Welcome to AP Lit. Below are details about your summer reading assignment; you’ll take an objective test on all three components in the fall. Completing these assignments thoughtfully is the first step toward contributing to next year’s shared intellectual community. As a valuable member of this literary community, your work this summer prepares you for the Lit experience. Please spend time on AP Central, familiarizing yourself with the test and its expectations.

Do you love reading, discussions, and intensive writing? Are you looking forward to being challenged in these areas? Are you a student who doesn’t cut corners and has time in your schedule for deep reading and concentration? If your answer to any of these questions is no, you may be putting yourself in a situation which brings about unnecessary stress and misery. Please understand that this is a highly demanding college course involving a lot of time, including large amounts of dense outside reading (going way beyond plot) and rigorous work on your writing. **Think about your time, your health, your joy, and the need for balance in your life.**

1. Read the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez. Keep a character list as you become enveloped in this fully-realized, intriguing novel. A family tree will help. Set in a small Colombian village, the novel is acclaimed as one of the greatest of the twentieth century. García Márquez creates a fully populated, richly realized world. I hope you will enjoy it. It’s so weird! ❤️ In addition to the character list and the test you will take in September, please complete the following:

   a. What is magical realism (also called “magic realism”) in South American writing? You may research and cite your source. Write about the ways in which the novel belongs in this genre. More importantly, how does magical realism enhance the story? Why does Garcia Marquez write in this style (think about what his purpose might be)? Answer in no more than one single-spaced page.

   b. Write and answer three thoughtful discussion questions. Sometimes a passage from the book is a good place to start. Answers should be at least one paragraph each, backed by textual evidence. Use formal writing.

   We’ll discuss your questions in September. **All writing and ideas must be your own.** Submit your summer work to turnitin.com in the fall. Academic honesty is paramount. Avoid getting a zero (no second chances) and jeopardizing your NHS standing. Don’t “check to make sure I’m on the right track;” not even one phrase or interpretation. Listen closely to the conversation the author is trying to have with you, the reader. If you’re confused, that’s only natural. Embrace the unknowing and stick with it. Stay offline, except to find out about
the magical realism movement in South America. Online cheat sources=poorly written and unimaginative. I want to know your thoughts.

2. A copy of Dear Students: On Reading, Writing, and the Joy of Smelling Books is waiting for you at school. Details to follow about exactly when and where you may pick it up. AP students have found this brief guide helpful for the course. Read it and jot down a few brief questions and/or observations. Please don’t write in the books, as you’ll need to return them. :)

3. Study the “How to Write a Literary Essay” and “The Language of Literary Analysis” handouts (below). Know its contents. In your write-ups, use as many of the word-list words as possible.

By engaging with great (well-written, culturally influential, timeless, thought-provoking) literature, you will learn how to think independently, not what to think or what opinions to possess. Considering opposing viewpoints and respecting others, even while disagreeing, is the key to an intellectually vibrant atmosphere. When it comes to literature, true thinking begins with listening closely to what an author wishes to convey, not what I (or anyone else) wants you to get out of it.

“The real community of man, in the midst of all the self-contradictory simulacra of community, is the community of those who seek the truth, of the potential knowers...of all men to the extent they desire to know. But in fact, this includes only a few, the true friends, as Plato was to Aristotle at the very moment they were disagreeing about the nature of the good...They were absolutely one soul as they looked at the problem. This, according to Plato, is the only real friendship, the only real common good. It is here that the contact people so desperately seek is to be found...This is the meaning of the riddle of the improbable philosopher-kings. They have a true community that is exemplary for all the other communities.” —Allen Bloom

In AP Lit, we will look at how authors use language to answer soul-searching questions about what it means to be human. You may not always agree with the authors or your peers, but as you listen thoughtfully you become part of a true scholarly cadre. In our “community of those who seek the truth,” we will explore not only a work’s content and philosophical background, but also its author’s chosen writing style. No fluffing or bluffing, please. We have so many great books to discuss and I can’t wait to begin. Have a great summer.
Sincerely,

Jennifer Gavin  
English Teacher  
Eastchester High School  
jgavin@eufsdk12.org

P.S. Are you concerned about your writing skills, either your mechanics or your clarity? If so, I highly recommend Strunk & White’s classic, *The Elements of Style*, a brief guide about writing with focus and purpose. Yes, writing guides can be witty and fun to read. You’ll see.

Keep scrolling to encounter more intriguing adventures!
Good Books

Did you used to love reading, but lost the passion in the shuffle of schoolwork and obligations? It’s totally understandable. I’m a sucker for the classics. In case you are looking for some modern, fresh reads, however, here are some suggestions. Totally optional.

