

Name: _____

Date: _____

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

**Study Questions for
How to Read Literature Like a Professor, Revised Edition
By Thomas C. Foster**

Introduction (pages. xxiii – xxx)

1. Define the “language of reading”.
2. What is the key to recognizing conventions in literature?
3. What separates the professional reader from the rest of the crowd?

Chapter 1: “Every Trip Is a Quest (except when it’s not)” (pgs. 1-6)

4. What are the five aspects of a quest?
5. What is always the real reason for a quest?

Chapter 2: “Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion” (pgs. 7-14)

6. Define “communion” in literature?
7. What is usually the point of an author’s inclusion of a meal scene in literature?
8. What happens if the characters do not share a meal?

Chapter 3: “Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires” (pgs. 15-22)

9. “Ghosts and vampires are...” (finish the sentence)
10. What is the true purpose of a vampire, ghost, or other human but “spooky” character?

Name: _____

Date: _____

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

Chapter 4: "Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?" (pgs. 23-31)

11. What is the biggest part of pattern recognition?
12. Complete the sentence: "There's no such thing as..."
13. Define intertextuality.

Chapter 5: "When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare..." (pgs. 32-42)

14. Name three examples of contemporary works based on Shakespeare's writings.
15. Name some reasons an author might choose to allude to Shakespeare's works.
16. When a writer "relies on our awareness of the Shakespearean text as he constructs his play, ...that reliance allows him to..." (complete the statement).

Chapter 6: "Or the Bible" (pgs. 42-51)

17. What are some examples of common Biblical archetypes?

Chapter 7: "Hansel and Gretel" (pgs. 52-58)

18. Define literary canon.
19. Why would a writer choose to allude to a children's book or a fairy tale?

Chapter 8: "It's Greek to Me" (pgs. 59-58)

20. Name three examples of works of art/literature that allude to the story of Icarus and Daedalus.
21. What does it mean when a story is ironized?

Name: _____

Date: _____

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

Chapter 9: "It's More Than Just Rain or Snow" (pgs. 69-75)

22. A stormy setting has the power to directly affect which elements of literature in particular?
23. What could rain signify within literature?

Chapter 10: "Never Stand Next to the Hero" (pgs. 76-89)

24. Foster states that ..."characters are not people..." Instead, "Characters are products of..." (Finish statement)
25. How does the protagonist's "next-man-over" serve to drive the plot in most works of literature?
26. Why aren't all characters round?
27. According to Aristotle, how do characters drive the plot?

Interlude: "Does He Mean That?" (pgs. 90-93)

28. What is meant by "lateral thinking" in the writing process?

Chapter 11: "...More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence" (pgs. 94-103)

29. What is the difference between violence in real life and violence in literature?
30. What are the two categories of violence in literature? Describe each in detail.
31. What are some reasons that writers kill off their characters?

Chapter 12: "Is That a Symbol?" (pgs. 104-114)

32. Explain the difference between symbolism and allegory.

Name: _____

Date: _____

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

33. Name two problems the reader may encounter when deciphering symbolic meaning within a piece of literature.

Chapter 13: "It's All Political" (pgs. 115-123)

34. Discuss an example in which an author subtly addresses a political subject or theme from this chapter.

Chapter 14: "Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too" (pgs. 124-142)

35. What is one of the most prevailing influences of a culture and its literature?
36. With this in mind, name the most prominent influence in the literature of our culture.
37. List five "Christ-like" features found in literature.
38. Why would an author choose to employ a Christ figure?

Chapter 15: "Flights of Fancy" (pgs. 133-142)

39. What is the significance of flight in literature?
40. Complete the sentence: "_____ trumps everything."
41. What happens when flight is interrupted in literature, particularly when the character survives?

Chapter 18: "If She Comes Up, It's Baptism" (pgs. 160-170)

42. What happens when a character gets wet or survives a drowning?
43. What happens when a character actually drowns?

Name: _____

Date: _____

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

Chapter 19: "Geography Matters" (pgs. 171-182)

44. What is *literary geography*?

45. What does geography mean to a work of literature?

46. What's the general rule for when a character goes south?

Chapter 20: "...So Does Season" (pgs. 183-192)

47. What are some examples of the literary significance of each season?

Interlude: "One Story" (pgs. 193-200)

48. Can a writer ever be purely original? Explain.

49. Define *archetype* and identify some examples of common archetypes in literature.

50. What is "displacement" of the myth?

Chapter 21: "Marked for Greatness" (pgs. 201-208)

51. What is the literary significance of a character's shape or markings?

Chapter 22: "He's Blind for a Reason, You Know" (pgs. 209-214)

52. Why would an author go through the trouble of creating a blind character?

53. What should a writer do if he wants us to notice something important about a character, or even the work at large?

Name: _____

Date: _____

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

Chapter 23: "It's Never Just Heart Disease... And Rarely Just Illness" (pgs. 215-231)

54. What is the most metaphorical illness for a character to have in literature? Why?

55. What are the four principles governing the use of disease in works of literature?

Chapter 24: "Don't Read With Your Eyes" (pgs. 232-239)

56. What does Foster mean when he states, "don't read with your eyes"?

57. What is the goal of *deconstructive* reading?

Chapter 25: "It's My Symbol and I'll Cry If I Want To" (pgs. 240-251)

58. What is the primary meaning of a text?

59. What is the secondary meaning of a text?

60. Define figuration.

61. What's Foster's strategy for determining the meaning behind symbolism?

Chapter 26: "Is He Serious? And Other Ironies" (pgs. 252-261)

62. What trumps everything in literature?

63. Define ironic mode?

Name: _____

Date: _____

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

Postlude: "Who's In Charge Here?" (pgs. 295-301)

64. How can we be certain that our reading is correct?

65. How can we be sure that we're doing what the author wants us to?

66. What is Foster's final piece of advice?

Envoi (pgs. 302-306)

67. Define the envoi.

68. What is Foster's main suggestion for reading?