



## AP Literature & Composition Summer Assignment

Dear Future AP Lit Student,

I am looking forward to welcoming you to Advanced Placement Literature and Composition. You will be following in the footsteps of many excellent students who have enjoyed this course for its nearly 50 year history at Grosse Pointe South.

As an important part of this course, you are assigned summer reading and study from one of our textbooks, ***Structure, Sound and Sense (Section Two: The Elements of Poetry, pages 633-673)***. Make sure you find and read the right section/pages of the book. You can obtain a copy from the school bookstore. Instructions for this assignment are on the following pages. All responses should go on the first pages of your class notebook. Expect to have an assessment on this work the first week we return to school.

The Advanced Placement Literature and Composition exam covers British and American literature from the 16th - 21st centuries, as well as literature of other countries whose works are published in the English language. That's a lot to cover. Obviously, the exam is not testing your knowledge and abilities for just this one course, but your lifetime of reading and writing. As we study various literary works, we will be reading about 25 pages each evening. The best way to maintain a strong reading rate is to read challenging material for sustained periods of time on a regular basis. Taking a 10-week hiatus during the summer will slow you down considerably. So please, continue to read and absorb works of literary merit of your own accord.

During the first week of school, I will be meeting with you individually to discuss what you have read over the summer, as well as your summer assignment. As mentioned above, please start the assignment in a notebook which you will use for this class only.

I will see you on the first day of school! Come prepared with your summer assignment and be ready to talk about it. I know we will have a great year together.

Sincerely,  
Ms. Lauer

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION  
SUMMER ASSIGNMENT**

**Completing this assignment thoughtfully and thoroughly should take about 8 hours. Please do not attempt to do this assignment in one sitting. Budget your time wisely.**

**Before school ends, obtain a copy of *Structure, Sound & Sense* from the school bookstore.**

1. In the Section "The Elements of Poetry," read Chapter 1 ("What is Poetry?") [page 633-654] and Chapter 2 ("Reading the Poem") [page 655-673]. Read *all* of the poems in those chapters—not just those assigned below.
2. As mentioned in the welcome letter, obtain a notebook to be used exclusively for this class.
3. Cut out the poems from the following pages. Note that not all of these come from Chapters 1 and 2. Some of these are not in the textbook and I have included them simply because they are great poems.
  - Introduction to Poetry
  - Dulce Et Decorum Est
  - Terence This is Stupid Stuff
  - Barbie Doll
  - A Study of Reading Habits
  - There's Been a Death in the Opposite House
  - The Red Wheelbarrow
  - Harlem Hopscotch
  - Duplex (not in the textbook)
  - Dead Stars (not in the textbook)
4. Glue the poem to a page in your notebook and then thoroughly annotate it. Don't merely point out a literary device, but try to ascertain its effect within the poem—why is it there? Please do NOT go to the internet for insight on a particular poem. The whole point of this is to grow in your own understanding and skill. Having someone or something else (Ahem... AI) do the thinking for you will not help.
5. Then beneath it write about the poem and its meaning—explain the effect of the features you've annotated; noticing them is not enough. This is called an EXPLICATION. The explication should be at least a single-spaced, handwritten page in your notebook. Make sure all relevant questions on page 641 of *Structure, Sound & Sense* ("Understanding and Evaluating Poetry") are answered. Bear in mind that not all of the questions on that page apply to every poem.
6. Choose two (2) poems from the textbook that are not on the bulleted list above. Pick ones that speak to you in some way. (This doesn't just mean one you like, it could be one that disturbs or upsets you). Either transcribe or print those two poems on your own. Then annotate and explicate these two poems as well using this prompt: *Poetry is meant to engage the reader on both the conscious and subconscious level. What techniques does the author use to accomplish this?*

**Bring this completed assignment to the first day of class!**

## **Introduction to Poetry**

Billy Collins

I ask them to take a poem  
and hold it up to the light  
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem  
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room  
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to water-ski  
across the surface of a poem  
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do  
is tie the poem to a chair with rope  
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose  
to find out what it really means.

