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## AP/KAP English Literature



Welcome to AP/KAP English. This course is, by definition, comparable to a freshman college English course. Congratulations on electing to be challenged! The texts we will read are all carefully chosen to reflect material that is frequently tested on the exam, to highlight a diversity of genres, periods, and writers, and to focus on writers who are acknowledged masters of their craft. In nearly every instance, our texts transformed a form, introduced a new idea, or elevated the art of writing to new heights. We will be reading Nobel, Pulitzer, National Book Award, and Booker Prize winners, and writers who erected the foundations on which these more modern writers built the enduring architecture of words. While preparation for the exam is one goal for this class, it is by no means the only or even the most important one. My pedagogical vision is entirely holistic. Nothing is “busy” work in this class. Every component of the curriculum -- class discussions, quizzes, writing assignments, commonplace entries, movie critiques, vocabulary work -- is designed to come together into a unified whole. The class is designed to enhance your appreciation for great literature, to inspire you to push your intellectual boundaries, hone your analytical thinking and writing skills, master the vocabulary and tools of critical analysis, develop more sophisticated vocabulary skills, and garner a more nuanced and comprehensive sense of the riches that this discipline offers. What a great gift to us as a class that in these times of political turmoil, mindless violence, and world-wide strife, we are charged with the task of being insightful, purposeful, reverent, and creative.

One of my favorite Emily Dickinson poems reads:

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I dwell in Possibility--  
A fairer House than Prose--  
More numerous of Windows--  
Superior--for Doors -

Of Chambers as the Cedars--  
Impregnable of Eye--  
And for an Everlasting Roof  
The Gambrels of the Sky--

Of Visitors--the fairest--  
For Occupation--This--  
The spreading wide my narrow Hands  
To gather Paradise—

To study great literature is to dwell in the house of possibility. To gather as a class and share our ideas, passions, questions, doubts, and voices is to be in a kind of intellectual paradise. I welcome your company, your fresh visions, and expertise as together we begin to build our own house of prose.



## A. Curricular Components

**I. Writing:** The heart of this course lies in a wide variety of written responses that ask you to draw upon varied ways of thinking, writing, analyzing, critiquing and synthesizing our material. You will learn how to hone a unique voice and master a wide range of literary and critical tools; these skills are life-skills, not just AP/KAP English skills. All writing assignments, whether analytical or creative, will have detailed and specific instructions.

- **Essays** – Out-of-class essays will focus on honing analytical, rhetorical, argumentative, and expository writing skills. They will be longer essays (at least seven paragraphs or 3-5 pages) written in formal and grammatically correct prose. You will have an opportunity to pre-write all essays, and you will receive both peer and teacher feedback. You will receive three steps of both peer editing and feedback from me. On the days noted, you need to bring **two copies** of thesis statements, outlines, and rough drafts. You will receive feedback from peer editors (select a different classmate for each step) and me on every step. In this way, a total of four sets of eyes will assess your work and trouble-shoot potential problems. You will note that on the days that essays are due it says **Final Revised** copy. This means that it is critical that you make *significant* changes and fully engage in the revision process. You will hand in both your marked-up rough drafts and your final copy so that I can assess how seriously you engaged in the editing process, and make note of how thorough your peer editors were. Think of *revision* as *re-seeing*. It is not about tinkering with minor changes, but about challenging yourself to make dramatic and necessary improvements. For each assignment, you will receive an editing sheet with specific instructions. It is very important that when you are editing a peer’s essay that you be specific and pointed. This exercise is not about “cheerleading” but about trouble-shooting and giving valuable feedback. I do not want to see “Great!” with no elaboration next to a sentence. When you edit the rough drafts you will be looking for both grammatical and structural problems. It is fine to praise something, but it is critically important to point out errors, vague wording, inaccurate statements, etc.
- **In-Class Essays** - Are timed assessments designed to help you learn how to write quickly, incisively, and cogently. You will be able to use your texts and notes so that you can quote accurately and make a compelling case. On occasion, though, you will not have access to texts so that you can practice writing for the AP exam, where you will not be permitted to use any materials. These assessments will usually be one full period, and, we will often use the double-period. You will need to write five full paragraphs. Because the AP rewards incisive, cogent, and pointed writing, and because you will not have the opportunity to revise your exam, in-class essay grades will stand as written. They represent the best measure of how you will score on the test, itself.
  - **Note:** As an AP grader, I am well-familiar with the rubrics and grading expectations. Your in-class essays will be graded according to the AP system (0-9) which I will translate for you.
- **Quick-Writes** – these will be ultra-short, ultra-focused assignments in which you respond to a very pointed question or a highly debatable point that the text raises. You will have ten minutes to create a focused and formal paragraph in response to a very specific question. All of the rules of formal writing will apply. In these assignments, I will ask you to take a firm stand on an issue; you do not want to “waffle” or offer multiple views. The AP exam readers want to hear confident and focused voices; these exercises are designed to hone that skill. All of our texts are so rich with complex and often contradictory meanings that you should feel assured that your unique reading is valid and valuable.
- **Commonplace Books** – Henry David Thoreau is generally credited with naming this style of journal a commonplace book. Not a diary in the traditional sense, it is, instead, a record of quoted material from works read. Every night:
  1. **Copy a passage from our reading that intrigued, moved or puzzled you.** You might write the quoted material in one color ink, or, if you choose to keep your commonplace book on the computer, in one font, and then write your response in a different color ink or font.

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**2. Write a few creative/analytical/thoughtful sentences interacting with the passage.** You might, for example, be inspired by a single melodious word and write a poem about it. You can be very creative. A student recently took the word *mellifluous* from *Twelfth Night*, and wrote a poem about an apricot blooming on a tree, a word blooming on a page. Alternatively, you might passionately disagree with an idea being expressed, or be enraged by a racist portrait, or prejudiced comment. Respond to that feeling.

These responses are personal and creative; they represent an on-going “dialogue” with the texts. They provide you with a format to be spontaneous and passionate. At the end of the term you will have a permanent record of the lines that inspired you. Keeping a commonplace book helps hone analytical and creative thinking and writing skills. Although your book will not receive a formal grade, you must write every night and bring it every day. I will frequently call on you to share your entries, and on designated days you must be prepared to share thoughtfully prepared responses. You must read what you actually wrote (not paraphrase or sum up). See my samples from *Hamlet*. Commonplace books are invaluable resources for in-class essays, essays, preparing to be a discussion leader, and exam preparation. The more you invest yourself in this project the more valuable the material you will accrue. When I look back through previous journals, I see how my interpretations keep shifting and changing, how each new class influences my reading of texts that I have read dozens of times. I treasure my commonplace book.

- **Out-of-the-Box** – Various creative exercises that will draw upon your ability to make insightful cross-textual connections. For example, I may ask you to have Juliet (*Romeo and Juliet*) write a letter to Archer (*The Age of Innocence*), giving him advice about love. Hamlet and Christabel (*Possession*) might meet in a café and discuss their love for their fathers. The boy (he is never named) in *Krik?Kraak!* might compare his boat trip to Rozenkrantz and Guildenstern’s, etc. When it is your turn to be a discussion leader, you might want to ask the class to create an *Out-of-the-Box*, in which you design the parameters, or bring in one of your own to share.

**Elements of style:** as an AP/KAP student you have already demonstrated that you have good mastery of basic grammar. Our focus this year will be on the subtle elements of style that culminate in superior work. We will focus on:

- Logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques to increase coherence, such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis.
- Creating more sophisticated diction (through intensive vocabulary work) and syntax or sentence structure through subordination, coordination, etc.
- How to balance generalization (quick references to the text) with specific illustrative detail
- How to establish and maintain tone and voice
- Eliminating general references
- Eliminating wordiness and ambiguity

There are numerous handouts and samples that I will be distributing throughout the course

**Style Requirements:** Any writing prepared out of class must be word-processed and double-spaced with 1” margins and 12- point font. Refer to The MLA Handbook for information about how to cite sources. Use *Spell-Check* and other guides for help with editing, but remember, HB bans the use of such sources as *Cliff Notes* and *Spark Notes*. Make sure that you save all essays on both your hard drive and a clean disk. Save your drafts, too. You should be prepared to hand in your essay disk at any time. If you fail to hand in an essay at the beginning of class, it is automatically penalized (a B becomes a B-). No one can afford to penalize her grade in this fashion.

**B. Grading:** your formal essays and in-class essays will earn three grades, one each for:

**The Tripartite Grade:**

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- **Concept:** The overall caliber of your ideas. Remember, excellence is inextricably linked to novelty. You want to proffer a unique insight in your thesis statement, no matter which style (expository, analytical etc.) essay you are writing. The key to success in any writing assignment always lies in crafting a specific thesis statement. **The Golden Rule: it is always better to fully develop one concept, insight, or proposition, than it is to gloss over many.**
- **Development:** Your ability to develop your idea fully and convincingly through close textual analysis. Your ideas need to be expressed in clear, elegant, and varied syntax. You must include and analyze key passages that support your thesis statement. Your focus will be on issues of style and technique, never on plot summary. Excellent development will showcase your mastery of literary devices, poetic devices, and figurative language. Going far beyond pointing out these techniques, you will fully develop their unique impact and import in the passages you quote.
- **Mechanics:** Your ability to write elegant, sophisticated, and varied syntax and diction, and grammatically correct prose. More than ten specified grammatical errors will earn an F on the mechanics part of the grade. Make editing an instinctive and critical part of your writing process.

These three grades will be weighted equally and averaged. The value of this system is that it allows you to pinpoint a specific skill area on which to focus.