*Where You Go Is Not Who You’ll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania, Frank Bruni*

Klara and the Sun, Kazuo Ishiguro  
Cloud Mountain, Aimee Liu  
Beloved, Toni Morrison  
Black Buck, Mateo Askaripour  
The Name of the Wind, Patrick Rothfuss (Harry Potter for intellectuals)  
Circe, Madeline Miller  
Cat’s Eye, Margaret Atwood  
Deacon King Kong, James McBride  
The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo, Taylor Jenkins Reid  
A Gentleman in Moscow, Amor Towles  
Cutting for Stone, Abraham Verghese  
Educated, Tara Westover (Nonfiction--amazing book)

Heavy topics, mature content, beautiful books:

- A Burning, Megha Majumdar  
- There, There, Tommy Orange  
- The Four Winds, Kristin Hannah  
- American Dirt, Jeanine Cummins

Ceremony, Leslie Marmon Silko  
Lincoln in the Bardo, George Saunders  
Obasan, Joy Kogawa

Here are a few books on my reading list for this summer. Drop me a line if you’d like to read and discuss, if you’ve read any of these, or if you have any recommendations. :)
HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY

INTRODUCTION

Functions of an Introduction
- Introduces your reader to basic background information about the literary work, presents the concepts your paper will ponder
- Presents your thesis

Necessary Elements of an Introduction

1.) **Title and type of literary work** --, e.g., *novel*, “short story”, “poem”, *play*, etc.

2.) **Author’s full name** should be given the first time ONLY (thereafter, you should refer to the author by last name only).
   Ex: In Harper Lee’s novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Lee suggests...

3.) **Characters should be identified** the first time they are mentioned (which should happen in the first paragraph). Ex: In *Night*, Elie Wiesel and his father, both concentration camp victims, have different methods of survival.

4.) **A brief orientation to the story or setting** should be provided (just enough information, one or two sentences tops) about the storyline. It makes your essay understandable to your reader – DO NOT SUMMARIZE the entire work. Spend more time on the universal concepts the work addresses (faith, justice, knowledge, compassion, etc.).

5.) **Thesis statement** – last sentence or two of introductory paragraph
**Thesis Statement**

Thesis = Argument + Areas of Support

The areas of support MUST be written in the order in which you plan to present them in your essay.

The shape of a thesis statement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument</th>
<th>Areas of Support</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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</table>

You can always name your areas of support and then present your argument.

**Ex:**

- The triumph of the id in *A Separate Peace* is inevitable, as revealed by Knowles’ nature symbolism, imagery about Brinker’s mock trial, and gruesome details about Finny’s death.

- In her poem, “An Invitation,” Barbara Lock uses metaphors about time, diction about sleep, and imagery about the passage of time in order to convey anxious tenderness for her son.

- In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee conveys the intractable nature of intolerance, even in a small friendly town, by characterizing the family of Tom Robinson, the fake alcoholism of Dolphus Raymond, and Scout’s disastrous first day at school.

- William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* validates Hobbes’ assertion that human life is nasty, brutish and short. The author showcases this harsh truth by providing gory details about Piggy’s death, the disappearance of the boy with the mulberry birthmark, and holy imagery describing Simon’s body.

- By employing surreal symbolism of the pig’s head, the characterization of Simon as a gentle soul, and details about Jack’s brutal dictatorship, William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* reveals that Hobbes is correct: there is an inner beast lurking in all of us.
The thesis statement is the last sentence or two of your introduction.

Argument (sometimes called a “Controlling Idea”):
- The argument of your essay is a statement about the author’s purpose or theme in a work of literature.
- The argument is not a plot summary: it is what you are trying to prove. The argument should be a statement about what the author is showing about life, society, or human nature.

Area of Support:
- Areas of support are points or topics within a literary work that can be developed as paragraphs in support of the argument. (In short essays, an area of support could be body paragraphs. For longer papers, an area of support may take several paragraphs or pages to develop.)

Ex: In Liam O’Flaherty’s short story, “The Sniper,” O’Flaherty conveys the horrors of war and its disastrous effects on a group’s collective identity. By reading the story carefully, we would be able to find the following areas of support:
  - Physical dangers (first body paragraph)
  - Psychological effects (second body paragraph)

Ex: In Harper Lee’s novel To Kill a Mockingbird, Atticus Finch and Mr. Gilmer both use the same strategies of questioning, but for different purposes. The areas of support could be the following:
  - Manner of addressing Tom
  - Types of questions (rhetorical vs. straightforward yes/no)
  - Details about Tom’s level of strength
  - Emphasizing pathos/emotions/fear

*Note that each area of support includes more than just one quote and example. Each area of support would include quotes from BOTH Atticus and Mr. Gilmer.
BODY PARAGRAPHS
(also called “areas of support”)

1.) Open with a topic sentence which names the topic and links to the argument of the paper.

