

June 2011

Dear **AP Senior** Students and Parents,

(Your first AP Senior act: read this letter in its entirety! If you can't or won't, then please don't register for the class.)

Welcome to the challenge of your last year of high school! The primary goal of the Advanced Placement English course at Stillwater Christian School is to develop your rhetorical abilities as a reader and writer by giving you a college-level English course during your senior year of high school. If you successfully complete (Score 3+) the Advanced Placement examination in May 2012, you may qualify for up to one year's credit and/or advanced placement in English at many colleges and universities. All students taking the AP class will take the exam in May 2012; otherwise the class cannot be labeled "AP" on a transcript. The advantages of the class go beyond test scores, however; the level of skill cultivated will be a life-long asset.

Our English Literature and Composition 12 class has been approved by the national AP program—meeting the rigorous curriculum standards required by the College Board. This means that the class has to take priority for any students opting to enroll. Avoiding the reading and slopping through assignments at the last minute will not achieve the results we desire and require.

AP English is both demanding and intellectually stimulating. It requires your best effort consistently and emphasizes your developing independence of thought and mature habits of critical thinking. Classroom discussion and active participation are vital means of testing your ideas. Written assignments, both short-term and long-term and timed and untimed, will be an important and frequent feature of the course.

Warning! If you imagine your senior year to be one major social event, if you plan to work only until the college applications are turned in, if you spend more time thinking about college than "reading," you should probably not register for AP English. Students may be requested to transfer to Standard English at quarter's end.

As your teacher, I hope that you will accept the challenge of Senior AP and give it your best effort. In addition to class time, I will be available to help you after school or by appointment. From you I expect *good work on time!*

Attached to this page please find the guidelines that you will need to get started on the AP challenge: SUMMER READING! The three pieces you will read come from the modern period, and Roberts' *Writing About Literature* will help you get the most out of each piece. I wish you well.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Wilson

Summer Reading – 2011 – SENIOR AP English

Read five selections in the following order:

1. **Read pages 1-16** in Roberts' *Writing About Literature* (checked out to you at the beginning of the summer). Enjoy the short story, "The Necklace," too. It's a classic!

Pay particular attention to the "Guidelines for Reading" on pages 13 to 16 top.

Prepare a notebook for your Reading Journal and copy the "Guidelines for Reading" as your first page entry. Include the 11 major points and subpoints (pages 13,14) with as much explanation as you need to remember.

2. **Read *The Great Gatsby*** by Scott Fitzgerald.

Journal as you read, using the suggested "Guidelines for Reading" for ideas of what to look for and what to think about. Include no summary—use the Reading Record card for that. There are nine chapters in the book, and you should have roughly one-half page of notes for each chapter. **Date your journal entries.** If you reach the end of a chapter and haven't taken many notes, STOP reading. Go back over the chapter and complete your notes for that section. You defeat the purpose of journaling when you read the entire book and then go back and try to reconstruct the development of your thoughts. Prepare a Reading Record card: see guidelines.

3. **Read *The Great Divorce*** by C. S. Lewis.

Lewis tells a story on a basic level, but on a spiritual level there is allegorical meaning. In your Reading Journal notebook, **use a two-column note format** to identify allegorical meanings. You might not see any at first, but you will eventually if you're thinking about what you're reading. Work toward at least 15 comparisons. Examples:

<u>Story Element</u>	<u>Allegorical Meaning</u>
The lizard	?
Light	?
Getting back on the bus	?

Find a reading partner—either an interested adult or a college student—to discuss each chapter or two after you both finish reading the segment. **Note in your journal** who your discussion partner is, and date your discussion times when noting comments and questions. C. S. Lewis, one of our great modern Christian thinkers, effectively impresses the inquiring mind in this work. As you begin, ponder particularly the last five sentences of the preface. Discuss the book with anyone—just be sure you read the work and don't lean on your discussion as a substitute for reading. Prepare a Reading Record Card according to instructions.

4. **Read pages 33-73** in Roberts' *Writing About Literature*. **Take notes** in your Reading Journal on this information, paying particular attention to the *Raise Questions to Discover Ideas* suggestions.

5. **Read *A Raisin in the Sun*** by Lorraine Hansberry.

A popular modern drama, this piece is a commentary on numerous facets of our society: racism, sanctity of life, wealth, women's rights, family loyalties, deceit, religion, politics, education, love, and marriage. After finishing the play, **discuss** in your Reading Journal **the play's position** on at least five of these issues (half-page minimum on each), using the characters and events of the play for support.

In your Reading Journal, **set aside a half-page each** for the following characters: Mama, Beneatha, Walter, and Ruth. As you read and discover new traits, attitudes, or behaviors of these characters, **jot those discoveries down in the appropriate sections**. Refer often to your notes from Roberts on suggestions and questions to consider. Prepare a Reading Record Card (format on the back of this page).

Notes on Summer Reading:

Keep in mind that if you consult Cliff's, Spark Notes, or other equivalent **instead of** reading the book, or **before** reading the book, I consider that cheating or shortcutting at the least; but if you make an honest effort to understand the work and finish it, then use other resources for help if you need it.

Copies of the books are available in the high school office. Be sure to check out a copy of *Writing About Literature* with your first book—you will need *Writing* all through the summer.

Be mature enough to consider your own self-improvement important; don't just look for every shortcut you can find, thus cheating yourself and wasting your God-given opportunity.

Be thorough, but do not use more than one card (both sides are OK) for each work (typed and pasted on a card is fine).

READING RECORD CARD

- ✓ **One 5 x 8 card** for each piece read (two sides are OK)
- ✓ Title and author
- ✓ Original publication date
- ✓ Setting: place and time
- ✓ Theme or main idea: one rather simple sentence
- ✓ Brief plot synopsis—including the ending (not TOO brief—this is your review for later)
- ✓ Main characters: brief descriptions and major antagonist/protagonist labels (not everyone needs a label)
- ✓ Major symbols (objects or places, not people), noting what the symbol represents
- ✓ Allusions (references to famous places, people, or events)
- ✓ Distinguishing characteristics of the work (what makes it distinctive or different from others)
- ✓ Your personal response to the content and style of the work (not just, "I did" or "I didn't like it")