Sample:

**Sample of the kind of feedback you would receive**

<b>Concept</b>	<b>A</b>	<i>Congratulations – you selected a subtle motif about references to food in <u>Hamlet</u> and did a remarkable job of finding important examples that develop your thesis. I’m glad you went beyond the obvious connections and thought about the link to emotional hunger. Excellent work!</i>
<b>Development</b>	<b>B</b>	<i>You selected telling examples and quoted important passages. In future essays, spend more time engaging in close textual analysis. Remember to analyze the passages you choose to include for issues of style and technique. For example, the passage on p. 128 contained rich symbols, and it is worth thinking about Claudius’s tone in that passage. You have a good sense, though, of how the figurative language links to your overriding concept. Continue to focus on creating smooth transitions between paragraphs.</i>
<b>Mechanics</b>	<b>C</b>	<i>Annie, your insightful ideas will come into sharper focus when you master the rudiments of grammar. Try to use more sophisticated diction and syntax. You use too many simple sentences; try including more subordinating and coordinating clauses. Let’s get together and review how to eliminate general references and run-on sentences. Your writing will be more persuasive when it is more grammatically correct. It was great to see you using smoother transitions between paragraphs.</i>

**Grade: B**

If you consistently earn A’s on your concept, you know that your ideas are novel and insightful. The C on development tells you that you are not fully developing your keen concept in the kind of depth necessary, or are not including persuasive textual support, and that you should focus on honing your analytical writing skills. The B on mechanics indicates a solid foundation of basic grammatical rules, but also suggests that you could spend more time honing and polishing the fine points that culminate in excellent work.

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**Optional Rewrites:** Every student has the option of rewriting any out-of-class essay. You can conference with me about specific changes you wish to make and rewrite the essay for a new grade. You need to make substantial revisions, though; this is not about spot editing. This step is optional because we do so much pre-writing, which involves rewriting, that many of you are sure to earn superior marks on the first effort.

**A very important note about grade inflation:** I do not believe in grade inflation. By definition an *A* means truly superior, and, even flawless, work. By the same token, a *B* indicates very good work, of which you should be proud. The real danger of grade inflation is that it distorts our appreciation for other grades. We have been conned into thinking that a *B* is “bad” and a *C* is failing. That is nonsense. If *A*'s are routinely handed out; they have no value whatsoever. We all need to resist this temptation. That said, I have no doubt that many of you will earn legitimate *A*'s, of which you can be truly proud. It is much more important though, to focus on learning for learning's sake and to break the habit of fixating on grades.

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**C. Note: in the early days of the course, we will review extensively the elements of sophisticated analytical writing and you will receive handouts on how to:**

- Craft a specific thesis statement
- Quote accurately and analyze the material you included
- Craft a successful closing paragraph that goes well beyond summarizing the ideas that you already made
- Tips on how to create more varied syntax:
  - Craft smooth transitions between paragraphs
  - Craft a variety of sentence structures including: subordination and coordination
- Editing sheets for how to avoid common grammatical errors
- A tip sheet on all of the rules of formal writing, and the philosophy behind those rules. For example, writing in the present tense is *not* an arbitrary rule. When we write in the present tense we remind ourselves that each work of literature is paradoxically both utterly timely (Flaubert's ideas are very much borne of a particular moment in France's history and the social mores that dictated public and private behavior) and timeless. Madame Bovary is always in the immediate moment, deciding to commit adultery, writing a letter to her lover, etc. Odysseus is still sailing on his wine dark sea. As Shakespeare knew, there are two ways to become immortal: having children and creating a lasting work of art. We write in the present tense to honor that timeless quality in great art.

**Proportion of Grade: 70%**

- II. Quizzes:** Reading quizzes are unannounced, but anyone who has read the assigned material should be able to ace them. These quizzes are very important interim assessments that help you gauge how well you are mastering our material. They are designed to assess your ability to:
- A. Recognize literary and poetic devices (figurative language) and develop their importance
  - B. Recognize the significance of motifs, themes and patterns
  - C. Recall specific details that resonate in the text
  - D. Read for subtext

**Tip:** The key to doing well on quizzes is to be an interactive reader and to take copious margin notes. We will practice how to take effective margin notes in class. I am a fan of the colored tab system since it gives you a visual aid that can be assessed even before you reopen your text. The system of notation you use can be utterly unique, but it must work for you. Under no circumstances do you want to open your books to blank pages when you are beginning to write about a text.

**Save all reading quizzes;** they are designed to help you prepare for the mid-term exam and the AP test, itself. All quizzes must be written in pen. No credit can be awarded for work done in pencil. Why? Because we will often self-correct in class, so that you can receive immediate feedback and learn from your classmates' varied responses. You will correct in a different pen, and add additional notes in the correcting color. I will often award points for the caliber of class notes.

**Note:** If your scores are consistently low and you have been reading, make sure that you make an appointment to see me so that we can review and practice strategies that will help you hone the ability to recall important details. If your low scores reflect the fact that you are not reading, or are falling behind, stop and reassess your investment in this class, and make a renewed commitment to being prepared. One glance at our assignment sheet will tell you that there is absolutely no room for slacking off in this class. You simply cannot afford to miss a night of reading or you will begin to fall behind in ways that make it difficult to catch up.

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**III. Vocabulary:** Simply put, nothing is more important to your mastery of literature than your ability to master the language in which it is written. Modern students are increasingly handicapped by weak vocabulary skills; this deficiency impedes progress in several critical ways. On the one hand, it is hard to grasp a writer's intent and nuanced meanings if one is not familiar with the precise meanings of the words used, and a student's writing style suffers if she relies too heavily on simple terms. The AP exam will test your vocabulary skills in numerous ways on both the Multiple Choice sections and all of the writing topics. Developing sophisticated vocabulary skills will give you an edge on this exam and in life. The good news is that this is the component of the curriculum most easily improved, but you must discipline yourself to look up any and all unfamiliar terms. For each text we read, you will hand in a list of twenty-five SAT-caliber terms that you have mastered.

**For all vocabulary assignments you must follow these directions, exactly. You need:**

- The term
- The sentence in our text where you found it written out in full
- A full definition including part of speech
- An accurate synonym
- A creative sentence of your inventing that accurately uses the term.

I will collect and grade these on the days noted on the assignment sheet. This is an easy way to garner full credit on an assignment, but any sheet turned in late will be penalized according to school policy.

**One final note:** make this valuable by looking up the most challenging words. Overly simplistic terms will not receive credit. No two lists should look alike, meaning you may not copy a friend's list. Every list should be unique.

**Quizzes and Vocabulary: 20% of grade**

**IV. Participation:** Is based on: attendance, your work as discussions leaders, commonplace entries, group work, level of preparation, daily verbal contributions, etc.) Special note: you may not ask for a grace period for being a discussion leader, sharing from your commonplace book, presenting a poem, etc. because the class depends on what you share that day. In this class, the grace period only applies to the essays.

- **Attendance:** Because nothing is more important to a discussion-based class than your presence, attendance is extremely important. If you miss more than five classes during a semester, your participation grade cannot be higher than a C-. Missing more days places you at risk for earning a 0 for participation. Of course, if you are legitimately ill and have a note from your doctor, we will work out a compromise.
- **Plan on using your voice every single day in this class.** Articulating your ideas verbally is a critical skill. Mastering verbal acuity can only aid your ability to think and write critically and incisively. I am deeply empathetic to shy students who feel intimidated about sharing their views, but this is the class in which you must learn to master that fear. I promise you that we will create a safe space where all opinions and ideas are honored.

• **Participation :10% of grade**





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C. **Course Texts:** an important reminder. I have deliberately ordered the cheapest versions available. You must buy the specific texts ordered. Since you are all going to be discussion leaders, it is critical that we are *literally* on the same page. You must have clean copies, so that your own notes are the only ones you have to which you have access. You need your assigned texts every day. Please do not come unprepared. You will receive a specific study guide for each text we read.

## **Brief Background on Our Texts**

### **Summer Reading:**

*The Woman Warrior: Memoir of Girlhood Among Ghosts.* Maxine Hong Kingston – Asian-American – 20<sup>th</sup> Century- Novel

*Too Loud a Solitude,* Bohumil Hrabal – Czechoslovakian- 20<sup>th</sup> Century -**Novella**

### **What's Love Got To Do With It?**

- **Myth and Fairytale pack** (photocopy)—**myths and fairy tales and critiques of them**
- *Othello*, Shakespeare – English- 16<sup>th</sup>- 17<sup>th</sup> Century- Universally regarded as the greatest writer of all time -- **Play**
- *Pride and Prejudice* Jane Austen – English – 18<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> Century - Universally regarded as one of Great Britain's greatest writers-- **Novel**
- *Madame Bovary*, Gustave Flaubert- French- 19<sup>th</sup> Century -Universally regarded as one of France's greatest writers-- **Novel**
- *The Age of Innocence*, Edith Wharton – American- early 20<sup>th</sup> Century - Pulitzer Prize winner -- **Novel**
- *Krik?Kraak!*, Edwidge Danticat- Haitian – late 20<sup>th</sup> Century- National Book Award winner—**Collected/Interwoven Stories**

### **Hearts of Darkness/Minds of Light**

- *Agamemnon*, Aeschylus –Greek (525 -546 BC) – One of the masters tragedians of Ancient Greece
- *Hamlet*, Shakespeare
- *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad – Polish – 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Century-Universally regarded as one of the greatest writers of the last century. He wrote in his *third* language, English -- Novella
- *To the Lighthouse*, Virginia Woolf – English – 20<sup>th</sup> Century -Universally regarded as a writer who, along with James Joyce, transformed the novel's form. There was vigorous protest among world-wide writers that she was not nominated for a Nobel Prize –Novel
- *Possession*, A.S. Byatt – English- 20<sup>th</sup> Century- Winner of the Booker Prize—Novel
- *Poems, Poets, Poetry: An Introduction and Anthology*, Helen Vendler – American Critic- Anthology –poems from ancient to modern

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### **Course:**

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2. Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. 1818. Ed. James Reilly. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1997.
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5. Danticat, Edwidge. *Krik? Krak!* New York: Vintage Books. 1996
6. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*. 430's BC. Trans. Philip Vallacott. England: Penguin Classics, 1959.
7. Conrad, Joseph. 1902. *Heart of Darkness*. Ed. Stanley Applebaum. New York: Dover Publications, 1990.
8. Woolf, Virginia *To the Lighthouse*. 1927. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company. 1981.
9. Byatt, A.S.. *Possession*. New York: Vintage Books. Random House, Inc., 1991.
10. Numerous handouts on issues of style and grammar

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### *Semester One*

**An Important Note about How to Read this Assignment Sheet:** In my assignment sheets, I do not differentiate between in-class and out-of-class work. That is because everything you read will be brought to bear in class discussions, essays, group work, etc. The class is based entirely on what we read. With this style of assignment sheet it is **essential** that you always read ahead in the syllabus so that you can prepare for varying demands on your time and talent. Work listed next to a date must be fully prepared for that day. For example, on Tuesday, September 11, you need to come to class having already read “Snow White” and the Gilbert and Gubar critique of it. Please ask early and often if you do not understand how to read the assignment sheet.

