow like the Shaper's songs? How is she different?
3. Why doesn't Grendel rape, torture, and murder Wealtheow? Or does he?
4. What does Grendel mean by "balance is everything"?
5. What is "meaning as quality"?
6. What is the parallel between Wealtheow and Grendel's mother?
7. What has happened to Unferth? How does the Queen affect him?

Chapter 8: Scorpio, the Scorpion.

1. What threats surround Hrothgar after Hrothulf's arrival? How is Hrothulf like a scorpion?
2. What is Grendel's Theorum? What does it mean?
3. How can violence be creative? What do Grendel and Red Horse have to say about violence and "legitimate force"?
4. Describe Red Horse's political ideology.
5. What is the meaning of the "horrible dream which Grendel imputes to Hrothgar"?
6. How can the old king Hrothgar be a giant? In what ways is he like Job?

Chapter 9: Sagittarius, the Hunter.

1. What ironies occur in this section?
2. How can Time be inside the hunter and the hart?
3. What is Grendel's opinion of religion?
4. What is the significance of Grendel's encounter with Ork? What does Ork have to say about the King of the Gods and about the nature of Evil?
5. Why is Grendel so disgusted by the speeches of the Fourth Priest?

Chapter 10: Capricorn, the Goat.

1. Explain the saying "Tedium is the worst pain."
2. Why is Grendel so frightened and so infuriated by the goat?
3. How does the Shaper's death affect Grendel?
4. What is "the pastness of the past"?
5. How has Grendel's mother changed? What is their relationship now?
6. Who is the other monster Grendel meets on the moors?
7. Explain "Nihil ex nihilo, I always say."

Chapter 11: Aquarius, the Water-bearer.

1. How does Grendel perceive Beowulf and the Geats?
2. In what ways are Beowulf and Grendel alike?
3. What has Grendel come to understand about the "dark realities" of self and the world?
4. What does Grendel mean when he says he has seen "the vision of the dragon"?
5. How does Grendel divide the world?

6. Explain the saying "Things fade; alternatives exclude."
7. What happens when Unferth challenges Beowulf about Breca?
8. How does the Queen respond to Beowulf?

Chapter 12: Pisces, the Fish.

1. How and why is Grendel defeated?
2. How do illusion and words help cause Grendel's death?
3. Why does Beowulf make Grendel sing of walls?
4. How does this last chapter echo lines, events, characters, and images from early chapters?
5. Explain Grendel's last words: "Poor Grendel's had an accident. . . So may you all."

General Questions:

1. How does the narrative point of view function in this story?
2. Are there any authorial intrusions in this story? If so, how do they function?
3. In what ways does the story Grendel differ from Beowulf?
4. In what ways do Grendel and Beowulf complement each other?
5. What is the truth about heroes and heroic action from Grendel's point of view?
6. What moral, philosophical, or metaphysical observations about human and/or monstrous existence are made in Grendel?
7. What is the "heroic vision" of this story?
8. Does the fact that Grendel is told from the monster's point of view qualify the story in any way?
9. How is the zodiac used as a structure for the book?

Optional Guided Reading Questions for *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*:

Think of the following as “thought exercises” for each chapter. You may jot down your thoughts on each chapter on a sheet of paper or in a journal, but the expectation is not that you have detailed responses to each chapter. You could, for example, write thoughts on sticky notes as part of your annotation process.

Introduction: How'd He Do That?

Consider: 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)

Apply the five aspects of the QUEST to something you have read (or viewed). Use the same format as Foster used on pages 4-5.

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.

Chapter 3 – Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires

What are the essentials of the Vampire story? Apply this to a literary work you have read or viewed. (*Please, please, please think beyond Twilight and other popular vampire stories when considering this question.*)

Chapter 4 – Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?

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

Chapter 5-6 – When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare...Or the Bible

SHAKESPEARE: Discuss a work that you are familiar with that alludes to or reflects Shakespeare. Show how the author uses this connection thematically. Read pages 44-46 carefully. In these pages, Foster shows how Fugard reflects Shakespeare through both plot and theme. In your discussion, focus on theme.

