WELCOME TO AP LITERATURE!

If you are reading this, I presume you are a passionate reader and writer, and I'm very excited to work together for the 2019-2020 school year. This document contains all the instructions and materials you'll need to complete the required summer reading and assignments in order to get a leg up before we convene in September. If you have questions, need clarification, or just need to share an epiphany or insight about a text, I am available all summer via email at elizabeth.sampson@thorntonacademy.org.

You should buy copies of the texts so you can annotate them and use them for ongoing work once school starts. All texts listed here are available in paperback.

TEXTS

1. A book of your choice from the attached top 10 list. These are the most frequently cited works on the exam (with a few omissions of texts we will be studying together in class.)
2. *Black Swan Green*, by David Mitchell (2006). This coming-of-age novel follows 13-year-old Jason Taylor who lives in a suburban community in northern England. The year is 1982, in the midst of Margaret Thatcher's tenure as Prime Minister. Jason has two problems that could cost him his social life: a stammer and a secret talent for poetry. This book tells a universal story but with a lush kind of literary beauty that is far from commonplace.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Google Classroom

I will be using Google Classroom over the summer and for the school year as the primary way to distribute materials and information about the course, to collect assignments, and to prepare for and extend our in-person discussions in class. As soon as possible, please join our class, AP Literature 2019-2020, with the code **cxvjd9**. Over the summer, there will be five assignments due. Below is an outline, with more details provided in the individual assignment postings:

1. By July 7, join the class and submit a post to introduce yourself, your favorite book, author, or genre, and what you hope to get out of taking AP Lit.
2. By July 21, post photos of 3 annotated pages from your choice novel and explain what and how you are annotating the text so far (you do not need to be finished at this point; about halfway through is fine.)
3. By August 4, post your response to and explication of the choice novel.
4. By August 18, post examples of your annotations of *Black Swan Green*, as in assignment #2.
5. By August 29 (our first day of class), post your response to and explication of *Black Swan Green*, as in assignment #3.

Annotation

Because AP Lit is a college-level course, I will not assess your reading based on comprehension questions or reading quizzes. Instead, I will be looking at (and sometimes evaluating) your annotations of texts. I do this because I believe that it is more important than any other reading practice for developing your own viewpoint as a critical reader. Annotation in English class is what "showing your work" is in math class. Attached is a well-known article, "How To Mark A Book," to get you started. You don't have to mark your books exactly as the author recommends, but you should develop a system that works for you.

The Top 10 AP English Literature Reading List

You can't argue with hard statistics. The College Board has kept track of the most frequently cited the AP English Literature and a great way to start preparing for the exam is to get familiar with as many of these titles as possible. The likelihood that at one or more of these will appear somewhere on the test is pretty high.

1. Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

Ellison's *Invisible Man* is a long read but it is definitely worth the time spent due to the way it tackles race and bigotry and its effect on the minds of the parties involved in issues of race. *Invisible Man* covers race, identity, ideology, and stereotypes. Further, it tells the story of a marginalized character who eventually overcomes alienation, invisibility, and defies a society that is unable and unwilling to recognize the individuality of the black man. This is the most frequently referenced title on the AP English Literature reading list at 26 citations since 1971.

2. Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte

Wuthering Heights is one of the most widely regarded pieces on the AP English Literature reading list. *WH* is a good example of Gothic Romanticism that deals heavily with questions of emotion and violence. It's particularly accessible and discusses class and gender comfortably from the perspective of a woman. This is one of the most frequently cited literary works on the AP Literature exam. It has been included in some form or fashion on 20 different years' tests since 1971. I personally recommend analyzing this piece while looking out for the poetry and mastery of composition that Emily Bronte wields in her only published novel. *Wuthering Heights* is long but meaningful read.

3. Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

Great Expectations is another Victorian novel that is very frequently included on the AP Literature exam. Since 1971, it has been cited 18 times. It is considered a Victorian Bildungsroman, German for "Novel of Formation," simply described as a coming-of-age story. *Great Expectations* is probably one of the most versatile titles on this list because it addresses many of the Victorian-era genres of the novel, including satire, crime, Silver Fork, Newgate, Gothic, serial fiction, romance, politics, and history. Read Dickens' *Great Expectations* as if you need to mark a trail to get back to the beginning, your starting point. With Dickens, it's about the particular points he mentions. Those points throughout the story inform your reading of *Great Expectations*, not the purpose of the novel itself.

4. King Lear by William Shakespeare

King Lear, referenced 17 times since 1971, is the most frequently cited work by Shakespeare. It's a somewhat brutal play containing themes ranging from familial love and duty to anger and deception. It's a play that provides you with many different elements of story to discuss as well as elements of style. The actual story is too complicated to briefly summarize, so trust the numbers and read this play before taking the test.

5. Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoevsky

The main theme of *Crime and Punishment* is redemption through suffering. This is another long but worthwhile read at 545 pages. The purpose of *Crime and Punishment* is to provide a psychological analysis of the young Raskolnikov's crime to reveal how this psychological analysis itself keeps us imprisoned. Intellectualizing events, says Dostoevsky, keeps us imprisoned. As the name tells us, crime

and punishment and their relationship to each other are major themes in the story. Think about questions of sacrifice when reading studying this piece. Nihilism, the superhero complex, alienation, and poverty are also analyzed at length.

6. Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad

Heart of Darkness is lauded on many of the AP English Literature prep message boards as a go-to literary work for the free response section, and with good reason. It's a relatively short novella and an interesting read involving mystery, psychology, and adventure. *Heart of Darkness* is particularly useful in questions about the modern world in that it was somewhat prophetically written. It deals with the question of imperialist greed particularly pointedly. Above all else, *Heart of Darkness* effectively explores and answers questions about morality and how the ambiguity of right and wrong can justify actions. Keep this in mind.

7. Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte

Jane Eyre is a highly cited Victorian Romantic novel. At its core, this is a story of a woman yearning for more than what traditional society would allow her to have. Not only is it well known, but it's also more relevant than ever as a piece of proto-feminism.

8. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

Huck Finn is probably one of the best-known titles on this list among American students and with good reason. It's rich and complex, yet decipherable by students. If, perhaps, you're asked about the era of Slavery or Reconstruction, *Huck Finn* should really come to mind. It relentlessly discusses slavery and racism and the hypocrisy of civilized society. Consider the Mississippi River a symbol for remaining in the middle of the road on issues of race and use that to inform your reading of *Huck Finn*.

9. Moby Dick by Herman Melville

Moby Dick is universally accepted as an expansive, masterful work of fiction. However, Melville himself described this novel as a meditation on America. Read key portions of this text at least and gain an understanding of Melville's particular use of symbolism. There are many pertinent symbols that may appear on the AP English Literature exam.

10. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce

Another bildungsroman, coming-of-age story, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*is an examination of how morality and religion can confine the artist. *A Portrait reflects* Joyce's own development as a young boy through adulthood at university. Read *A Portrait* with an eye for Joyce's stream of consciousness style. As Stephen, the main character, develops morally and psychologically, the style of Joyce's writing adapts and grows, so to speak. Utilize this title on questions of how style can inform the meaning of the development of characters.

--Adapted from "The Ultimate AP English Literature Reading List"

How to Mark a Book

By Mortimer J. Adler, Ph.D.

From *The Saturday Review of Literature,* July 6, 1941

You know you have to read "between the lines" to get the most out of anything. I want to persuade you to do something equally important in the course of your reading. I want to persuade you to write between the lines. Unless you do, you are not likely to do the most efficient kind of reading.

I contend, quite bluntly, that marking up a book is not an act of mutilation but of love. You shouldn't mark up a book which isn't yours.

Librarians (or your friends) who lend you books expect you to keep them clean, and you should. If you decide that I am right about the usefulness of marking books, you will have to buy them. Most of the world's great books are available today, in reprint editions.