**Note:** Although school guidelines allow for an hour of homework a night in an AP class, I have worked hard to keep the readings within reason, and hopefully under this amount of time, on the theory that quality is more important than quantity.

### *Semester One*

#### *“What’s Love Got to Do with It?”*

Although this title is a playful allusion to the Tina Turner song, this course will take a *serious* look at the elements, emotions, and motivations at play in love literature. We are reading a sampler of great love stories that cover many genres. We will examine the nature and impact of different genres; how does a love poem differ from a drama? What can a novel convey that a myth cannot? How do these texts interact with and inform each other? Our seminal text is *Romeo and Juliet*. You will see patterns, themes, and motifs introduced in this famous play manipulated and transformed by other writers. I deliberately chose a text that I suspect many of you have familiarity with for several reasons. I want you to recognize how much you have already matured as readers and writers, and your familiarity with the bare bones of the plot will enable you to relish the elements of style. In some instances, the allusions and connections to *Romeo and Juliet* will be obvious – Austen was clearly playing off of Shakespeare’s work when she crafted Anne’s and Wentworth’s story. *Krik? Krak!* also consciously plays with the motif of young lovers thwarted by family and politics. But Shakespeare’s influences are felt, too, in very subtle ways in *The Age of Innocence* and *Madame Bovary*. Of course this over-arching thematic connection is just a starting place. As AP students, we will move far beyond placing texts in boxes; we will open our minds to the myriad possibilities inherent in great literature, both as it stands alone and as each text becomes part of a tradition. One final note, when I first designed this course, I asked numerous colleagues to give me their lists of all-time great love stories. Most of our texts appeared on virtually every list. You will quickly see that many of them (though not all) are tragedies. It is worth beginning with this question: What is it about love that lends itself to tragic forms?

**Note:** I know that this assignment sheet looks daunting. I want to begin by assuring you that this is the “blue print” for our structure. Although it looks overly prescribed, the course will take on its own unique shape and form the moment we begin class discussions. Your unique insights, contributions to class discussions and group work, and engagement with the course will invest it with a spontaneous and unpredictable arc. Your ideas will drive every facet of the actual course. I cannot wait to see what you will bring to the project.

## ASSIGNMENTS



**Notes:** Although I do not believe in “teaching to a test” (like our founder, I believe that we “learn for life”) I *do* believe that it is critically important to familiarize ourselves with the AP format. Learning the language of testing can only reinforce confidence and skill levels. Therefore:

- **Reading quizzes will echo AP Multiple Choice style questions**
- **Essay and In-class essay topics will always offer former AP essay topics as choices**



= a day where you need to bring a new text; always plan ahead.





= a day where formal assessed writing is due










= No school, or no homework day



**September 2007**

A = double days, D= drop days

Tuesday 	9/4	<b>A Double</b>	Welcome to AP English! Introduction Expectations Discussion of summer reading – <i>The Woman Warrior</i> & <i>Too Loud a Solitude</i> Review of literary terms and poetic devices based on specifics in the text
Wednesday 	9/5	<b>B</b>	<b>In-class essay on <i>The Woman Warrior &amp; Too Loud a Solitude</i> – former AP topic</b> Have read this syllabus from cover to cover so that you can ask pertinent questions about it at the beginning of class, tomorrow. I may quiz you on the syllabus. It is that critical that you have read it.
Thursday	9/6	<b>C</b>	1. Discussion on <i>The Woman Warrior</i> 2. Discussion on <i>Too Loud a Solitude</i>
Friday	9/7	<b>D</b>	Drop
<b>Monday</b>	9/10	<b>E</b>	1. <b>Quiz on literary devices</b> – it is critical that you have full mastery of these terms because we will be using them constantly, and the AP exam will test your ability to recognize them on virtually every facet of the exam. 2. Have read the fairytale handout “Snow White” and the Gubar and Gilbert critique of it 3. Think about: How do fairy tales establish expectations about love? Are those healthy or unhealthy expectations? Are they achievable? What is the value of a critic and a critique?
Tuesday	9/11	<b>F</b>	Bring a commonplace entry in which you have playfully responded to the prompt, “Love is...” Avoid clichés, song lyrics, etc. Try to be original. Use some of the poetic devices and literary techniques that we just reviewed
Wednesday No homework	9/12	<b>A Double</b>	1. Have read the Bruno Bettelheim critique of “Snow White” – be ready to compare the merits of the different critiques 2. Have read myths, <i>Eros and Psyche</i> and <i>Orpheus</i>







			2. Think about: What themes and motifs do <i>Too Loud a Solitude</i> and <i>The Woman Warrior</i> share with “Snow White” and these myths? Do Hanta and Maxine Hong Kingston share traits with each other? Which? Which themes, motifs, and ideas, however subtle, connect these works?
			<b>New Text: <i>Romeo and Julie</i> – clean copy please!</b>
Thursday	9/13	<b>B</b>	1. In class read Act I, scenes 1-3 of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Hereafter RJ) 2. Share from commonplace books: topic – first impressions. What immediately strikes you as being interesting about the opening scene? 3. Be working on Critical response to “Snow White” <b>Category: writing to explain/interpret</b> After examining Gilbert and Gubar’s, and Bettelheim’s critiques of “Snow White,” examine your own feelings about that famous and famously “loaded” text. Write a brief but specific critique in which you draw upon specific textual details to create an extended explanation/interpretation for your view of its social impact and value. Gilbert and Gubar notice feminist messages, Bettelheim’s view is psychoanalytical. What dominant message or pattern emerges for you? Alternatively, you may write about either of the myths that we read.
Friday No homework	9/14	<b>C</b>	1. Have read Act I, scenes 4-5
Monday	9/17	<b>D</b>	Drop <b>Thinking Ahead/ Getting Ready to Write:</b> This will be our essay category for <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> ; as you read take note of passages that interest you and play into our topic. Take careful margin notes that you can incorporate in your essay. <b>Category: Writing to interpret:</b> write an interpretation of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> that is based on a careful observation of the work’s textual details, considering: such elements as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone. We will compose a menu of topics which include former AP prompts and your own ideas.
<b>Tuesday</b> 	9/18	<b>E</b>	1. Have read Act II <b>2. Critical Response to “Snow White” Due as you come into class</b>
Wednesday	9/19	<b>F</b>	1. Have read Act III <b>Getting Ready to Write:</b> Select a passage from last night’s reading that engaged you, and take careful notes on its use of figurative language, its symbols, images and tone. Be ready to share with the class.
Thursday	9/20	<b>A</b>	Have read Act IV <b>Getting Ready to Write:</b> Class discussion about how to write an interpretative essay- focus on finding and analyzing textual support. We will work with your passages from yesterday, or you may select a new one from today’s reading.
Friday No homework weekend	9/21	<b>B</b>	Finish the play. <b>Getting Ready to Write:</b> The class constructs a menu of topics comprised of original ones and selections from former AP exams.
Monday	9/24	<b>C</b>	View : <i>Shakespeare in Love</i>

			Be working on essay Bring two copies of a thesis statement and outline to class, one for me and one for your peer editor, we will all grade them overnight to return on Wednesday
Tuesday	9/25	<b>D</b>	Drop
Wednesday	9/26	<b>E</b>	 Return edited copies of thesis statements and outlines to their owners View the movie
Thursday	9/27	<b>F</b>	View movie Be working on essay at night
Friday	9/28	<b>A</b> <b>Double</b>	Finish <i>Shakespeare in Love</i>  Bring two full rough drafts of your essay to workshop in class, one for me and one for your peer editor
<b>October</b> 			<b>NEW TEXT: <i>Persuasion</i></b> , Jane Austen- Austen scholars agree that this is her true work of genius. The mood of this novel has often been described as being <i>autumnal</i> (in comparison to the spring-like energy of <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> .) In many ways, this is also a <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> story with a twist. As you read, make connections between these radically different works. See Study Guide for more tips and details.
Monday	10/1	<b>B</b>	<b>Edited copies of essay on <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> returned</b> Introduction to Jane Austen’s world Have read, pp.1-22, discuss first impressions. Who is Anne Elliot? Where is she, literally and figuratively in the novel? Review parallelism – find examples of parallel construction in <i>Persuasion</i>
Tuesday	10/2	<b>C</b>	1. Have read to p. 45 in <i>Persuasion</i> 2. Share from commonplace books on first impressions Student research: We will rotate through so that every student gets a chance to do a mini-report on background information on at least one text. Make this ultra-focused, cogent, and pertinent to our texts. Use reliable resources (check out web-sites that say “edu”) Think quality over quantity. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Biographical information on Austen that may play into our reading of <i>Persuasion</i> _____</li> <li>2. The Regency Age- Focus on the literary and social worlds _____</li> <li>3. The Regency Age- Focus on gender roles and relationships _____</li> <li>4. Class issues in the Regency period _____</li> </ol>
Wednesday	10/3	<b>D</b>	Drop
<b>Thursday</b> 	10/4	<b>E</b>	<b>1. Final Revised versions of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> due</b> 2. Have read to p. 75 3. Report on Austen’s life _____
<b>Friday</b>	10/5		No classes – Remember to read each night so that you are on p. 119 on Tuesday
Monday <b>No school</b>	10/8		No classes
Tuesday	10/9	<b>F</b>	Have read to p. 119 Review the importance of eliminating general references Be ready to share an important passage