## **Dulce Et Decorum Est**

Wilfred Owen

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,  
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs  
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.  
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots  
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;  
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots  
Of disappointed shells that dropped behind.

GAS! Gas! Quick, boys!-- An ecstasy of fumbling,  
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;  
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling  
And floundering like a man in fire or lime.--  
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light  
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,  
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,--  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
Pro patria mori.

***Terence, This is Stupid Stuff...***

Alfred Edward Housman

"Terence, this is stupid stuff!  
You eat your victuals fast enough;  
There can't be much amiss, 'tis clear,  
To see the rate you drink your beer.  
But oh, good Lord, the verse you make,  
It gives a chap the belly-ache!  
The cow, the old cow, she is dead;  
It sleeps well, the horned head...  
We poor lads, 'tis our turn now  
To hear such tunes as killed the cow!  
Pretty friendship 'tis to rhyme  
Your friends to death before their time  
Moping melancholy mad!  
Come, pipe a tune to dance to, lad!"

Why, if 'tis dancing you would be,  
There's brisker pipes than poetry.  
Say, for what were hop-yards meant,  
Or why was Burton built on Trent?  
Oh many a peer of England brews  
Livelier liquor than the Muse,  
And malt does more than Milton can  
To justify God's ways to man.  
Ale, man, ale's the stuff to drink  
For fellows whom it hurts to think:  
Look into the pewter pot  
To see the world as the world's not.  
And faith, 'tis pleasant till 'tis past:  
The mischief is that 'twill not last.  
Oh I have been to Ludlow fair  
And left my necktie God knows where,  
And carried half way home, or near,  
Pints and quarts of Ludlow beer:  
Then the world seemed none so bad,  
And I myself a sterling lad;  
And down in lovely muck I've lain,  
Happy till I woke again.  
Then I saw the morning sky:  
Heigho, the tale was all a lie;  
The world, it was the old world yet,  
I was I, my things were wet,  
And nothing now remained to do  
But begin the game anew.

("Terence..." cont.)

Therefore, since the world has still  
Much good, but much less good than ill,  
And while the sun and moon endure  
Luck's a chance, but trouble's sure,  
I'd face it as a wise man would,  
And train for ill and not for good.  
'Tis true, the stuff I bring for sale  
Is not so brisk a brew as ale:  
Out of a stem that scored the hand  
I wrung it in a weary land.  
But take it: if the smack is sour,  
The better for the embittered hour;  
It should do good to heart and head  
When your soul is in my soul's stead;  
And I will friend you, if I may,  
In the dark and cloudy day.

There was a king reigned in the East:  
There, when kings will sit to feast,  
They get their fill before they think  
With poisoned meat and poisoned drink.  
He gathered all the springs to birth  
From the many-venomed earth;  
First a little, thence to more,  
He sampled all her killing store;  
And easy, smiling, seasoned sound,  
Sate the king when healths went round.  
They put arsenic in his meat  
And stared aghast to watch him eat;  
They poured strychnine in his cup  
And shook to see him drink it up:  
They shook, they stared as white's their shirt:  
Them it was their poison hurt.  
—I tell the tale that I heard told.  
Mithridates, he died old.

## **Barbie Doll**

Marge Piercy

This girlchild was born as usual  
and presented dolls that did pee-pee  
and miniature GE stoves and irons  
and wee lipsticks the color of cherry candy.  
Then in the magic of puberty, a classmate said:  
You have a great big nose and fat legs.

She was healthy, tested intelligent,  
possessed strong arms and back,  
abundant sexual drive and manual dexterity.  
She went to and fro apologizing.  
Everyone saw a fat nose on thick legs.

She was advised to play coy,  
exhorted to come on hearty,  
exercise, diet, smile and wheedle.  
Her good nature wore out  
like a fan belt.  
So she cut off her nose and her legs  
and offered them up.

In the casket displayed on satin she lay  
with the undertaker's cosmetics painted on,  
a turned-up putty nose,  
dressed in a pink and white nightie.  
Doesn't she look pretty? everyone said.  
Consummation at last.  
To every woman a happy ending.

