

June 2010

Dear Prospective AP Literature Student,

Advanced Placement students should understand that they are making a commitment to a more rigorous curriculum than that taken by most high school students. Intellectual engagement is a lifetime activity and does not start or stop according to a school year calendar. To meet the requirements of the course, we must begin with work to be completed throughout the summer.

Your summer work will help us to get acquainted with you before class begins, and will help to keep you focused on the study of literature through the summer break. In the past, all summer work was due on the first day of class. Human nature being what it is, students often attempted to complete all of the assignments in the final moments of the summer break with varying degrees of success. Students who will be the most successful in the course, and on the exam next May complete the summer work with diligence and interest. To encourage this approach to summer work, there will be due dates by which specific assignments must be submitted.

**Students who do not meet the deadlines for submitting summer assignments will be dropped from the course.**

These assignments should be emailed to us at [shmits@portlandschools.org](mailto:shmits@portlandschools.org) or [levasd@portlandschools.org](mailto:levasd@portlandschools.org) respectively. **You must submit your work as an attachment using Word.** Please include your name on the subject line of your email to avoid any confusion. We will send a confirmation for work submitted by email. If you do not receive the confirmation within a week, we did not successfully receive the email.

First book assignment:	due July 1
Second book assignment:	due July 31
Persuasive Essay on a Contemporary Issue	due August 21

We, too, will be completing summer work as we reread the material we will study next year, read pieces of literary criticism on literature, assemble poetry to be studied, evaluate the work you submit over the summer, and read new literature we have been planning to use next year. We realize that we all have a variety of demands on our time. You have yours and we have ours. Each of us also has a commitment to AP Literature and Composition.

Sincerely,  
Ms. Shmitt & Mr. Levasseur

Advanced Placement 12: Literature and Composition  
Ms. Sarah Shmitt and Mr. David Levasseur  
**Summer Assignments: FATE, DESTINY and FREE WILL**

I. Obtain a copy of The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga (available to free-and-reduced lunch students from Anne-Marie at the front desk) and of The Golden Compass by Philip Pullman (the first book in a trilogy called His Dark Materials).

**A. The White Tiger:**

1. Read this article on the caste system in India to better understand the protagonist's circumstances: "**Caste and Class**" (at <http://countrystudies.us/india/89.htm>; **read up to "Intercaste Relations"**).
2. Be prepared to discuss/write about the following:
  - a. What is the "rooster coop" and how is it endlessly perpetuated in Indian society?
  - b. India is the world's largest democracy and yet there are political, economic and social forces that seem to keep India from real progress. How are Balram, Ashok and the Landlords representative of India's problems and its promise?
  - c. Balram is illiterate, and yet the role of books and education is central to the book's meaning. Explain.
  - d. What is the climax of this story?
  - e. How does Adiga make it clear to the reader that his novel is a satire?
3. In a few well-organized paragraphs, explain why the following quotation is significant to the book as a whole: "These days there are just two castes: Men with Big Bellies and Men with Small Bellies" (Adiga 54).

**B. The Golden Compass:**

- A. Read Genesis 1:1-5 and 3:1-6 (<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage>) and then carefully read the epigraph (the quotation at the very beginning of the novel) to The Golden Compass.
  1. What is "the wild abyss" in the epigraph?
  2. Who is the "wary fiend" who is "pondering his voyage"? Bear this comparison in mind as you read the book.
- B. In literature, there are a number of kinds of heroes: epic hero, tragic hero, Byronic hero, and the anti-hero of modern lit. Using a credible source (see for example [http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit\\_terms\\_b.html](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_b.html)), look up the definitions for the types of hero that are unfamiliar to you. What kind of hero is the protagonist, Lyra? What about Asriel? Fader Coram? Explain.
- C. What is Dust?
- D. In a few well-organized paragraphs, explain why the following quotation is significant to the book as a whole: "There is a curious prophecy about this child: she is destined to bring about the end of destiny. But she must do so without knowing what she is doing, as if it were her nature and not her destiny to do it. If she's told what she must do, it will all fail; death will sweep through all the worlds; it will be the triumph of despair, forever. The

universes will all become nothing more than interlocking machines. . ." (Pullman 310).

**The responses to the quotations are due via email July 1 and July 31. You may choose which book to read first.**

**C. Writing Assignment: Persuasive Essay**

**DUE: AUGUST 21**

A. Read "By the Time I Get to Cucaracha" by Celia C. Perez-Zeeb. This essay offers an example of the kind of persuasive essay we are asking you to compose. It uses evidence from a variety of sources to support a debatable claim.

B. Choose a subject that is likely to remain in the news throughout the summer and follow the news from a variety of sources and political perspectives (e.g., FOX and CNN; Al Jazeera and MSNBC; USA Today and The New York Times; Glenn Beck and the Huffington Post). **Be sure to keep notes on information you hear and the source of that information so that you are able to use it and cite it in your essay.**

C. Allowing yourself plenty of time to organize your ideas and write your essay, **take a position on the issue you have been following and defend your position** in a 3-4 page essay. Use and cite your evidence (you may use a Works Cited page or running footnotes). Proofread your paper. You may use the first person.

**ALL WORK SHOULD BE SUBMITTED AS A WORD DOCUMENT  
ATTACHMENT TO AN EMAIL. PUT YOUR NAME ON THE SUBJECT LINE**

**EMAIL ADDRESSES:**

**shmits@portlandschools.org**

**levasd@portlandschools.org**