2.) Each body paragraph should have at least two (aim for more in a longer paper)) quotations from the text. Work quotations in smoothly and break them down fully, analyzing the words and their significance. What are the connotations and denotations of the key words?

3.) End the paragraph with several sentences linking back to your argument. Re-read the essay prompt to make sure your body paragraph has addressed what the essay question has asked. Re-read your thesis: how do all of the quotes and analysis in this body paragraph explicitly prove your argument? What is the author trying to get us to understand?

--------------SAMPLE BODY PARAGRAPH-------------

The essay prompt asked the student to show what the author (George Eliot)’s attitude is toward the character Dorothea Brooke, and to explain the techniques Eliot uses to convey this attitude.

While Eliot clearly reveres Dorothea’s beauty, she mildly mocks Dorothea’s own reverence of God. Eliot characterizes Dorothea as an extremely pious young woman. She ridicules Miss Brooke’s eagerness to renounce horseback riding, an activity that she feels “she enjoy[s] in a pagan sensuous way” (59). While her morality and spirituality make her a beautiful person, Eliot also implies that Dorothea takes her devoutness to extremes. Her religious devotion prevents her from enjoying a typical, jovial youth. Eliot also points out that her extreme piety causes her to have “childish ideas about marriage.” Miss Brooke claims to wish to marry a pious man, who can help her to remain holy and informed. Dorothea’s ideas concerning her religious lifestyle seem absurd, considering that she is quite gorgeous and intelligent, and could be taking advantage of every enjoyable activity that her surroundings have to offer her. Even though Eliot scorns Dorothea’s excessive piety, her rumination about Dorothea’s spirituality reveals a respect and fascination with her complex world view and behavior.
Notice that there are only two quotations, but they are explained fully (and the word “quote” is never used). After the quotes and analysis comes further explanations of what Eliot’s attitude is, showing complexity: it’s not described just as “respectful,” but with “respect,” “interest,” “scorn,” and “amazement.” The last several sentences elaborate on what Eliot’s attitude toward Dorothea really is—and that was the argument of the paper.

In any close reading essay:

- The argument is going to be about what the author is trying to convey (purpose, tone, etc.). WHAT the author is saying.
- The body paragraphs will each analyze one strategy or technique the author uses to convey that purpose. HOW the author is saying it.

As you read a passage, scan for patterns. If the author refers to nature more than once, uses the color blue more than once, or comments on social gatherings more than once, then those are all techniques and can each get their own body paragraphs. Close reading passages will always have several of these for you to analyze. Passages that the College Board selects will be chock full of these patterns for you to separate out and identify.

The body paragraph is where you connect your evidence (quotations) with the argument. After giving a quotation and explaining its significance, make sure you connect the evidence to your argument with several sentences.

Ex:
The imagery of the environment’s textures and tangibility emphasizes the devastating impact of the wolf’s death on the boy’s spirituality. The beginning of the passage focuses on externalities, the feeling of the wolf’s fur, “bristly with the blood dried upon it.” McCormack’s long, vivid sentences detail the protagonist’s mechanical movements, never deviating from the man’s agenda of, “crouch[ing] in the dark,” and “wash[ing] the blood out of [the blanket].” All of these actions revolve around the tangible world that the man can touch and feel. Trying to formulate a routine that accounts for the absence of the wolf, the man focuses on the externals, staving off the internal process of grief. However, as the man reflects on the wolf’s death, the imagery adopts a dreamier atmosphere. He imagines her, “Running in the mountains, running in the starlight...”
Gavin

attempting to find a tangible home for her intangible soul, something he can no longer hold. By the end of the passage, the man has accepted the passing, filled with the same, “fear and marvel,” that his fellow animals experience. McCormack further contrasts the intangibility of death with the corporeal body left behind as the author depicts the character “taking up her stiff head [and holding] what cannot be held.” The end of the wolf’s life forces the man to expand his spiritual views on the spirit because it reminds him of his own mortality and the destination of his soul.

**Topic Sentence**

The topic sentence is the first sentence of each body paragraph.

Each area of support (paragraph) needs a topic sentence.