## **A Study of Reading Habits**

Philip Larkin

When getting my nose in a book  
Cured most things short of school,  
It was worth ruining my eyes  
To know I could still keep cool,  
And deal out the old right hook  
To dirty dogs twice my size.

Later, with inch-thick specs,  
Evil was just my lark:  
Me and my coat and fangs  
Had ripping times in the dark.  
The women I clubbed with sex!  
I broke them up like meringues.

Don't read much now: the dude  
Who lets the girl down before  
The hero arrives, the chap  
Who's yellow and keeps the store  
Seem far too familiar. Get stewed:  
Books are a load of crap.



***There's been a Death, in the Opposite House...***

Emily Dickinson

There's been a Death, in the Opposite House,  
As lately as Today –  
I know it, by the numb look  
Such Houses have – always –

The Neighbors rustle in and out –  
The Doctor –drives away –  
A Window opens like a Pod --  
Abrupt – mechanically –

Somebody flings a Mattress out –  
The Children hurry by –  
They wonder if it died –on that –  
I used to -- when a Boy --

The Minister -- goes stiffly in --  
As if the House were His --  
And He owned all the Mourners -- now --  
And little Boys -- besides --

And then the Milliner -- and the Man  
Of the Appalling Trade --  
To take the measure of the House --  
There'll be that Dark Parade --

Of Tassels -- and of Coaches -- soon --  
It's easy as a Sign --  
The Intuition of the News --  
In just a Country Town --

# **The Red Wheelbarrow**

William Carlos Williams

so much depends  
upon

a red wheel  
barrow

glazed with rain  
water

beside the white  
chickens.

## **Harlem Hopscotch**

Maya Angelou

One foot down, then hop! It's hot.

Good things for the ones that's got.

Another jump, now to the left.

Everybody for hisself.

In the air, now both feet down.

Since you black, don't stick around.

Food is gone, the rent is due,

Curse and cry and then jump two.

All the people out of work,

Hold for three, then twist and jerk.

Cross the line, they count you out.

That's what hopping's all about.

Both feet flat, the game is done.

They think I lost. I think I won.

## **Duplex**

Jericho Brown

A poem is a gesture toward home.  
It makes dark demands I call my own.

Memory makes demands darker than my own:  
My last love drove a burgundy car.

My first love drove a burgundy car.  
He was fast and awful, tall as my father.

Steadfast and awful, my tall father  
Hit hard as a hailstorm. He'd leave marks.

Light rain hits easy but leaves its own mark  
Like the sound of a mother weeping again.

Like the sound of my mother weeping again,  
No sound beating ends where it began.

None of the beaten end up how we began.  
A poem is a gesture toward home.

## Dead Stars

Ada Limón

Out here, there's a bowing even the trees are doing.

Winter's icy hand at the back of all of us.

Black bark, slick yellow leaves, a kind of stillness that feels  
so mute it's almost in another year.

I am a hearth of spiders these days: a nest of trying.

We point out the stars that make Orion as we take out  
the trash, the rolling containers a song of suburban thunder.

It's almost romantic as we adjust the waxy blue  
recycling bin until you say, *Man, we should really learn  
some new constellations.*

And it's true. We keep forgetting about Antlia, Centaurus,  
Draco, Lacerta, Hydra, Lyra, Lynx.

But mostly we're forgetting we're dead stars too, my mouth is full  
of dust and I wish to reclaim the rising—

to lean in the spotlight of streetlight with you, toward  
what's larger within us, toward how we were born.

Look, we are not unspectacular things.  
We've come this far, survived this much. What

would happen if we decided to survive more? To love harder?

What if we stood up with our synapses and flesh and said, *No.*  
*No*, to the rising tides.

Stood for the many mute mouths of the sea, of the land?

What would happen if we used our bodies to bargain

for the safety of others, for earth,  
if we declared a clean night, if we stopped being terrified,

if we launched our demands into the sky, made ourselves so big  
people could point to us with the arrows they make in their minds,

rolling their trash bins out, after all of this is over?