			Student report on the literary/social worlds _____
Wednesday	10/10	<b>A Double</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have read to p. 142</li> <li>2. Student report on gender roles</li> <li>3. Student report on class issues</li> <li>4. Class brainstorms ideas for in-class essay topics</li> <li>5. Review: how to engage in close textual analysis (see my handout on <i>Twelfth Night</i> sample) Work with your passage from yesterday. We will practice going beyond what the passage “says” to analyzing issues of style and technique to appreciate what it “means,” a much more critical issue.</li> </ol>
Thursday	10/11	<b>B</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have read to p. 157</li> <li>2. Focus on suggestive transitions. Examine a page or two in last night’s reading and study how Austen creates seamless or suggestive transitions between paragraphs. How do her transitions work? What kinds of phrases does she use to build word bridges? Think about how to apply her style to your work.</li> <li>3. Bring a passage that supports one of the essay topics you are interested in</li> </ol>
<b>Friday Vocab due</b>	10/12	<b>C</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finish the novel</li> <li>2. Share commonplace entries</li> <li>3. Bring a thesis statement to class</li> <li>4. Over the weekend, do some pre-writing for our in-class essay on Monday and begin reading <i>Madame Bovary</i>- spread out the reading so that you are on page 44 by next Wed.</li> </ol>
			<b>New Text: <i>Madame Bovary, Gustave Flaubert</i></b> - This great novel-- (many critics, including Nabokov, consider it the greatest French novel- introduced a kind of gritty realism to writing. In fact, the novel was brought up on charges of obscenity. For modern readers this charge may seem absurd, but try reading the text through the eyes of a sheltered young woman living in the 1800’s and you might see how radical it is. See Study Guide for more tips and details.
Monday	10/15	<b>D</b>	<b>Drop</b> – make sure that you are reading <i>Madame Bovary</i> so that you do not have 44 pages to read in one night.
<b>Tuesday</b> 	10/16	<b>E</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>In-class essay on <i>Persuasion</i></b></li> <li>2. <b>Vocabulary list for <i>Persuasion</i> Due</b></li> </ol>
Wednesday	10/17	<b>F</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have read, pp. 1-44</li> <li>2. Share from commonplace books</li> </ol>
Thursday	10/18	<b>A Double</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have read, pp. 44-60</li> <li>2. Share from commonplace books</li> <li>3. Talk about successful strategies on the in-class essay</li> </ol>
Friday	10/19	<b>B</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have read, pp. 60-77</li> </ol> <p><b>Style focus:</b> review how to create smooth transitions between paragraphs. Examine Flaubert’s transitions in last night’s reading. What has she done to create suggestive and useful transitions between paragraphs and chapters? Apply lessons to your writing.</p>
Monday	10/22	<b>C</b>	Have read, pp. 77-100

Tuesday	10/23	<b>D</b>	Drop
Wednesday	10/24	<b>E</b>	1. Have read, 100-131 2. Underline three examples of Flaubert’s use of subordinating and coordinating structure
Thursday	10/25	<b>F</b>	1. Have read, 131-148 2. Find a place in the text where Flaubert deliberately uses a general reference – be ready to explain why it makes sense that he did, and review why we do not use general references in our analytical writing.
Friday	10/26	<b>A Double</b>	Have read, 148-162 <b>Getting Ready to Write:</b> Group work: Examining an author’s tone, each group will be assigned a passage from last night’s reading that emphasizes a different tone. The group will categorize that tone and examine the textual details that lead to that conclusion.
Monday	10/29	<b>B</b>	Have read, 162-184 <b>Getting Ready to Write:</b> how to hone a persuasive voice that enables your reader to “buy” your argument. We will focus on crafting powerful voices through the use of precise diction. Avoid entirely phrases and terms such as “perhaps,” “maybe,” “sort of like” (too casual, also). A major gender study showed that female students are ten times more likely to preface their work with such anemic and wishy-washy terms. Be bold and emphatic. This is also why we do not use “I” in analytical writing. It may seem counter-intuitive, but every time you say “I think…” or “I believe…” you are subtly suggesting that your view is narrow and unconvincing. It is both pithier and more powerful to make simple statements. Ex: not “I think Madame Bovary is psychologically complicated…” <b>but</b> “Madame Bovary is psychologically complicated.” Can you hear the difference?
Tuesday	10/30	<b>C</b>	Have read, 184-208 Read in class, “Neutral Tones,” poem by Thomas Hardy (handout) Being planning your essay on <i>Madame Bovary</i> <b>Category: writing to evaluate:</b> this will be an analytical, argumentative essay in which you draw upon textual details to make and explain judgments about <i>Madame Bovary’s</i> artistry and quality, and its social and cultural values. One Option for a topic: <b>Variation on an old AP question:</b> The conflict created when the individual conscience opposes the central power of the state is the recurring theme of many novels, plays, and essays. Using <i>Madame Bovary</i> as an example, analyze Emma’s conflict with the mores and laws of her society, and discuss the moral and ethical implications for both Emma and her community. Do not summarize the plot or action; instead focus on what Flaubert has done stylistically to heighten our awareness of the conflict and the magnitude of its implications for Emma and everyone who knows her.
Wednesday	10/31	<b>D</b>	Have read , 208-231 Sharing writing tips...
<b>November</b>			






			
<b>Thursday</b> Vocab due	11/1	<b>E</b>	Finish the novel and work on your essays- Bring to class two copies of a thesis statement and outline to swap a partner Make a copy for me, too <b>Vocabulary lists on <i>Madame Bovary</i> due</b>
Friday 	11/2		No class – over the long weekend work on a rough draft of your essay –It is extremely important that you meet all of these deadlines.
Monday	11/5	<b>F</b>	Time to work on your essays - have all five paragraphs by tomorrow
Tuesday	11/6	<b>A</b> <b>Double</b>	1. Bring two copies of a rough draft of your essay, one for a class partner and one me (to save paper feel free to single space and double-side,) final version should be double-spaced. 2. Second period to implement corrections and suggestions
			<b>New Text: <i>The Age of Innocence</i></b> – As you read, ponder the meaning of this title. Is anyone in this novel truly innocent? Of what? In what sense? Is Wharton being wry and ironic? Is the Gilded Age, in fact, an age of <i>knowing</i> and experience? See study guide for more details.
<b>Wednesday</b> 	11/7	<b>B</b>	Have read, pp. 1-20 in <i>The Age of Innocence</i> <b>Style Focus:</b> Continuing to hone close textual analysis – how to interact with the text you choose to include in an essay, ensuring that you are analyzing for style and technique, not plot summary.  In last night’s reading underline a passage that you found particularly suggestive
Thursday 	11/8	<b>C</b>	<b>Revised Essay on <i>Madame Bovary</i> due as you come into class</b> Have read, pp. 20-37 <u>Group work on close textual analysis</u> – each group will be given a specific passage in last night’s reading to analyze. Members of the groups will pool their ideas and write a collective practice paragraph response in which they draw upon specific textual details that point to important subtext.
Friday	11/9	<b>D</b>	Drop- You need to be on 78 by Monday, make sure you break up this longer reading, spread over five nights (Thr.-Sunday) that is approximately 8 pages a night. Don’t leave it until Sunday night!
Monday	11/12	<b>E</b>	<b>After Writing:</b> share comments about the process of writing this essay 1. Have read , 78 – discuss
Tuesday	11/13	<b>F</b>	1. Have read , 78-98 – discuss
Wednesday	11/14	<b>A</b> <b>Double</b>	1. Have read, pp. 98-123 2. Discuss writing strategies that worked well
Thursday	11/15	<b>B</b>	Have read, pp. 123-147
Friday	11/16	<b>C</b>	Have read, pp. 147-173 <b>Getting Ready to Write/Style Review</b> – creating a balance between general ideas and specific illustrative detail. Sum up two main ideas in last night’s reading, and then select a passage that allows you to examine specific literary devices that



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			illustrate the importance of that idea.
Monday	11/19	<b>D</b>	Drop – make sure you spread out the reading over the weekend/drop day (Again you will have five nights to read)
<b>Tuesday</b> Vocab words due	11/20	E	Have read to p. 204 Class generates topics for essay <b>Category: Writing to interpret:</b> craft an essay on <i>The Age of Innocence</i> which is based on a careful observation of the work's textual details, considering: structure, style, and themes. <u>One option:</u> Examine how specific textual details or a recurring motif enrich our understanding of the novel's title. <b>Vocabulary Words on <i>Age of Innocence</i> due</b>
Wednesday 	11/21 11-26		Happy Thanksgiving!
Monday C	11/26	<b>F</b>	Finish the novel Begin the movie
Tuesday	11/27	<b>A</b> <b>Double</b>	View movie
Wednesday	11/28	<b>B</b>	Finish the movie
Thursday	11/29	<b>C</b>	Discuss movie and writing tips
Friday 	11/30	<b>D</b>	<b>In-class essay on <i>The Age of Innocence</i></b>
<b>December</b>			
<b>Monday</b>  essay	12/3	<b>E</b>	<b>Introduction to <i>Krik?Krak!</i> and Edwige Danticat</b> Begin reading in class
Tuesday	12/4	<b>F</b>	Have read, to p. 49
Wednesday	12/5	<b>A</b> <b>Double</b>	Have read, pp. 53-75 Time to work on Out-of-the-Box
Thursday	12/6	<b>B</b>	Have read , pp. 75-100
Friday	12/7	<b>C</b>	Have read, pp.100-141 <b>Begin work on an Out-of-the- Box</b> – Have either the boy or the girl from “Children of the Sea” write a one-page letter to any other character we have met giving him or her advice about sustaining hope in the face of hardship. Try to recreate voices that ring true to the characters and texts, but be creative and inventive in your own right. Due on 12/13
Monday 	12/10	<b>D</b>	Drop
Tuesday	12/11	<b>E</b>	Finish the novel Time to work on Out-of-the-box

