

“In a very real sense, people who have read good literature have lived more than people who cannot or will not read. It is not true that we can have only one life to live. If we can read, we can live as many lives and as many kinds of lives as we wish.” --S. I. Hayakawa

“The world is made up of stories, not of atoms.” --Muriel Rukeyser

Welcome to Advanced Placement English!

With an open mind and willingness to work, you should have no trouble scoring high on the AP exam next May and earning credit at a participating college. One of my goals—among many—is to provide you with the instruction and guidance that will prepare you for this exam—but the test is really not what drives the course.

To ensure a strong beginning, please read the works listed below during the summer. I encourage you to take informal notes on each book. Your notes can include impressions, reactions, quotations, questions, connections to other works—anything that helps you to understand and interpret literature. I will not collect these notes, but they will be helpful in completing the following assignment, which I will collect.

In addition, I would like you to write a short paper (about 2 pages—typed double-spaced—12 Times New Roman font) in which you relate any one of the novels you have read to the following quotation by Franz Kafka:

“A book must be the ax for the frozen sea within us.”

In other words, your essay should discuss what that work has taught you about yourself. You have latitude regarding how to approach and structure the paper, but it must be organized and focused. Please do not use any outside sources for the paper—I want to see how *you* think and write. I will collect the essay the first class meeting in September and it will count as a test grade for the first marking period. I will also collect the seven short reaction papers on selections from *The Book of Genesis* (see below). You will receive half credit if the work is not turned in at the first class—no exceptions (including technology issues).

VERY IMPORTANT! You will need to visit my eBoard over the summer for additional information and links that are designed to enhance and extend your understanding and appreciation of each novel, as well as the selections from *Genesis* and *Mythology*. The links should be up by the last week in June.

The following are the required summer readings:

*Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky (one of the first and probably the greatest of all psychological detective novels)

*Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte (a story of passionate, complex and tragic love)

*Jude the Obscure* by Thomas Hardy (a scathing attack on Victorian morality and sensibility—the reaction against the book was so harsh that even though Hardy was at the peak of his literary powers, he never published another novel)

*Mythology* by Edith Hamilton (you do not need to read the entire book--see my eBoard for the selections)

*The Book of Genesis* (although I encourage you to read the entire book --it is not very long--see my eBoard for the selections and some short writing assignments to complete)

After reading these works, I am confident you'll come back to school with plenty to question and discuss. Be prepared for some sort of “evaluation” for each of the novels and *Mythology*—check tests, essays, or a combination of both—within the first two or three weeks of class.

I look forward to seeing you in September—if you have any questions or concerns over the summer feel free to email me at [rwvalerio@comcast.net](mailto:rwvalerio@comcast.net) or [rvalerio@wtps.org](mailto:rvalerio@wtps.org).