There are two ways in which one can own a book. The first is the property right you establish by paying for it, just as you pay for clothes and furniture. But this act of purchase is only the prelude to possession. Full ownership comes only when you have made it a part of yourself, and the best way to make yourself a part of it is by writing in it. An illustration may make the point clear. You buy a beefsteak and transfer it from the butcher's icebox to your own. But you do not own the beefsteak in the most important sense until you consume it and get it into your bloodstream. I am arguing that books, too, must be absorbed in your bloodstream to do you any good.

Confusion about what it means to "own" a book leads people to a false reverence for paper, binding, and type -- a respect for the physical thing -- the craft of the printer rather than the genius of the author. They forget that it is possible for a man to acquire the idea, to possess the beauty, which a great book contains, without staking his claim by pasting his bookplate inside the cover. Having a fine library doesn't prove that its owner has a mind enriched by books; it proves nothing more than that he, his father, or his wife, was rich enough to buy them.

There are three kinds of book owners. The first has all the standard sets and best sellers -- unread, untouched. (This deluded individual owns wood pulp and ink, not books.) The second has a great many books -- a few of them read through, most of them dipped into, but all of them as clean and shiny as the day they were bought. (This person would probably like to make books his own, but is restrained by a false respect for their physical appearance.) The third has a few books or many -- every one of them dog-eared and dilapidated, shaken and loosened by continual use, marked and scribbled in from front to back. (This man owns books.)

Is it false respect, you may ask, to preserve intact and unblemished a beautifully printed book, an elegantly bound edition? Of course not. I'd no more scribble all over a first edition of 'Paradise Lost' than I'd give my baby a set of crayons and an original Rembrandt. I wouldn't mark up a painting or a statue. Its soul, so to speak, is inseparable from its body. And the beauty of a rare edition or of a richly manufactured volume is like that of a painting or a statue.

But the soul of a book "can" be separate from its body. A book is more like the score of a piece of music than it is like a painting. No great musician confuses a symphony with the printed sheets of music. Arturo Toscanini reveres Brahms, but Toscanini's score of the G minor Symphony is so thoroughly marked up that no one but the maestro himself can read it. The reason why a great conductor makes notations on his musical scores -- marks them up again

and again each time he returns to study them--is the reason why you should mark your books. If your respect for magnificent binding or typography gets in the way, buy yourself a cheap edition and pay your respects to the author.

Why is marking up a book indispensable to reading? First, it keeps you awake. (And I don't mean merely conscious; I mean awake.) In the second place; reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The marked book is usually the thought-through book. Finally, writing helps you remember the thoughts you had, or the thoughts the author expressed. Let me develop these three points.

If reading is to accomplish anything more than passing time, it must be active. You can't let your eyes glide across the lines of a book and come up with an understanding of what you have read. Now an ordinary piece of light fiction, like, say, *Gone with the Wind*, doesn't require the most active kind of reading. The books you read for pleasure can be read in a state of relaxation, and nothing is lost. But a great book, rich in ideas and beauty, a book that raises and tries to answer great fundamental questions, demands the most active reading of which you are capable. You don't absorb the ideas of John Dewey the way you absorb the crooning of Mr. Vallee. You have to reach for them. That you cannot do while you're asleep.

If, when you've finished reading a book, the pages are filled with your notes, you know that you read actively. The most famous "active" reader of great books I know is President Hutchins, of the University of Chicago. He also has the hardest schedule of business activities of any man I know. He invariably reads with a pencil, and sometimes, when he picks up a book and pencil in the evening, he finds himself, instead of making intelligent notes, drawing what he calls 'caviar factories' on the margins. When that happens, he puts the book down. He knows he's too tired to read, and he's just wasting time.

But, you may ask, why is writing necessary? Well, the physical act of writing, with your own hand, brings words and sentences more sharply before your mind and preserves them better in your memory. To set down your reaction to important words and sentences you have read, and the questions they have raised in your mind, is to preserve those reactions and sharpen those questions.

