



Karns High School

AP Literature and Composition

Preparatory Supplemental Reading – 2020

This summer, as an AP Literature and Composition student, you will read two books to help prepare for the rigors of the course. The first, Thomas C. Foster’s nonfiction *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, will serve as a companion resource to the rich and challenging works that you will encounter over the next year. You will then read *In Cold Blood*, in order to help you bridge the gap between the nonfiction of AP language and the fiction of AP literature. Read these books closely. I highly recommend that you complete this assignment, as it will help you become acclimated to the type of reading that you will be expected to do this year. Students are responsible for obtaining their own copies of these works either from a bookstore or a local library. The full text of *In Cold Blood* is available online (see padlet for link).

Book 1: ***How to Read Literature Like a Professor (Revised Edition)*** – Thomas C. Foster

Description (from Harper Collins): a lively and entertaining introduction to literature and literary basics, including symbols, themes and contexts, that shows you how to make your everyday reading experience more rewarding and enjoyable.

While many books can be enjoyed for their basic stories, there are often deeper literary meanings interwoven in these texts. *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* helps us to discover those hidden truths by looking at literature with the eyes—and the literary codes—of the ultimate professional reader, the college professor.

What does it mean when a literary hero is traveling along a dusty road? When he hands a drink to his companion? When he’s drenched in a sudden rain shower?

Ranging from major themes to literary models, narrative devices and form, Thomas C. Foster provides us with a broad overview of literature—a world where a road leads to a quest, a shared meal may signify a communion, and rain, whether cleansing or destructive, is never just a shower—and shows us how to make our reading experience more enriching, satisfying, and fun.

*Your first major project in AP Lit will be based on this text.

Book 2: Read *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote*. *In Cold Blood* is one of the first works of “literary non-fiction” – a true story told in a more artistic way than straight journalistic writing.

*Helpful hint: Sparknotes, Cliffs Notes, etc., may be good for aiding in your understanding of the text, but they are no substitute for actual reading.

Description: (from Random House): Truman Capote's masterpiece, *In Cold Blood*, created a sensation when it was first published, serially, in *The New Yorker* in 1965. The intensively researched, atmospheric narrative of the lives of the Clutter family of Holcomb, Kansas, and of the two men, Richard Eugene Hickock and Perry Edward Smith, who brutally killed them on the night of November 15, 1959, is the seminal work of the "new journalism." Perry Smith is one of the great dark characters of American literature, full of contradictory emotions. "I thought he was a very nice gentleman," he says of Herb Clutter. "Soft-spoken. I thought so right up to the moment I cut his throat." Told in chapters that alternate between the Clutter household and the approach of Smith and Hickock in their black Chevrolet, then between the investigation of the case and the killers' flight, Capote's account is so detailed that the reader comes to feel almost like a participant in the events.

* *In Cold Blood* is an excellent story; however, it is not for the faint of heart. If you object to reading it, *Crime and Punishment* may be read as a substitute text. Better yet – feel free to read both!

While reading these texts, remember to annotate and do close reads of difficult passages. If you will be taking AP Lit in the spring, I highly encourage you not to wait until winter break to do this assignment, as this is a large undertaking and you will need more than two weeks to fully engage with the texts. Also, be sure to visit our class resource padlet (link below) for extra information that will be useful for your reading. If you have any questions about the assignment or the material, feel free email me at rachel.monday@knoxschools.org. Please allow a minimum of 24 hours to respond.

https://padlet.com/rachel_monday/cz7swxmt6gsjb098