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			<b>New Text: Helen Vendler's : <i>Poems, Poets, Poetry: An Introduction and Anthology (Hereafter, Poems)</i></b> We will be using this text primarily as an anthology. I have arranged poems in my own thematic categories.
Wednesday <b>Vocab lists due</b>	12/12	<b>F</b>	<b>Vocabulary lists for <i>Krik?Krak! due!</i></b> Introduction to the DiYanni Four-Step Approach to decoding a poem. We will work with Blake's "The Tyger" and "The Lamb"
Thursday	12/13	<b>A Double</b>	<b>Nature Poems:</b> Have read: Shakespeare's Sonnet 60 (Like as the waves made towards the pebbled shore") and Keats's "The Human Seasons." Read both poems and select one to write a Four-step on. Bring the completed Four-Step to class
Friday	12/14	<b>B</b>	<b>Poems About Parents</b> – Have read: Ben Jonson, "On My First Son," Roethke's "My Papa's Waltz," and Rita Dove's "Flash Cards." Read all three then pick one to master.
Monday	12/17	<b>C</b>	<b>Poems that Tease-</b> Have read: Robert Herrick's "To the Virgins, to make Much of Time," and "Upon Julia's Clothes" and Billy Collins's "Undressing Emily Dickinson"
Tuesday	12/18	<b>D</b>	Drop
Wednesday	12/19	<b>E</b>	<b>Poems that Praise:</b> Have read: Gerard Manly Hopkins's "Pied Beauty" and Shakespeare's Sonnet 130 <b>Getting Ready for Poetry Projects:</b> The class will be divided into teams of three; each team selects a poem from the Vendler text that we have not read or discussed for an official poetry presentation (see handout for explicit instructions)
Thursday	12/20	<b>F</b>	Drop – make sure you have touched base with team members so that you can tell me which poem you have chosen by Friday
<b>Friday</b> 	12/21	<b>A Double</b>	<b>Poems that Defy:</b> Have read: Chidiok Tichborne's "Tichborne's Elegy," Donne's "Holy Sonnet 14 ( <i>Batter my heart, three-personed God</i> ) Note: these are <u>very challenging</u> poems, read both with care and then focus on one. Have done an official Four-step approach on one. <b>2. Second period: In-class essay on poem – former AP topic</b> <b>3. Teams share selections</b>
			<b><i>Winter Break</i></b> Read Vendler's <i>Poems</i> : Section 5 – The Play of Language: Phonemes, Word Roots, Words, and Sentences Begin preliminary work on poetry project- as individuals begin roughing out a Four-step approach on your chosen poem <b>Honing Unique Writing Skills:</b> each student prepares a specific list of her strengths and weaknesses as a writer. You need to go back through all of your essays and note recurring patterns and issues about your style so that we can tailor a plan of action to address those issues. Please fill out the entire handout.
<b>January</b> 			
Tuesday	1/8	<b>B</b>	Have read: Frost's "After Apple-picking," and Dickinson's "The Heart asks Pleasure – first"

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Wednesday	1/9	<b>C</b>	Time to work on your poetry presentation – get together with your team and share your Four-step approaches. Begin practicing reading the poem aloud. Plan how you will make your presentation memorable.
Thursday	1/10	<b>D</b>	Drop
Friday	1/11	<b>E</b>	Time to work on your poetry presentation- fine tune your official typed Four-step to share with the class.
Monday	1/14	<b>F</b>	Time to work in the library and work with team
<b>Tuesday</b> 	1/15	<b>A</b> <b>Double</b>	<b>Poetry presentations</b> – you cannot exceed the 15 minute time frame
<b>Wednesday</b>	1/16	<b>B</b>	<b>Poetry presentations</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	1/17	<b>C</b>	<b>Review for Mid-term Exam – Practice multiple choice on poetry</b>
Friday	1/18	<b>D</b>	Drop
Monday	1/21		No School
Tuesday	1/22	<b>E</b>	<b>Review- Practice Open Essay Question from AP</b>
Wednesday	1/23	<b>F</b>	<b>Reading Day</b>
Exams	1/24		Write from the heart of what you remember, not the fear of what you have forgotten





## Revised Syllabus for Second Semester




### *Second Semester* Hearts of Darkness/ Minds of Light





The great Italian artists of the Renaissance practiced a shading technique called chiaroscuro. This technique juxtaposes bright areas of unmarked paper to heavily shaded ones; these opposites throw each other into high relief. Think about this artistic technique as you read our next texts. As you will soon realize, the title for this unit of the course alludes to Conrad’s masterpiece, *Heart of Darkness*. Although many of these texts probe disturbing events – the racist pillaging of the Congo; doomed love; an adulterous love affair that destroys several lives; Jim Crow racism in the American South that drove light-skinned black people to choose between being “white” or “black;” and a novel about one family’s love and poignant losses during WWI—it is also very much about the light kindled by characters who are inspired to find love, meaning, justice, and solace in their ability to contemplate and shape their fates and influence the lives of others. That intellectual and human energy cannot be extinguished. The darkness at the heart of these texts throws the light into exquisite and necessary relief.

<b>Monday</b> 			
Tuesday	1/29	D	Drop
Wednesday	1/30	E	Introduction to Heart of Darkness, and begin reading aloud
Thursday			
<b>February</b>  <b>Friday 2/1</b> Vocab list due		A Double	Finish the play <b>Vocabulary list for the play due</b> 1. Act out key scene Discuss how acting differs from reading
			<b>New Text: Heart of Darkness</b> , Joseph Conrad – Conrad writes this remarkable novella in sections rather than chapters. How, when, and why does he “break” his material into units? Consider the “lull” between the sections. See Study Guide for more tips and details.
Monday	2/4	B	Have read Section I to p. (tba)
Tuesday	2/5	C	1. Have Finished section I 2. Group work on thematic issues in the text
Wednesday	2/6	D	Drop
Thursday	2/7	E	Have read section II
Friday	2/8	F	Have read section III to p. (tba)

Monday	2/11	A Double	Finish section III Discuss the text as a whole Have read Michael Harper's "American History"
Tuesday	2/12	B	1. Have read Achebe's critique (handout) 2. <b>Getting Ready to Write:</b> how to successfully argue a debatable point– read the in-class essay topic for Thursday and begin planning which point you want to defend. We will discuss rhetorical strategies that enable you to craft a compelling voice to make your case.
Wednesday	2/13	C	<b>1. Getting Ready to Write:</b> bring in passages from both <i>Heart of Darkness</i> and Achebe's article that strike you as being particularly persuasive for your position. <b>Group work:</b> share your thesis statement with a peer. Ask each other if the point made is persuasive. Edit to make thesis statements precise, compelling, and pointed.
<b>Thursday</b> 	2/14	D	<b>In-class Essay – Argumentative Writing</b> – write an essay in which you <u>either</u> argue/defend the proposition that Achebe's critique of <i>Heart of Darkness</i> is valid and insightful, <u>or</u> that his essay represents a serious misreading of the text. <b>Do not do both;</b> either position can be successfully defended. As we discussed yesterday, successful argumentative writing always resides in the persuasiveness of the text you choose to include to support your point.
			<b>New Text: <i>Passing</i>, Nella Larsen, novella-</b> The term <i>passing</i> is rooted in a tragic chapter in our history when light-skinned black people had to choose whether they would adopt the black world or the white world. As Larsen depicts, it was a shattering decision with untold repercussions. Many lives were irreparably marred by this insidious form of racism. As you read, consider various meanings of the term <i>passing</i> . In what other ways does Larsen use the term? Consider, for example, its opposite, <i>failing</i> . See Study Guide for more tips and details.
Friday 	2/15 2/18		No School
Tuesday	2/19	E	<b>Sharing perspectives on Writing-</b> share samples of excellent responses to in-class essay on <i>Heart of Darkness</i> Introduction to <i>Passing</i> begin reading in-class
Wednesday	2/20	F	Have read to pp. 143-176 in <i>Passing</i>
Thursday	2/21	A Double	Have read pp. 176-
Friday	2/22	B	Finish the novella Have read poem, "Those Winter Sundays" by Robert Hayden (Vendler)
			<b>New Text: <i>To the Lighthouse</i>, Virginia Woolf</b>