THE BIBLE: What are some Biblical allusions that you have seen in literary works? Do not limit yourself to the allusions mentioned by Foster – there are many!

Chapter 7 – Hansel and Gretel

Think of a work of literature that reflects a fairy tale. Discuss the parallels. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation?

Chapter 8 – It's Greek to Me

Write a free verse poem derived or inspired by characters or situations from Greek mythology. The internet (or library) can provide extensive resources for classical mythology.

Chapter 9 -- It's More Than Just Rain or Snow

Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work with which you are familiar (your discussion should not be entirely focused on plot).

Chapter 10 – Never Stand Next to the Hero

Apply this chapter to a book you have read recently (or a movie you have watched recently). Detail how the heroes' friends suffer or die so that the hero can grow/develop.

Interlude – Does He Mean That?

This interlude is meant to make you *think*, so I am not going to ask you to *write* anything specifically...but you should definitely *think* about the argument Foster makes.

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 on the characters/story/reader/etc are different.

Chapter 12 – Is That a Symbol?

Think about literature you have read (or really good movies...those can work, too). Discuss the symbolism in that book (or movie). For example, you could discuss the symbolism in *The Great Gatsby*, a book you read in English III Honors.

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 assigned to you as a freshman is political.

Chapter 14 – Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too

Apply the criteria on page 119 to a major character in a significant literary work. 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* (which is also a book), *Excalibur*, *Malcolm X*, *Braveheart*, *Spartacus*, *Gladiator* and/or *Ben-Hur*.

Chapter 15 – Flights of Fancy

Select a literary work in which flight signifies escape or freedom. Explain in detail.

Chapter 16-17 – It's All About Sex...Except the Sex

The key idea from this chapter is that "scenes in which sex is coded rather than explicit can work at multiple levels and sometimes be more intense than literal depictions" (141). In other words, sex is often suggested with much more art and effort than it is described, and, if the author is doing his job, it reflects and creates theme or character. Choose a novel or movie in which sex is suggested, but not described, and discuss how the relationship is suggested and how this implication affects the theme or develops characterization.

Chapter 18 – If She Comes Up, It's Baptism

Think of a "baptism scene" from a significant literary work (If you can't think of a literary work, try to think of a movie). How was the character different after the experience? Discuss.

Chapter 19-20 – Geography Matters...So Does Season

GEOGRAPHY : Discuss at least four different aspects of a (one) specific literary work that Foster would classify under "geography."

SEASON : Find a poem that mentions a specific season and discuss how the poet uses the season in a meaningful, traditional, or unusual way. (Email me a copy of the poem and 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 22-23 – He's Blind for a Reason, You Know; 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" (215-217). Discuss the effectiveness of the death as related to plot, theme, or symbolism.

Chapter 24 – Don't Read with Your Eyes

After reading Chapter 25, choose a scene or episode from a novel, play or epic written before the twentieth century. 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 specific assumptions that the author makes, assumptions that would not make it in this century.

Chapter 25 – It's My Symbol and I'll Cry If I Want To

Discuss three symbols that you have encountered in "academic" reading that have stayed with you over the years. How did reading this chapter deepen or change how you view those symbols?

Chapter 26 – Is He Serious? And Other Ironies

Select an ironic literary work and explain the multi-vocal nature of the irony in the work.

Chapter 27 – A Test Case

Read "The Garden Party" by Katherine Mansfield, the short story starting on page 245. Complete the exercise on pages 265-266, following the directions exactly.

Do not read ahead before you construct your own interpretation.

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 (as the horse reference on page 280) and note its appearance in three or four different works. What does this idea seem to signify?

Reflections

Once you have finished reading *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, reflect on the different things you have learned. Has this assignment been helpful? Are there areas that are confusing to you? Did it help to read posts from your classmates?

CHALLENGE:

The next time you go to the movies, look for these elements—you will be amazed at how many you will see if you really start looking for them!