**Topic sentence = One area of support + reference to the paper’s argument**

Examples:

- Liam O’Flaherty depicts the complex and gruesome effects of war on the individual first by presenting the physical dangers of war.

- John Knowles cautions us about the the id’s subversive danger by presenting war-like details about the violent blitzball game.
  
  id’s subversive nature (argument) + details about blitzball (first area of support)

**Argument + area of support**

triumph of id peer pressure of the tree

Ex: John Knowles showcases the lurid triumph of the id by highlighting the peer pressure of jumping out of the tree.
Ex: The peer pressure of jumping out of the tree reveals John Knowles’ view that the id in human nature will always triumph.

**Argument + area of support**

Triumph of id  Academic competition

Ex: John Knowles emphasizes human nature’s id with several examples of academic competition.

Ex: The motif of academic competition reveals the author’s view that in human nature, the id ultimately triumphs.

Each body paragraph in your essay needs to begin with a clear, complete topic sentence.
CONCLUSION

The conclusion leaves the reader convinced that:

1.) Your thesis has been supported.

2.) The argument that you have made has led to some deeper understanding of the text. What is the author eager to show about what kind of world this is and how we are to live in it?

Specific Strategies for Writing Conclusions

1.) Rephrase your thesis statement in a fresh way. Don’t introduce any new evidence.

2.) Discuss the larger message of the text as a whole. What is the “big picture”? How is our understanding and/or appreciation of the story enriched by analyzing it in this way?

3.) Incorporate the universals. Don’t boil the author’s work down to a treacly moral; not every literary work is a call to action. The author doesn’t just want to convey an accurate portrayal of a character for its own sake. The portrayal will serve another purpose. In this passage, what is the author trying to show us about knowledge, storytelling, family, suffering, nobility, virtue, honor, social hierarchies, wisdom, betrayal...what is the author, in this passage, showing about these universals? Ponder the work’s grand ideas.

Example: With her complex characterization of Walter Lee, Hansberry raises the black male above the typical stereotype. Walter is not a social problem, a mere victim of matriarchy. Rather, Hansberry creates a character who struggles with his fate and rises above it. In doing so, she elevates Walter Lee above narrow stereotypes, representing him as a fully rounded and psychologically complex human being. The passionate behaviors Walter and his family exhibit, along with their forced smiles, often mask
Three Sample Essay Structures for *To Kill a Mockingbird*

1. **Education**: comparing what is learned and how  
   Argument: showing that informal education is more helpful to Scout than formal education  
   Areas of Support  
   a. school  
   b. family  
   c. community  
   Conclusion: what the author is suggesting about how one learns the most (or the most important) lessons

2. **Individual v. Group**: a close look at the Old Sarum Gang and William Carlos Williams’ poem “At the Ball Game”  
   Argument: the triumph of the individual over the group (individual reasoning v. mob mentality)  
   Areas of Support  
   a. How groups are portrayed  
      1. WCW  
      2. *TKM*  
   b. How individuals are portrayed  
      1. WCW  
      2. *TKM*  
   Conclusion: What authors suggest about the potential of each

3. **Innocence**  
   Argument: How characters lose their innocence affects the type of person each will become  
   (Boo or Mayella, *harsh*,  
   Jem or Dill, *some difficulties*,  
   and Scout, *relatively painless*  

Gavin

deep, long-held senses of injustice and survival. As James Baldwin writes in *Notes of a Native Son*, “Time has made some changes in the Negro face.”
Choose only three characters: one from each group.

Areas of Support:

a. how the child is nurtured
b. ... responds to authority
c. ... interacts with others

Conclusion: are you still reading this? I hope so.

Note: a student once pointed out that Dill would likely work better than Jem for several reasons: distance from Scout/Finch family, issues of neglect, honesty, etc. Intriguing!

************************************************

AP Lit Essay Scoring

The 100/100 paper will include the following:

- Thesis statement. Thesis is complex yet clear, addressing the prompt. Presents your essay’s argument and three areas of support.
- Ideas. Answers the prompt fully, addressing the question with insight and analysis. Goes way beyond what has already been said in class. Remarks transcend the obvious and accurately identify the author’s purpose, tone, and techniques. Picks up on the subtleties of the author’s language, connecting these observations to the argument (the author’s purpose).
- Organization. Three clear areas of support (body paragraphs) that address the author’s techniques. Ideas are easy to follow, in a logical progression, with each paragraph framed by a topic sentence. Structure includes an introduction and a conclusion.
- Evidence. Analysis is supported by evidence (quotes, examples), worked in smoothly. Evidence is linked to your thesis, with a thorough explanation of how that evidence supports the argument (typically, what the author’s tone or purpose is).
- Free of errors in grammar, spelling and mechanics. Writing is formal and follows the standard conventions of academic written English.
Try not to worry yourself too much about the empty space in this area.