			– <b>Novel</b> – Woolf’s masterpiece transformed the way people think about the novelistic form. Along with James Joyce, she is responsible for inventing <i>Stream-of-Consciousness</i> writing. Pay attention to the quirky passage of time, and consider why she breaks her novel into the units she does. See Study Guide for more tips and details.
Monday	2/25	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have read chapters 1-7</li> <li>• Write three thought-provoking questions on index cards for group work</li> </ul>
Tuesday	2/26	D	Drop
Wednesday	2/27	E	Have read chapters 8-13
Thursday	2/28	F	Have read chapters 14-17 <b>Getting Ready to Write:</b> reviewing how to balance including both general and specific illustrative detail
<b>Friday</b> 	2/29	A Double	1. Have read chapters 18-20 <b>IN-CLASS ESSAY (former AP topic) BASED ON MATERIAL THROUGH CHAPTER 20</b>
<b>March</b>			
Monday	3/3	B	Have read section “Time Passes”
Tuesday	3/4	C	Have read “The Lighthouse” through chapter IV <b>Writing Feedback</b> – share samples of excellence and successful strategies from last week’s in-class essay
Wednesday	3/5	D	Drop
Thursday	3/6	E	Finish the novel <b>Getting Ready to Write- Writing to evaluate:</b> Draw upon textual details to explain the importance of the unique artistry of this ground-breaking novel. Consider the impact and value of stream-of-consciousness writing. Think about the link between themes and events in the novel, and why this style of writing is a particularly apt form to highlight those concepts.
Friday Vocab lists due	3/7	F	<b>Vocabulary lists on <i>To The Lighthouse</i> due</b> More discussion and time to work on essay
Monday	3/10	A	Time to work on essay Bring two copies of your thesis statement
Tuesday	3/11	B	Time to work on essay Bring two copies of your outline
Wednesday	3/12	C	Bring two copies of your rough draft of essay for cross-editing
			<b>New Text: <i>Possession</i>, A.S. Byatt, novel</b> – This is one of the very few modern novels that has the “heft” of the great novels of the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century. Byatt has been compared to Dickens and George Eliot. Her novel comprises fairy tales, poems, myths,





			<p>legends, and a poignant story of forbidden love. It is incredibly demanding, but commensurately rewarding. Please do not fall behind in the reading, and do <u>not</u> skip the poems and fairy tales. Many important clues are imbedded in the stories, poems, and tales that Christabel and Ash write to each other. See Study Guide for more tips and details. We will be analyzing most of the poems in the novel as if they were poems in Vendler's text.</p> <p><b>Special Note:</b> We will use this unit for intensive review and preparation for the AP exam itself. Instead of an out-of-class essay, you will have a series of in-class essays which incorporate every form of writing on the exam. We will be working with AP grading rubrics and samples. Do keep up with the reading, but on several days we will focus more on talking about writing than the actual reading; however, the readings infuse those discussions.</p>
Thursday	3/13	D	Drop - edited essay on the note board. Feel free to come for a conference about your essay
<b>Friday</b> 	3/14	E	<b>Final Revised copy of essay on <i>To the Lighthouse</i> due</b> Have read to p. 50 and Class time to begin reading <i>Possession</i>
3/14-4/1			<b>Spring Break!</b> Over the break you need to have read to p.172 in <i>Possession</i>  <b>Honing Unique Writing skills:</b> each student <u>updates</u> her specific list of her strengths and weaknesses as a writer. You need to go back through all of your essays and note recurring patterns and issue about your writing style so that we can tailor a plan of action to address those issues.
<b>April</b>			
Tuesday	4/1	F	Welcome back Discuss the first 172 pages of the novel Talk about epistolary literature – the next section focuses on Christabel's and Ash's letters. Think about that form, how it differs from speech.
Wednesday	4/2	A	Have read 172-198 Class time to read to p. 220 (the letters need to be read as a single unit) <b>Feedback on Writing</b> – sharing samples of excellence and talking about successful strategies
Thursday	4/3	B	Have read pp. 221-242 (Where Ellen's journal begins) <b>Getting ready to write:</b> a general over-view of the three kinds of essays you will write on the AP exam – Prose Passage, Open, and Poetry – and tips that I have garnered from being an AP grader.
Friday	4/4	C	Have read, <i>Possession</i> , pp.-242-259 <b>Getting ready to write:</b> This essay will be based on a former AP Prose Passage topic- we will review tips for success. You will be given a passage from last night's



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			reading, and a real AP question tailored to our text.
Monday	4/7	D	Drop
<b>Tuesday</b> 	4/8	E	Have read, pp. 259-280 <b>1. In-class essay covering material through p.280</b>
Wednesday	4/9	F	Have read, pp. 280-313 Class creates rubric for grading in-class essay
Thursday	4/10	A	Have read, pp. 313-357 <b>Feedback on Writing:</b> Each student grades her own essay according to the rubric. Then compare the grade I gave it to your grade.
Friday	4/11	B	Time to read in class
Monday	4/14	C	Have read to pp. 413
Tuesday	4/15	D	Drop
Wednesday	4/16	E	Have read, pp.414-465
Thursday	4/17	F	Have read, pp. 465-491
Friday	4/18	A	Have read, p. 491-528 <b>Getting ready to write:</b> This essay will take a former AP Open Question and tailor it to our text. We will review key strategies for writing a focused, specific, response that directly addresses the topic.
Monday	4/21	B	Finish the novel Everyone shares from her commonplace book
<b>Tuesday</b> 	4/22	C	<b>In-class essay on AP Open Question Topic</b> – no books, texts, notes.
Wednesday	4/23	D	Drop
Thursday	4/24	E	<b>Feedback on Writing – class creates a grading rubric and then each student grades her own in-class writing according to the AP system</b>
Friday	4/25	F	<b>Writing review and tailored feedback-</b> I will meet with each of you to address your updated lists of strengths and weaknesses and to give you personal tips for the exam.
Monday	4/28	A	<b>Writing review and tailored feedback-</b> I will meet with each of you to address your updated lists of strengths and weaknesses and to give you personal tips for the exam.
			<i>Ending on a Poetic Note... focusing on paired poems</i> Back to Vendler’s text and some handouts
Tuesday	4/29	B	Have read, Poe’s “Helen” and D.H.’s “To Helen” (handout)
Wednesday	4/30	C	Have read, “The Twa Corbies” (approx. date 1400’s) and a Ted Hughes’s “Hawk Roosting” poem (handout) 1. Review strategies for writing on paired poems for the

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			AP exam
<b>May</b>			
Thursday	5/1	D	Drop
<b>Friday</b> 	5/2	E	Have read Billy Collins's poem "The History Teacher" and Richard Wilbur's "The Barred Owl" (handouts) <b>In-class essay on paired poems using a former AP Topic</b>
Monday	5/5	F	1. Have read, a Shakespeare sonnet and an Emily Dickinson poem (tba) In-class essays returned by the end of the day with AP score and with a personal tip sheet styled for your individual needs for the AP exam
Tuesday	5/6	A	Bring your favorite commonplace entry to share
Wednesday	5/7	B	Continue to share your commonplace entries....
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>5/8</b>		<b>AP Exam!</b>
Friday	<b>5/9</b>		Class Party to celebrate you!

I hope that you share my feeling that we did not just build a house, we fashioned a city. Continue to read as if your life depends on it, because it does. Allow a great book to carry you away...but come back often to see me and share your adventures. You will be missed.

**Let Emily Dickinson have the last word:**

1263

*There is no Frigate like a Book  
 To take us lands away -  
 Nor any Coursers like a Page  
 Of prancing poetry -  
 This Traverse may the poorest take  
 Without oppress of Toll -  
 How Frugal is the Chariot  
 That bears the Human soul!*

-- Emily Dickinson

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Both Emily Dickinson poems are quoted from, *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. 1890. Ed. Thomas H. Johnson. New York: Little Brown and Company.1960.

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### **Addendum I: Specific Essay Topics**

*The course teaches students to write an interpretation of a piece of literature that is based on a careful observation of the work's textual details, considering: structure, style, and themes.*

#### **A. Example of a Quick-Write on *Possession***

**Directions:** Ash's and Christabel's letters are packed with many rich details and figurative elements that reveal important facets of their individual lives and personalities. Their epistolary styles seem to change in subtle but important ways as they write and are drawn deeper into their mutual attraction. Drawing on specific textual details, select one telling change that you notice, or an important pattern or motif that emerges or becomes more evident in the letters or correspondence, and write a unified paragraph (8-9 sentences) about this structural or stylistic change. Quote and analyze lines from the letter that support your point. Do not summarize

#### **B. Sample of topics for essays on poems:**

- Analyze how poetic devices and punctuation in Blake's "The Tyger" highlight the speaker's anxiety.
- Examine how the structure of Blake's "The Tyger" –stanza breaks, repetition, enjambment, etc.— contributes to the overall meaning of the poem.
- Compare and contrast "The Lamb" and "The Tyger" in order to garner a fuller sense of Blake's vision of creation. How do the two poems influence each other? Pay careful attention to changes in punctuation. Consider the different "weight" that a question mark or an exclamation point carries.
- Consider Donne's "title" of Holy Sonnet XIV: "Batter my heart, three-personed God;" how is the shock of this initial line amplified in the poem itself? Examine the poetic devices, elements of structure, and the overall theme of the poem in relationship to its first line.
- "Explore how poetic devices, especially allusions and hyperbole, heighten the speaker's mood in "To His Coy Mistress" by Andrew Marvel. Clearly, you need to begin by pinpointing what the speaker's mood is; then analyze the devices that contribute most richly to his tone and attitude.

*The course includes frequent opportunities for students to write and rewrite formal, extended analyses and timed, in-class responses. The course requires writing to evaluate: analytical, argumentative essays in which students draw upon textual details to make and explain judgments about a work's artistry and quality, and its social and cultural values.*

#### **Sample of essay topics on *Madame Bovary***

##### **Variation on an old AP question:**

The conflict created when the individual conscience opposes the central power of the state is the recurring theme of many novels, plays, and essays.

Using *Madame Bovary* as an example, analyze Emma's conflict with the mores and laws of her society, and discuss the moral and ethical implications for both Emma and her community. Do not summarize the plot or action; instead focus on what Flaubert has done stylistically to heighten our awareness of the conflict and the magnitude of its implications for Emma and everyone who knows her.

