

Ryan High School Summer Reading 2018
English III: Dual Credit
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Welcome to your first college class! Your work ethic and study habits have prepared you for the requirements of this hard-work class with plenty of personal challenges and rewards. The Dual Credit English III course is intended to provide you with the opportunity to earn college credit while you earn high school credit. We will be studying and writing various kinds of analytic and persuasive essays on non-literary and literary topics. Here at RHS we will focus, additionally, on American literature. The summer reading assignment is designed to prepare you for the types of writing and analysis we will be doing during the year.

Part One: Required Reading (Fiction)—*The Chosen*, Chaim Potok

Welcome to the world of Hasidic Jews. For many of you, this will be a new cultural experience; Potok terms it **“core culture confrontation.”** As you read, be especially aware of Potok’s use of imagery and local color (**writing that exploits the speech, dress, mannerisms, habits of thought, religion, and topography peculiar to a certain region**) of the Hasidic Jewish community in New York. Buy your own copy (used is fine) and make notes in the margins or use post-it notes as you read. Note any questions you have as well as examples of local color. *The Chosen* is another example of the Bildungsroman motif (innocence to experience) you’ve encountered in several English I and II novels. (If you enjoy this book, you may want to read others by Potok; I suggest *I am the Clay* and *My Name is Asher Lev*.) **Expect a reading exam over *The Chosen* on the second day of class;** following that, we will begin our discussion.

Part Two: Required Reading and Writing (Non-fiction)—*How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines*, Thomas C. Foster (You may read either the original, 2003 edition or the revised, 2014 one—make sure you are reading the one with **“literature”** and **NOT “novel”** in the title; Foster wrote both.)

What does it mean when a fictional hero takes a journey? Shares a meal? Gets drenched in a sudden rain shower? Often, there is much more going on in a novel or poem than is readily visible on the surface—a symbol, maybe, that remains elusive, or an unexpected twist on a character—and there’s that sneaking suspicion that the deeper meaning of a literary text keeps escaping you. In this practical and amusing guide to literature, Thomas C. Foster shows how easy it is to unlock those hidden truths, and to discover a world where a road leads to a quest; a shared meal may signify a communion; and rain, whether cleansing or destructive, is never just rain. Ranging from major themes to literary models, narrative devices, and form, *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* is the perfect companion for making your reading experience more enriching, satisfying, and fun. (From the Publisher)

As you read, **keep a double-entry response journal.** Use standard notebook paper or a spiral composition notebook for your journal; you may handwrite it (**in ink**) since you are responding as you read. Draw a line down the middle of a page, and then use the left column to record one of the author’s assertions (**strongly stated opinions or claims**) and the right column to offer your response to that assertion. Quote the assertion exactly, noting the page number in correct parenthetical MLA documentation form. By book’s end, you should have **four (4)** assertions and accompanying responses. Make sure you choose assertions from various sections of the book.

Your response, not a summary of the passage, expresses what you are thinking as you read the passage. What does it reflect about the author? What does it remind you of? How does it make you feel? How does it influence your thinking? What reaction do you have to the assertion? What does the passage contribute to the book? **Responses should be at least 75-100 words each (minimum—you may always go over).**

Example of a Double-Entry Response Journal for *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Foster:

Passage

“What we mean in speaking of ‘myth’ in general is story, the ability of story to explain ourselves to ourselves in ways that physics, philosophy, mathematics, chemistry—all very highly useful and informative in their own right—can’t. That explanation takes the shape of stories that are deeply ingrained in our group memory, that shape our culture and are in turns shaped by it, that constitute a way of seeing by which we read the world and, ultimately, ourselves. Let’s say it this way: myth is a body of story that matters” (65).

Response

Foster reminds us with his assertion here that the word “myth” is not merely a synonym for “untrue” as is so often (mistakenly) the case seen in many contemporary headlines. For example, consider how frequently our attention is grabbed by magazine covers and articles with titles like “Top Ten Weight Loss Myths” or “Top Ten” Investment Myths.” By focusing our attention on just one word that is, in terms of its literary significance, usually cited incorrectly, we are already beginning to read with more attention to detail and a keener eye. Bring on the American literature—the more complex, the better!

Content Disclaimer

Dual Credit English III is a college class taught in a high school setting. Necessarily, because college literature courses deal with all facets of living, there will be talk of life, of death, of the various human desires. Also, there may be transgressive language (there will certainly be beautiful language) contained in the work we study. If you feel delicate about such things or are easily offended, let’s talk together about the challenges you might face. You can expect mature discussion of a wide variety of subjects, as prompted by the work under examination.

Part Three: Summer Fun

Read some more—fiction, non-fiction, essays, editorials from magazines and newspapers. Have conversations with people you agree with and people you disagree with. Watch the news. Try to attend one of the Shakespeare in the Park performances, a summer musical, a museum, or any other event that might broaden your horizons. Come armed with ideas for expressing your opinion about anything and everything. Get some rest, too, then come ready to WORK this fall!