Quick Overview of Essay Structure

1. **Introduction**
   - Interesting opening
   - Background, titles, authors
   - Introduction of paper’s philosophical concepts
   - Thesis statement

2. **Body Paragraph**
   - Topic sentence naming argument and area of support
   - Evidence with explanations
   - Several sentences linking back to the author’s purpose and your thesis

3. **Body Paragraph**

4. **Body Paragraph**

5. **Conclusion**
   - Rephrase argument in a fresh new way
   - How is our understanding/appreciation enhanced by looking at it this way?
   - Big picture—universals!
   - Get philosophical
The Language of Literary Analysis

VERBS

These verbs will be especially effective when the subject is the author or a character. They are excellent replacements for “be” verbs, instrumental in the formulation of thesis statements. Using them carefully can result in precise identification of an author’s purpose.

VERBS FOR LITERARY ANALYSIS

accentuates  
accepts  
adopts  
adovates  
affects  
alleviates  
allows  
alludes to  
alters  
avalyses  
approaches  
ascertains  
assesses  
avsumes  
attacks  
attributes…to  
avoids  
challenges  
characterizes  
chronicles  
claims  
compels  
condescends  
conducts  
conforms

confronts  
considers  
contends  
contests  
contrasts  
conveys  
convinces  
defies  
defines  
delineates  
despises  
details  
determines  
develops  
deviates  
differs b/w  
directs  
discovers  
disputes  
disrupts  
distinguishes  
distorts  
downplays  
dramatizes  
elevates  
elicits  
emphasizes  
encounters  
enhances  
enriches  
enumerates  
envisions  
evokes  
excludes  
expands  
experiences  
expresses  
expresses  
extrapolates  
fantasizes  
foreshadows  
generalizes  
guides  
heightens  
honors  
identifies  
imagine  
implies  
indicates  
impresses  
interprets  
interrupts  
justifies  
juxtaposes  
laambasts  
laments  
lampoons  
manipulates  
minimizes  
moralizes  
muses  

rationalizes  
recalls  
recollects  
recounts  
reflects  
regards  
regrets  
rejects  
represents  
ridicules  

divertizes  
selects  
specifies  
speculates  
supplies  
suppresses  
symbolizes  
sympathizes  

validates  
vacillates  
values  
verifies

VERBS THAT REPLACE “SHOWS”

16
Gavin

accentuates  connotes  discloses  exemplifies  manifests
asserts  corroborates  elucidates  exhibits  ratifies
attests to  defines  endorses  exposes  substantiates
certifies  denotes  establishes  expounds upon  typifies
confirms  depicts  evinces  intimates  validate

ADJECTIVES

**DESCRIBING THE AUTHOR**

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**DESCRIBING STYLE OR CONTENT**

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**DESCRIBING DICTION AND TONE**

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<td>Cultured</td>
<td>Effusive</td>
<td>Foreboding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
gracious     jocular     obscure     poignant     somber
grotesque   laconic     obsequious   pretentious   supercilious
homespun    learned    obtuse      provincial   symbolic
impudent     lighthearted    ominous    puerile      tactful
incendiary  literal     ominous    reflective   urbane
inexact      lugubrious   passionate  restrained   urgent
informal    melancholic   patronizing  reverent     vexed
insipid      misanthropic  pedantic    sardonic     vulgar
inspired     moralistic   peevish      scholarly    wistful
ironic       mournful    perplexed    sensuous     wry
irreverent   nostalgic    picturesque  sentimental  zealous

Forbidden words: happy, sad, gloomy, depressing, depressed, scared, positive, negative, mad, mean, impactful

DESCRIBING SYNTAX

abrupt     declarative     interrupted     mellifluous     telegraphic
antithetic    elaborate     inverted     musical     terse
austere        elegant     jerky     obfuscating     thudding
balanced      epigrammatic     journalistic     ornate     tortuous
cacophonous  erudite     jumbled     periodic     unadorned
chaotic       euphonic     laconic     rhythmic
complex      exclamatory     lilting     spare
compound     imperative     loose     sprawling
compound-complex      interrogative     lyrical     staccato

DESCRIBING IMAGERY

auditory     carnal     kinetic     primordial     sensual
bucolic       gustatory     olfactory     religious     tactile
cadaverous    kinesthetic     pastoral     rustic     verdant
Gavin