

AP Literature and Composition

Summer Reading Assignment

Objectives:

- ★ *To provide the preliminary writing sample needed to start this year's contributions to students' cumulative writing portfolio*
- ★ *To exhibit students' ability to construct an effective piece of writing, blending creativity and literary analysis*
- ★ *To show mastery of rhetorical grammar, appropriate tone for audience, effective vocabulary, and advanced, sophisticated usage*

Specifics:

A common piece of rhetorical grammar (e.g. stylistic punctuation) is the ellipsis (the omission of words or phrases from a sentence, leaving their meaning implied). Writers frequently use ellipses within sentences . . . but imagine if we applied the definition of the term to those complete scenes they leave out. There are many examples in both novels of this: one scene ends and another begins, though the reader can infer that action of some sort happened between the two.

Let's use some titles from your previous English classes to find examples. In *The Great Gatsby*, the group leaves the Plaza Hotel in separate cars and tragedy strikes, but we don't see that scene firsthand--we only hear about it later from Gatsby. In *To Kill A Mockingbird*, the jury deliberates behind closed doors and we see them return to the courtroom, but we don't see the scene of their debating the verdict. And though we aren't privy to seeing it played out, Crooks, George and Lennie, Curley and his wife, Candy and his dog . . . all of the characters from *Of Mice and Men* have a rich and storied past. Get the idea?

You will be writing a "ghost chapter" that portrays some action or conversation (or both) that could have happened between the actual scenes and the text. Feel free to choose any section of either novel that you like. Be creative, but be very careful to adhere as closely as you can to the author's style. Remember that style is defined by a writer's choice of diction, syntax, imagery, figurative language, and other literary devices. Use your previous knowledge of these literary devices; you may find [this website](#) helpful.

Stay true to the author's plot and characters (no, aliens can't suddenly land in the middle of a WW2 landscape). Don't forget about the author's use of paragraphing, punctuation, vernacular, dialogue, time-period-specific wording, and so on. Think about the preferred/common literary devices the author uses and do the best you can to create some of your own into your chapter.

Don't panic--you won't be writing a chapter as long as those you found in the novels. About 500 words should do the trick (roughly a full, single-spaced typed page). Yes, please single-space your chapter in order to make it look as much like a novel chapter as possible. If you have the

computer skills to do it, see if you can match the font and chapter heading/layout to the original, but don't agonize over it.

Include, at the top of your chapter, where we'd find this if it were part of the novel. You could call it "Chapter 2.5" if it would take place between chapters 2 and 3, or "Chapter 0" if it starts before the book begins. If it would take place in the middle of a chapter, let us know the page number and paragraph where you'd insert it: "Chapter 9, page 142, immediately following the paragraph that begins "He walked across to the hotel."

Something to keep in mind: the easiest (and, might I add, quickest option) would be for a student to merely grab a "here's what happened before or after" idea--a fast prologue or epilogue. If you have a fantastically creative idea, go for it, but if you're just picking something quickly . . . these chapters do tend to have a "hastily done without a whole lot of thought" air to them. Really think. Find a spot in the book where you actually wished there had been a scene included, or a scene that occurs "offstage," and write that. The effort you put forth in choosing your ghost chapter will be evident!

Your primary goal is to exhibit a very strong understanding of the novel as evidenced by your ability to infer implied action by established characters. It goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway) that the novel itself is your source; woe betide the student who relies on sparknotes, shmoop, or any other literary "training wheels" for assistance in working with the book. For this assignment, you'll need to construct original details that mirror the actual details provided by the author.

Remember: you must have a hard copy of your assignments ready to turn in on the first day of class. You must also retain a digital copy of your assignment in GoogleDocs in your pvlerners account. All students must be prepared to submit their assignments to turnitin.com to verify originality.

Have fun with this assignment! I can't wait to see what you produce. Dazzle me!