

Dear AP English Literature and Composition Students,

Welcome to Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition! This is a challenging college-level course which will not only prepare you to take the AP exam in May (required), but will also enrich your literary background and enhance your writing and analysis skills, preparing you to do college-level work.

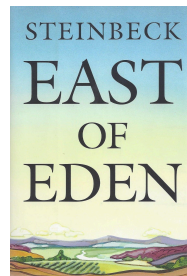
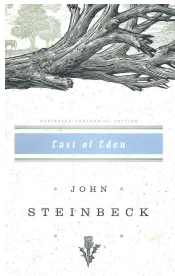
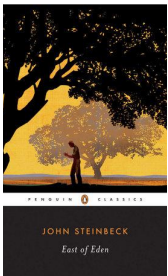
Like most AP English courses across the country, ours requires reading, thinking, and writing over the summer months. Your first grades this fall will come from these summer assignments, but we will also refer to these assignments throughout the year.

Keep in mind that many of you will be writing your college application essay during the first few weeks of September (also required for this class, even if your college does not require an essay) so do not procrastinate on these assignments. ***Your summer assignments are due during the first week of school. Start as soon as possible (after a little break, of course).***

Overview:

1. *East of Eden*: Complete your journal in a Google Document (minimum of two pages). Submit to Canvas on August 25. Bring notes and annotations to show Mr. Aldrich on the first day of class.
2. *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*: Complete three written assignments (total of three typed pages or more) all in the same Google Document. Submit to Canvas on August 25.
3. Optional: Read closely and familiarize yourself with common Biblical allusions.

Assignment 1: Novel



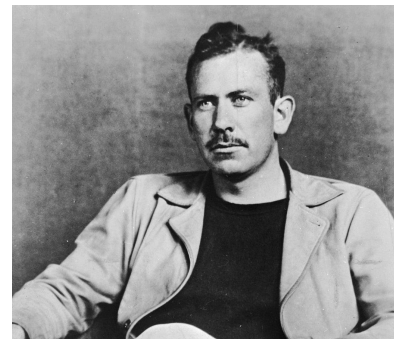
***East of Eden* by John Steinbeck**

Read closely when the text calls for it, and take notes on this novel. It reads slowly at first, establishing the setting and tone, but once you start reading about the struggle between brothers Adam and Charles, you will be hooked. This is a decades spanning story of two families - the Hamiltons and the Trasks - whose generations helplessly reenact the fall of Adam and Eve and the poisonous rivalry of Cain and Abel. This is the type of novel that resonates long after you finish reading it.

Below is some brief biographical information on Steinbeck, followed by the assignment details.

Biographical Information - John Steinbeck

Although it is not necessarily fruitful to search for parallels between a work of literature and the author's life, there is an autobiographical element to John Steinbeck's work. Like the majority of his work, *East of Eden* is set in the Salinas Valley region of central California, which also happens to be the author's birthplace. Born on February 27, 1902, Steinbeck spent many of his formative years working as a ranch hand in the place that would serve as a backdrop for some of the most iconic works of American literature. Steinbeck left Salinas after his high school graduation to study English literature at Stanford University, but he dropped out in 1925 before finishing his degree. He spent five years shuffling between California and New York City, working odd jobs while trying to make it as a writer. Steinbeck's first novel, *Cup of Gold*, was published in 1929, but it was not until 1935 that he achieved critical acclaim with the novel *Tortilla Flat*. He went on to write the novella *Of Mice and Men*, which the Nobel Prize committee called "a little masterpiece," before publishing his most famous novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, a novel about a family of migrants trying to survive the trek to California during the Dust Bowl. Despite winning him the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, *Grapes* proved to be a very controversial text that resulted in bans and protests of Steinbeck's work, death threats, and the eventual harassment of J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI.



In 1952, Steinbeck published *East of Eden*, the book that he considered to be his *magnum opus*. He called the novel “the first book,” an allusion to the many elements of the text that directly recall the book of Genesis. While *Of Mice and Men* and *Grapes of Wrath* are arguably the more famous titles, *East of Eden* is a towering achievement of American literature that addresses some of the most fundamental aspects of human existence: forgiveness, generational curses, and free will.

