

Mr. DePalma
AP Literature and Composition
2017-2018 Summer Reading Assignments
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Summer Reading Assignment #1

The first summer assignment is to read Burton Raffel's Translation of *Beowulf*, an epic poem from the Anglo-Saxon period in Europe known to be the oldest surviving national epic. This poem follows Beowulf from heroic youth to heroic old age. This is a great adventure story, and a deeply philosophical one. Scholars differ over the poem's original purpose and audience.

Upon reading please answer the following AP Open Response style prompt about *Beowulf*.

In the final line of Burton Raffel's translation, Beowulf is described as "deserving of praise." However, in many other translations, the final phrase refers not to Beowulf's meriting praise, but to his desiring, or seeking, it ("desirous of praise," "keenest for praise," "fondest of honor"). In a well-organized essay, discuss the significance of the differing characterizations of Beowulf and, based on your reading of the entire poem, explain which characterization (Beowulf as deserving praise versus Beowulf desiring and seeking praise and honor) is most consistent with the title hero. Use specific examples from Beowulf to support your points.

Summer Reading Assignment #2

Please read and absorb the documents in hard copy or digital form that can be found in the public drive entitled - *Aristotle - Poetics and Tragic Hero Summary* = *READ & ABSORB*.

Consider that according to Wikipedia, "*Aristotle's **Poetics** is the earliest surviving work of dramatic theory and the first extant philosophical treatise to focus on literary theory. In it, Aristotle offers an account of what he calls "poetry" (a term which in Greek literally means "making" and in this context includes drama—comedy, tragedy, and the satyr play—as well as lyric poetry, epic poetry, and the dithyramb). He examines its "first principles" and identifies its genres and basic elements. His analysis of tragedy constitutes the core of the discussion.*"

While the connection between your reading of Oedipus Rex and Poetics Packet should be fairly clear, we will discuss this documents relevance to your work in our early activities.

Summer Reading Assignment #3

Your third summer reading assignment will be to read the classic play *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles. This is the first play in the Oedipus Trilogy, some of the most famous, lasting plays from Ancient Greece; the birthplace of drama. Upon completion of the play you must apply the following AP Open Response style prompt to your close reading of OEDIPUS REX and respond to it:

Choose a complex and important character in a novel or a play of recognized literary merit (in this case, Oedipus Rex) who might on the basis of the character's actions alone be considered evil or immoral. In a well-organized essay, explain both how and why the full presentation of the character in the work makes us react more sympathetically than we otherwise might. Avoid plot summary.

The two essay prompts above are loosely based on AP style OPEN RESPONSE prompts; only you are being told which text you must respond to. You will be responding to these types of prompts (and poetry and prose based prompts) throughout the year, including on the AP exam, a requirement for taking this course

Writing Suggestions:

A well-crafted essay will follow the traditional 5-paragraph essay format: Introductory paragraph (with a defensible and insightful thesis that answers the question posed by the prompt); body paragraphs; and conclusion paragraphs.

You are not required to use the a=b because of x, y, and z formula as the basis of your thesis BUT, recognize that we will be using this formula as we recalibrate to AP style writing in August. We will discuss more.

These papers will likely be in the 3-page range. However, I am not looking for your perfectionistic tendencies to take over here...plenty of time for that – I need to see what you got as a writer. Put 2-3 hours into each of these papers – we have the rest of the year to grow from here. I just need a legit writing sample.