

Dear Prospective AP English Literature scholar:

Welcome to the exhilarating world of serious literary study! In **Advanced Placement Literature & Composition** (formerly called **AP English 12**), we will read, analyze, and enjoy (I hope) the finest literature mankind has produced. This course is separate from AP *Language & Composition*, which focuses on nonfiction and was formerly called AP English 11. We will study a great deal of it in all genres, especially novels, plays, and poetry, exploring masterpieces produced by both male and female authors, ancient and modern authors, and writers of diverse ethnic, national, and cultural backgrounds. We'll have two goals in this course, in order of importance: 1) to open our minds to all that these classics have to offer us---morally, intellectually, and socially; 2) to earn college credit by passing the AP English Literature exam. In order to achieve the second goal, *it is necessary to read and write at the collegiate level*. This will require a tremendous amount of dedication on your part, as many of the texts are challenging and there is little tolerance for careless mistakes in your written work. You need to *earn* the college credit by reading voraciously and writing well. If you are up for the challenge, I can promise you a stimulating learning environment. Our mode of learning will be guided discussion, not lecture. Class participation during discussions is vital on your part. Try to be as active in class as you can, both asking and answering questions.

Careful and active summer reading is the first step on our quest for wisdom in AP English Literature & Comp. You need to read one classic novel over the summer--Great Expectations by Charles Dickens--and complete the accompanying assignment on it (below). Great Expectations can be challenging reading because: 1) it's long, 2) it was written long ago, in the 1860s, 3) Charles Dickens' writing style includes long, complex sentences that at times aren't easy to follow, and 4) the vocab level might prove challenging for you. (To help with the vocab, use the Glossary on page 614; otherwise, looking up words you don't know will definitely improve your reading comprehension and boost your own vocabulary.) You'll turn in your summer reading assignment and be tested on the novel (factual recall of plot, characters, settings, quotes, etc.) during the **first week of the school year**. Then we'll spend a week or so discussing the novel in depth and your reactions to it (answering questions you may have, going over the deeper aspects of it, such as themes, symbols, etc.). Before we begin new reading in September, we'll have a unit test on what was discussed in class about Great Expectations. My advice to you is to try to make personal connections to the story, even if it at first seems strange or unfamiliar. What do you find most interesting? Why?

Enjoy your summer and enjoy your summer reading. I look forward to seeing you in September!

Sincerely,

Mr. Endres

PROJECT: You are to keep a **READING JOURNAL** while reading Great Expectations. Your journal can be either a Google Doc or, if you prefer physical pen/pencil and paper, an actual "marble-covered" composition notebook, or any type of notebook. You need a minimum of one journal entry for every two chapters you read. There are 59 chapters in the novel, so do one journal entry on chapter 1 or chapter 2, another journal entry on chapter 3 or chapter 4, your third journal entry on something in chapter 5 or chapter 6, etc., till you reach the end of the novel and

have 30 journal entries total. Each entry should start with the date and the chapter number and be at least 8 sentences long. Each entry should **not** simply summarize what happened in a chapter; instead you should give your **personal reaction** to what happened in a chapter. You should be using the words *I, me, my* in your responses. If you're responding to something very specific in a chapter, include a quote and page number as well. You're free to write on anything that you find interesting, impressive, or even challenging in the novel. If you have trouble coming up with something to write about, here are a few suggestions to stimulate your thinking:

- Connections to your life (explain how you can personally relate to something specific in the reading)
- Connections to history or current events
- Connections to pop culture (something in the reading that reminds you of a particular movie, TV show, song, meme, etc.)
- Connections to other works of literature (explain how something in the reading reminds you of another story or a poem you've read)
- Literary elements and techniques (noticing when the writer used one and then trying to figure out *why* the writer used it---what effect does the LE/LT have on the reader?)
- Noticing things that are repeated in the story, and trying to figure out why
- Possible themes: a statement in the reading that seems so true, important, or even profound
- Things you disagree with or even take exception to
- Anything else you can think of; be creative in your thinking and journal entries

{ Note: You do not need to read the additional stories and poems that come after Great Expectations in the book. }