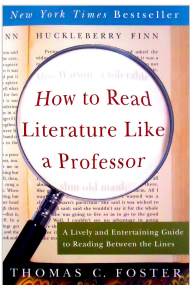
Along with reading this novel, do **BOTH** of the following tasks by **Wednesday, August 25** to be ready for our first class.

Assignment 1 -- Informal writing to prepare for graded discussion and formal writing: This is a work that can be approached at various levels – sociological, spiritual, psychological, and philosophical – and cherished for its literary and entertainment value. Write thoroughly and clearly (coherent paragraphs, specific examples and quotations) about which of these ways you read this work, and what within the novel prompted you to read it through that lens (or those lenses). Since this is not yet formal analysis, you can write in an informal, journal-like way. To really develop your thinking, write for **at least two double-spaced pages**. Have this ready to digitally submit on the first day of class.

Assignment 2 -- Presentation Preparation: Once we discuss this novel in class, you will be assigned to be a part of a presentation, analyzing this novel from a well-defined perspective designed to prepare you for AP-level analysis and the AP exam. Prepare for this over the summer by reading closely, annotating or taking notes, and having those notes available when given your assigned topic once classes begin.

Note: Because you will have to work with this novel in the fall, be sure to take notes as you read (page numbers help, too.) I would **highly recommend purchasing a copy of the book** if you can in order to take notes directly within the text as well as on a separate document.

Assignment 2: *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas Foster



Think of this book as the ultimate SparkNotes for any work of fiction that you might read in AP Literature. It explains the difference between reading and reading closely, what to look for, and what notes will be helpful when reading literature.

This text helps readers understand some of the common archetypes and images found in literature: quests, communion, baptism, fairy tale elements, allusions (Greek, Biblical, Shakespearean), Christ figures, and symbolism (blindness, physical imperfections, flight, weather, geography, illness).

Choose **three (3)** of the writing assignments in the following list. Write, revise and edit. **Length: no less than one page per response in proper MLA format**--all done in the same document; label each written piece with the chapter number and title. In making connections to other works, it is best to choose novels, short stories, novellas, plays, and epics you have read for class or works of equal literary merit. Can't think of anything? Consider classic children's literature or even films or shows you've enjoyed.

Choices from Foster's book – (The chapters and page numbers that follow are taken from the FIRST EDITION of this book (2003)).

Introduction: How'd He Do That? -- How do memory, symbol, and pattern affect the reading of literature? How does the recognition of patterns make it easier to read complicated literature? Discuss a time when your appreciation of a literary work was enhanced by understanding symbol or pattern.

Chapter 1 -- Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not) -- List the five aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to something you have read (or viewed) in the form used on pages 3-5.

Chapter 2 -- Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion -- Choose a meal from a literary work and apply the ideas of Chapter 2 to this literary depiction.

Chapter 3: --Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires -- What are the essentials of the Vampire story? Apply this to a literary work or film you have read or viewed.

Chapter 4 -- If It's Square, It's a Sonnet -- Select three sonnets and show which form they are. Discuss how their content reflects the form. (Submit copies of the sonnets, marked to show your analysis).

Chapter 5 --Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before? -- Define intertextuality. Discuss three examples that have helped you in reading specific works.

Chapter 6 -- When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare... -- Discuss a work that you are familiar with that alludes to or reflects Shakespeare. Show how the author uses this connection thematically. Read pages 44-46 carefully. In these pages, Foster shows how Fugard reflects Shakespeare through both plot and theme. In your discussion, focus on the theme.

Chapter 7 -- ...Or the Bible -- Read "[Araby](#)" by James Joyce (available online). Discuss Biblical allusions that Foster does not mention. Look at the example of the "two great jars." Be creative and imaginative in these connections.

Chapter 8 -- Hansel and Gretel -- Think of a work of literature or a film/show that reflects a fairy tale. Discuss the parallels. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation?

Chapter 9 -- It's Greek to Me -- Write a free verse poem derived or inspired by characters or situations from Greek mythology. Be prepared to share your poem with the class. You read *The Odyssey* in Honors English I and may be familiar with other Greek lore. Online research is readily available on Greek mythology.

Chapter 10 -- It's More Than Just Rain or Snow -- Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work or film/television, not in terms of plot.

Interlude -- Does He Mean That

Chapter 11 --...More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence -- Present examples of the two kinds of violence found in literature or film/television. Show how the effects are different.