*The course teaches students to write an interpretation of a piece of literature that is based on a careful observation of the work's textual details, considering: the social and historical values it reflects and embodies.*

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### **Sample from *Heart of Darkness***

Write an essay in which you explore how Achebe's historical and social background have influenced the way he reads and misreads *Heart of Darkness*. To what degree are his criticisms rooted in current views of Africa? Alternatively, you may write about how the textual details of *Heart of Darkness* reflect Conrad's own critique of the colonization of Africa, or his own latent racism. For this essay, you will want to do historical research about prevailing views of Africa, the Congo, colonialism, etc. in order to substantiate your points.

*The course teaches students to write an interpretation of a piece of literature that is based on a careful observation of the work's textual details, considering: such elements as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone.*

### **Sample of an In-class Essay on *Romeo and Juliet***

**Directions:** Write a five paragraph essay on the following topic. Observe all of the rules of formal writing. Make sure that you include a significant quotation and that you analyze for issues of style and technique, not for plot points.

**Topic:** Select one of the following motifs and analyze how it is developed throughout the play. How does this particular recurring pattern of words enrich the central love story, or, how does it contribute to a specific tone, or lend itself to symbolic interpretation? Select one angle to develop in full.

- References to animals
- References to the stars, moon, light, astronomy
- References to speed, haste, quickness, etc.
- Classical allusions
- References to religion
- Imagery of being bound or constrained
- References to writing implements, pages, words, pens, margins, volumes, etc.

### **Addendum Two: Study Guide to *Possession***

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## Study Guide for *Possession*

**Background** - This novel, rightly recognized as one of the masterpieces of recent fiction, is a rich amalgam of prose, fairytales, poems, letters, diaries, and journals. Keep in mind that Byatt actually wrote every word. Ash and Christabel are her fictional creations, and yet they seem so real that many a reader has tried to research them in encyclopedias. Many critics have marveled at Byatt's ability to create two totally different styles of poetry. Ash's style is in keeping with Robert Browning's work (very long lines, abstruse references, and richly allusive), while Christabel's poetry and fairytales are evocative of Christina Rossetti's and Emily Dickinson's work (exceptionally short lines which are integrally related to how enigmatic the intended meanings are). The novel travels from the present, where academic researchers are devoting their lives to uncovering the work of these "famous" poets, and the past, when we enter the mystery and discover what really transpired between Christabel and Ash. As in all great literature, every character plays a critical role. Although many of the academic "camps" (high-brow British, brash American, ardent lesbian and invested feminist) are sneeringly dismissive of each other, Byatt understands that it takes all of them, each with its own peculiar focus and interest, to solve the mystery of a long lost love. *Possession* has raised many fascinating and important issues about academic ethical issues. One library held a symposium questioning the real legal issues related to discovering private love letters and stealing them from a library. Byatt is keenly aware of the dilemma surrounding the intersection between the private and public domain, and asks us to ponder whether we really *do* have a right to trespass into the secrets of the human heart. *Possession* is also keenly interested in the tensions between those who create primary documents and the students and teachers who study and critique what is written or painted. As a writer, Byatt understands the grand "dance" that happens between those who write and those who read. She invites us into/onto the clean margin of her pages where we can interact with her fictional creation. Like Shakespeare, Byatt, through the voices of Ash and Christabel, reminds us that there are only two ways to become immortal ...through progeny of the flesh and the creation of art. This novel is keenly interested in both of these venues, and, its real triumph is that in paying tribute to lost fictional lovers of the Victorian age, Byatt has made her own voice and vision immortal. As Judith Thurman wrote in *The New Yorker*, "What is finest in *Possession* is what the artist illuminates about those, including herself, who love the word."

**1. Names** –Shakespeare famously asked, "What's in a name?" and Byatt playfully demonstrates: everything. Each name in this brilliant text is highly suggestive of historical, fictional, and mythic connections.

**Randolph Henry Ash** – The poet, Ash, while wholly fictional, is loosely based on the Victorian poet, Robert Browning. His name is also highly significant. As he points out in several places, the ash tree is invested with special mythic properties (see p. 213 for a specific example). On a metaphoric level, ash is what is left after wood has been burned. If you think about an adulterous love affair as a kind of domestic "fire" his name makes perfect sense. I may be overreaching here, but when reading this time (my fourth reading of the novel) I noticed that he often writes, R.H. Ash, which spells *rhash* or *rash*. His affair ends up being the one monumentally "rash" moment of his deliberative life, especially when compared to his fifteen- year courtship of Ellen.

**Christabel LaMotte**- The famous Romantic poet, Coleridge, wrote a ballad-like poem about a mysterious woman named Christabel. Our Christabel tells Ash that Coleridge held her when she was a baby, and the implication is that he named his poem for her. Tellingly, Coleridge's poem was never fully revised, and this detail touches upon the haunting way in which Christabel's emotional life is truncated. Here is part of an essay by Anna Taylor about Coleridge's poem:

*"Christabel" is Samuel Taylor Coleridge's longest poem, his least revised, the most satisfying to himself as its preface indicates, and his most troubling to readers. It is a poem that can drive readers "mad" or make them feel*

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*"stupid." (1) From its opening--"Tu -whit!--tu-who!"--its lulling, almost lobotomized repetitions--"Is the night chilly and dark? / The night is chilly but not dark"(2)--its shifting narrative voices, and its metrical hesitations and forward rushes, it lures listeners into its twilight. (3) Coleridge's opening section does to listeners what Geraldine does to Christabel: leaves them anxious and ungrounded. Critic after critic has tossed interpretations*

...

Taylor's critique of the poem touches upon some elements of Byatt's style. Here, too, we find "shifting narrative voices...metrical hesitations [think of Christabel LaMotte's excessive use of hyphens in both her letters and poems] and forward rushes."

The name *Christabel* has a ring of the word "crystal" in it, and the novel (and the poem) is very much intrigued with the notion of crystal balls, gazing into the future, séances etc. Her last name may also be a subtle play on the French word, *mot*, which means *word*. Her life is invested-- in every sense of the word --with words. Byatt has acknowledged that Christabel is very loosely based on Christina Rossetti, the great Pre-Raphaelite poet. I also believe that there are strong echoes of Emily Dickinson, particularly in issues of poetic style.

**Blanche** – The word *blanch* means to whiten, grow pale, bleach out. In cooking, it is a process which tends to leach the nutrients from food. Think about the metaphorical implications invested in her name. Blanche, though technically a "minor" character, remains absolutely central to the story. Although Christabel initially "rejects" or at least neglects Blanche in favor of Ash's attention, she remains haunted by her friend/lover's fate. I also think that there may be a sly literary "wink" to Tennessee William's play, *Street Car Named Desire*. The lead character, another Blanche, famously says, "I have always depended on the kindness of strangers." And like this Blanche, Blanche DuBois is lost and fragile.

**Ellen Ash** – Again, there are echoes of the Browning relationship in that Elizabeth Barrett Browning also had to wait an inordinately long time to marry her husband. Ellen's long "spinsterhood" actually harms her ability to lead a sexually fulfilling life. Her inability to consummate her relationship with Ash surely plays an important role in the affair on which he embarks. Pay special attention to the quotations from her letters and journals. She is a remarkably astute and accommodating woman. Keep in mind that she knows about her husband's affair, and then consider how generous and insightful she is when assessing Christabel's work.

**Maud Bailey** – There is a famous Wordsworth poem about a Maud. The word bailey has to do with the British judicial system. Maud seems to be a fascinating combination of both Ellen and Christabel. While she shares Christabel's unearthly "pale and golden" beauty, she also shares Ellen's cold distaste for, or at least reluctance and fear of, human sexuality. Maud seems frozen in time and lost in space. In the course of the novel, she anchors herself, ironically, by traveling, literally and figuratively in Christabel's footsteps. She is a foil for Christabel and seems to have taken her tragic life as a cautionary tale, but she goes too far and fears taking any emotional risks when it comes to love. Though, given Christabel's fate, perhaps such caution is warranted.

**Blackadder** – This name literally translates into a black poisonous snake, something this academic clearly is not. Of all of the academics he seems the most benign.

**Beatrice Nest** - In many ways this name may be the most poignantly suggestive. Beatrice was Dante, the great Italian poet's, muse, and Beatrice Nest seems to be no one's muse or love. *Nest* perfectly symbolizes her *image* as a homemaker, but note the profound and disturbing discrepancy between how others view her and what she wished for herself. For example, she wanted to write her dissertation on Ash, but was forced by her sexist mentor to write about the wives of famous poets. A nest is built in a tree, just as her



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life is built in the “branches” of Ash’s (a kind of tree) reputation. It seems particularly fitting that Beatrice should focus on Ellen’s life, for in many ways, they share the fate of being overlooked and underestimated. Note that both Ellen and Beatrice are uncannily sharp and astute women who have a gift for searing analysis. In many ways, they both come closets to getting to the true essence of Ash and Christabel, *without* benefit of the knowledge contained in the letters.

**Roland** – is named for a great work of literature, *The Song of Roland*, the first major literary work in France. Because his name is so suggestive, I would like you each to look up its meaning. Wikipedia has a good definition. You will see how Byatt plays with standard meanings and transforms them, as she does with all of these names.

## II. Reading Questions

These questions are designed to shape your thinking about Byatt’s novel. They provide a “roadmap” of topics and ideas that may interest you, but you can and should “go off the beaten path” to explore ideas that engage you.