Even if you wrote on a scratch pad, and threw the paper away when you had finished writing, your grasp of the book would be surer. But you don't have to throw the paper away. The margins (top as bottom, and well as side), the end-papers, the very space between the lines, are all available. They aren't sacred. And, best of all, your marks and notes become an integral part of the book and stay there forever. You can pick up the book the following week or year, and there are all your points of agreement, disagreement, doubt, and inquiry. It's like resuming an interrupted conversation with the advantage of being able to pick up where you left off.

And that is exactly what reading a book should be: a conversation between you and the author. Presumably he knows more about the subject than you do; naturally, you'll have the proper humility as you approach him. But don't let anybody tell you that a reader is supposed to be solely on the receiving end. Understanding is a two-way operation; learning doesn't consist in being an empty receptacle. The learner has to question himself and question the teacher. He even has to argue with the teacher, once he understands what the teacher is saying. And marking a book is literally an expression of differences, or agreements of opinion, with the author.

There are all kinds of devices for marking a book intelligently and fruitfully. Here's the way I do it:

- **Underlining (or highlighting)**: of major points, of important or forceful statements.

- **Vertical lines at the margin**: to emphasize a statement already underlined.
- **Star, asterisk, or other doo-dad at the margin**: to be used sparingly, to emphasize the ten or twenty most important statements in the book. (You may want to fold the bottom comer of each page on which you use such marks. It won't hurt the sturdy paper on which most modern books are printed, and you will be able take the book off the shelf at any time and, by opening it at the folded-corner page, refresh your recollection of the book.)
- **Numbers in the margin**: to indicate the sequence of points the author makes in developing a single argument.
- **Numbers of other pages in the margin**: to indicate where else in the book the author made points relevant to the point marked; to tie up the ideas in a book, which, though they may be separated by many pages, belong together.
- **Circling or highlighting of keywords or phrases**.
- **Writing in the margin, or at the top or bottom of the page, for the sake of**: recording questions (and perhaps answers) which a passage raised in your mind; reducing a complicated discussion to a simple statement; recording the sequence of major points right through the books. I use the end-papers at the back of the book to make a personal index of the author's points in the order of their appearance.

The front end-papers are to me the most important. Some people reserve them for a fancy bookplate. I reserve them for fancy thinking. After I have finished reading the book and making my personal index on the back end-papers, I turn to the front and try to outline the book, not page by page or point by point (I've already done that at the back), but as an integrated structure, with a basic unity and an order of parts. This outline is, to me, the measure of my understanding of the work.

If you're a die-hard anti-book-marker, you may object that the margins, the space between the lines, and the end-papers don't give you room enough. All right. How about using a scratch pad slightly smaller than the page-size of the book -- so that the edges of the sheets won't protrude? Make your index, outlines and even your notes on the pad, and then insert these sheets permanently inside the front and back covers of the book.

Or, you may say that this business of marking books is going to slow up your reading. It probably will. That's one of the reasons for doing it. Most of us have been taken in by the notion that speed of reading is a measure of our intelligence. There is no such thing as the right speed for intelligent reading. Some things should be read quickly and effortlessly and some should be read slowly and even laboriously. The sign of intelligence in reading is the ability to read different things differently according to their worth. In the case of good books, the point is not to see how many of them you can get through, but rather how many can get through you -- how many you can make your own. A few friends are better than a thousand acquaintances. If this be your aim, as it should be, you will not be impatient if it takes more time and effort to read a great book than it does a newspaper.
You may have one final objection to marking books. You can't lend them to your friends because nobody else can read them without being distracted by your notes. Furthermore, you won't want to lend them because a marked copy is kind of an intellectual diary, and lending it is almost like giving your mind away.

If your friend wishes to read your *Plutarch's Lives*, *Shakespeare*, or *The Federalist Papers*, tell him gently but firmly, to buy a copy. You will lend him your car or your coat -- but your books are as much a part of you as your head or your heart.