Chapter 12 -- Is That a Symbol? -- Use the process described on page 106 and investigate the symbolism of the fence in "Araby" by James Joyce (Mangan's sister stands behind it.)

Chapter 13 -- It's All Political -- Assume that Foster is right and "it is all political." Use his criteria to show that one of the major works assigned to you in school is political.

Chapter 14 -- Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too -- Apply the criteria on page 119 to a major character in a significant literary work. Try to choose a character that will have many matches. This is a particularly apt tool for analyzing film/television (*Star Wars*, *The Matrix*, *Avengers*, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*) or children's literature (*Harry Potter*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Hunger Games*)

Chapter 15 -- Flights of Fancy -- Select a literary work or film/show in which flight signifies escape or freedom. Explain in detail.

Chapter 16 -- It's All About Sex... / Chapter 17 -- ...Except the Sex -- The key idea from this chapter is that "scenes in which sex is coded rather than explicit can work at multiple levels and sometimes be more intense than literal depictions" (141). In other words, sex is often suggested with much more art and effort

than it is described, and, if the author is doing his job, it reflects and creates a theme or character. (No written assignment for these chapters.)

Chapter 18 -- If She Comes Up, It's Baptism -- Think of a "baptism scene" from a significant literary work or film/show. How was the character different after the experience? Discuss.

Chapter 19 -- Geography Matters... -- Discuss at least four different aspects of a specific literary work or film/show that Foster would classify under "geography."

Chapter 20 -- ...So Does Season -- Find a poem that mentions a specific season. Then discuss how the poet uses the season in a meaningful, traditional, or unusual way. (Submit a copy of the poem with your analysis.)

Interlude -- One Story -- Write your own definition for archetype. Then identify an archetypal story and apply it to a literary work with which you are familiar.

Chapter 21 -- Marked for Greatness -- Select a character (other than Harry Potter) with a physical imperfection and analyze its implications for characterization.

Chapter 22 -- He's Blind for a Reason, You Know / Chapter 23 -- It's Never Just Heart Disease... / Chapter 24 -- ...And Rarely Just Illness -- Recall two characters who died of a disease in a literary work or film/show. Consider how these deaths reflect the "principles governing the use of disease in literature" (215-217). Discuss the effectiveness of the death as related to plot, theme, or symbolism.

Chapter 25 -- Don't Read with Your Eyes -- After reading Chapter 25, choose a scene or episode from a novel, play or epic written before the twentieth century. Contrast how it could be viewed by a reader from the twenty-first century with how it might be viewed by a contemporary reader. Focus on specific assumptions that the author makes, assumptions that would not make it in this century.

Chapter 26 -- Is He Serious? And Other Ironies -- Select an ironic literary work or film/show and explain the multivocal nature of the irony in the work.

Chapter 27 -- A Test Case -- Read "The Garden Party" by Katherine Mansfield, the short story starting on page 245. Complete the exercise on pages 265-266, following the directions exactly. Then compare your writing with the three examples. How did you do? What does the essay that follows comparing Laura with Persephone add to your appreciation of Mansfield's story?

Envoi -- Choose a motif not discussed in this book (as the horse reference on page 280) and note its appearance in three or four different works. What does this idea seem to signify?

OPTIONAL, but RECOMMENDED: Excerpts from the Bible

In order to be prepared to recognize and understand the Biblical allusions in major works of literature, it is necessary to be familiar with all of these passages from the Bible:

Genesis: Chapters 1-4, 6-9, 11v1-9, 22. (**Genesis is especially important for understanding East of Eden**)

Exodus: Chapters 2, 3v13-22, 4; 7-12, 19-20

Ecclesiastes: All (read for main ideas and motifs)

Luke: Chapters 1v26-38; 2v1-20

Matthew: Chapters 5-7

Mark: Chapters 14-16

Re-familiarize yourself with these stories (or other forms of literature). As you read, take note of symbolism and motifs that emerge in these fundamental stories. Your studies in theology class will have prepared you, but from what students have told me, re-reading them is necessary to do well and to be adept at analyzing allusions to them.

*Enjoy your summer, read good books,
and email Mr. Aldrich (joshaldrich@grcatholiccentral.org)
if you have any questions on this assignment.*