1. Look up the word *possession* in a good dictionary. As you read the novel, consider the many meanings of possession, and then consider how Byatt plays off of them.
2. This novel is divided between the present and the past. This paradigm automatically suggests that time is an important element. As you read, pay close attention to how time is manipulated, and the specific ways in which it is important. Think about how Byatt structures the novel. Why does she break chapters when she does?
3. Love triangles are always fraught. This novel contains several fascinating and subtle love triangles. Think hard, pay close attention, and keep a list of love triangles. There are many more than may first be apparent. On the first day of class we will make a composite list of these often surprising triangles. Which is most important? Why?
4. You may be tempted to gloss over the fairy tales and poems that are contained within the novel. Do not! Byatt created them all, and critics have raved about her versatility in form and genre. These poems and tales contain critical clues about significant developments in the relationships. Use her poems as practice for the AP exam. Try analyzing them in the same way we have the poems in our poetry units.
5. Byatt is English, and you may be able to tell that she has a certain bias about Americans. Compare how the American and British characters are portrayed.
6. Many of the modern characters are academics, while the characters in the past are writers or artists. What unites and divides these fields – those who actively create and those who critique and write about creativity? Is one field more valuable? Why?
7. Shakespeare once said that there were only two ways to become immortal: through creating a lasting work of art or through the act of producing children. This novel is keenly interested in both avenues to immortality. In the final analysis, which is more important? Or, are they both given different but equal weight? Be ready to talk about this issue.

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8. In addition to a love story, this is also an old-fashioned mystery. As you read, consider what Byatt does stylistically to heighten the mystery. In what ways is the final scene at the grave site a “spoof” or satire of murder mysteries?
9. Nearly every modern character has a Victorian counterpart or foil. Be ready to pair up characters across the time divide. What do they share? How are they different?
10. Both Blanche’s and Christabel’s ultimate fates are deeply depressing. To what degree is patriarchy at fault? To what degree is this a condemnation of patriarchy.
11. Pay close attention to settings. Ash’s desk has many symbolic articles and items on it; many of them are clues about his relationship with Christabel.
12. If someone asked you to sum up one main theme in this complex novel, what would you say? Write out an actual sentence as practice for the first writing assignment.
13. Do we ever see a normal healthy family in this novel? Be ready to share examples and to explain why there are so few “typical” models.
14. For those of you who love science, be ready to explain Darwin’s influence on the Victorian world and in this novel. Which Darwinian principles are at work? How do they shape the lives of our characters? Do you agree with the notion that we are programmed by nature and science to respond as we do to the world?
15. Think about the many lovers we have met in this course. How would you compare Christabel and Ash’s relationship to those of the characters in *The Age of Innocence*, *Madame Bovary*, *Romeo and Juliet*,

### III. Sample In-class Essay

*Possession* is filled with many overlapping themes and groupings of people. More than a love triangle, many quadrangles are at work. Select either a love (or some interesting overlap of interest) triangle or quadrangle and develop each “angle” of shared interest. Show how and where the different elements meet, or the impact the resulting tension has on each person. Consider using a quirky option. Remember, minor characters have major importance in any text. Feel free to use this page for brainstorming. In your essay, examine what Byatt has done stylistically to dramatize the triangle. Pay close attention to textual details.

#### Addendum Three

### *Study Guide for Romeo and Juliet*

**I. Note About the Folger Text:** The notes on the left-hand page of the Folger edition are good as far as they go, but they do not go far enough. Shakespeare is the all-time master of puns, often wringing triple meanings from a word. Our text usually just tells us the Elizabethan meaning, but Shakespeare is often using the word the way modern readers would (because he is responsible for modernizing language). Do look up any word that puzzles you and be alert for double and triple meanings. Example: *mad* = angry and insane, *fancy* might mean embellished, desire, ornate, imagination, and dream. The richness of the play depends upon our ability to grasp these multiple meanings. At times, the Folger’s “clarifying” notes just seem to add to the confusion, so use your discretion and common sense when decoding a passage. Do read the summaries at the beginning of each scene. They provide crisp snapshots of the action. Knowing what “happens” enables you to relish the more subtle elements of language and issues of style.

**II. The Language:** Begin by knowing that everyone, including teachers and scholars, finds his language challenging. It is. There is no way around that fact, so instead of backing away, I want to invite you to dive into the complexity of his word play. The real pleasure of reading Shakespeare lies in relishing the play on words. A close reading of the Prologue, alone, should indicate how incredibly rich this text is. A single line of Shakespeare can simultaneously contain a metaphor, a pun, an allusion, a paradox, and alliteration. Pay attention to literary devices and think about how they invest the text with meaning. Write a commonplace entry on one that strikes you as being particularly rich and meaningful. Try not to get bogged down in the archaic qualities of the language. Reading *dost* and *thou* can seem distancing. The antidote is to “come closer.” Latch onto what you know and recognize and the rest will become clear. Do not become bogged down in a passage or on a word and lose sense of the scene itself. You will quickly find that your ear becomes accustomed to the archaic qualities, and with each passing night, the readings should become more accessible. If the reading remains unduly challenging, come see me and we can work together to make it accessible.

### **III. Tips for Reading:**

- Read when you are at your most alert. There is a temptation to leave reading for bedtime, but Shakespeare demands your full attention and best energy.
- Read aloud. Hearing the words and holding them in your mouth actually brings meaning into sharper focus.

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- Recruit friends to act out a scene. Again, hearing the language enables you to see patterns that may remain inert or hidden on the page.
- Read a scene once quickly for plot, and then reread it for technique and style. I have read every Shakespeare play multiple times, and, yet, I still use this technique. I find that I need the “double” dose to reinforce specific details.
- Take copious margin notes and use colored tabs to keep track of motifs, patterns, devices, etc.
- Read the text once and then listen to it on tape, especially if you have a long commute.

#### **IV. Questions to Ponder**

1. In his study, *Hamlet as Minister and Scourge*, Bowers notes, “When a playwright deliberately throws away dramatic suspense, one of his main stocks in trade, it is well to look into his motives.” (76) In *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare also tells us the plot in the prologue. Why does Shakespeare allow the audience to know that Romeo and Juliet will die, even before we meet them? What is lost and gained by this revelation? What impact does it have on you, as a reader? How might a theatre audience have responded?

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2. In the Prologue, Shakespeare calls attention to the fact that this is a play, noting that this is “where we lay our *scene*,” and “Is now the two hours’ traffic of our *stage*.” [My emphasis.] He seems quite insistent upon the fact that this is not real. Why? Part of the conceit or the implicit contract between the artist and audience of theatre and fiction is that once we enter the theatre or text what we experience is “real” is actually “happening.” That is the great pleasure of reading and theatre-going. What is gained by forcibly reminding the audience that what it is about to unfold is not real?
3. Both Romeo and Juliet are entangled in other relationships, or pending ones, when we meet them. Why does Shakespeare complicate the plot in this way? What does it tell us about human nature? About love? About the importance or inconsequential nature of first love?
4. Juliet is only thirteen. How does her age influence choices she makes? Does she seem like a thirteen-year old? Does she *act* like one?
5. How old do you think Romeo is? Does he act his age? Does he seem mature? Act mature? What are his interests and preoccupations? How do his friends feel about him? His family? How do you respond to him?
6. The name Benvolio contains the root word “bene” which means “good.” In what ways does Benvolio live up to his name? Does he also have flaws? Which ones?
7. To what degree is this a political story, a public and civic one, rather than a love story?
8. Keep track of the different kinds of love at work in this play. What is the importance of fraternal, paternal, political, ideological, platonic love?
9. Keep track of words that connote or mark time. At what pace do events seem to unfold? What are the consequences of timing?
10. Elizabethans placed great faith in fate and the stars. To what degree is the tragedy fated to happen? To what degree is it based on human error, on actual choices? Which choices?
11. What role do adults play in the play? Are they responsible? Mature? Authoritative? Compassionate? Admirable? What mistakes do they make? Why?
12. What role do servants play in the drama? Pay special attention to Juliet’s nurse. How would you characterize their relationship? Does the nurse bear any responsibility for the tragedy? What does Shakespeare do to make her sympathetic? Annoying?
13. What is the role of the friars? What role does organized religion play in the plot?
14. Which traits seem to characterize Paris? Had Juliet not found Romeo, would he have been a worthy mate?
15. How would you characterize gender roles in the play? Do women seem to act in prescribed ways? Do men? Can you find characters who seem to break type? How? When? Why?





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- **Never end a paragraph or your essay with a quotation.** You always want to have the last and best word.
- **Work on paragraph unity.** Only develop one main idea per paragraph. Make sure that each paragraph is anchored by a specific topic sentence that relates back to your thesis statement.
- **Craft smooth transitions between paragraphs, but avoid the kind of pat phrases that far too many style manuals and grammar texts encourage you to use.** Phrases such as *On the other hand... As I was saying ...* lapse into the category of clichés. Create your own vivid voice that is original and fresh. We will practice how to do this all year. The best guides are the texts we read. Examine how Austen, Flaubert, Wharton, Conrad and others create and sustain a smooth syntactical flow. Reread the concluding sentence of one of their paragraphs and the first sentence of the new paragraph, noting how the author creates a forward momentum, or conversely, reverses direction, or arrests us with a surprising word choice or inverted syntax. Our authors are masters of the craft of writing; they provide the best models for how to forge transitions.
  - Agreement – be attentive to the use of compound subjects. If you have a compound subject you need to ensure that you select the plural verb form.
    - Example: Despair and determination drive (not drives) Edna to commit suicide.
  - Spell words under 100- ninety-nine, seventy-six, etc. (just one of those weird rules)
  - Spelling – use spell-check and/or a dictionary
  - Missing words (mw), wrong words (ww), missing phrases
    - Hint: try reading your essay aloud; you are much more apt to catch missing words and phrases

**Eliminate:**

- **Contractions** (isn't, won't, can't, etc.) – you must spell all words fully.
- **Signs and symbols** (“&” instead of “and”). You need to spell all words.
- **Coordinating conjunctions** (and, but, so) at the beginning of a sentence. By definition, coordinating conjunctions are designed to link phrases and clauses; they
- **General References** (it, this, or that) – you need to clarify what these terms mean. Try adding a noun, or rephrase entirely.
  - **Example:** This is essential
  - **Fixed:** This concept of loss is essential to understand the inevitability of her demise.

**Take time to edit. You want to do justice to your good ideas by ensuring that they are conveyed correctly.**