

Dear AP Literature and Writing Students,

I am looking forward to seeing you all in the fall full of enthusiasm for a college-level course in American lit and writing. It will be a demanding, but rewarding, adventure. This summer please purchase and read *Huckleberry Finn* (Barnes & Noble ISBN 978-1-593-08-112-6) and *The Scarlet Letter* (Bantam Classics ISBN 978-0553210095 or ISBN 0553210092). It would be advantageous for you to purchase your own copy of the edition indicated and to mark it up with your thoughts as you read through the text.

### ***Huckleberry Finn* Personal Essay**

While you should read both *Huck Finn* and *The Scarlet Letter*, you will write this paper on *Huck Finn*. When we return to school in August, **bring a copy of this essay with you**; you will also submit it to turnitin.com within the first few days. Read actively, noting in your copy of the text examples of important characterization, details of setting, imagery, words or phrases you enjoy, etc. As you read, mark significant, memorable quotations from the text that fit at least one of the follow criteria:

1) Reveals more about the characters; 2) Reveals the author's style of writing; 3) Reveals a major message, motif, etc. of the text; 4) Reveals the author's perspective upon the issues that he/she is writing about; 5) Appeals to you, or is significant to you personally. You will weave these quotations into your response essay. Avoid SparkNotes. Do not use their quotations. Choose your own. That is what I care about the most—hearing which quotations you found to be significant.

Then, in at least 3 double-spaced pages, type a **personal response** to your author's novel. You MAY use 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns—I; we; my; your—but your personal response must be well written, reasonably formal, and grammatically correct.

Your response should take **ONE** of the following forms:

- a. A letter to the author, describing your personal reactions to the messages of his work, and asking any lingering questions that you would like to ask the author upon reading the work
- b. A journal entry in which you discuss your response to specific elements of the book

Whichever form you take for the personal essay, you need to provide your personal, analytical response to each of the following:

1. **Setting** is defined in Webster's dictionary as "the time, place, and circumstances in which something occurs or develops." Address the **setting** of your novel: the time of year; the era of history; the specific location[s] where it takes place; the surroundings; the circumstances—and describe how the setting is crucial: how it influences the novel.
2. Address the **opening page** of the book--the first page of a novel tends to set the scene for *many of the major messages* of the work: is this true for your novel? Explain.
3. Address the **ending and resolution** of the book, and your personal response to it. By "resolution," I don't mean just the final page: but the events/elements leading to the end.
4. Address the **authorial style**: respond to the way in which your author is unique—and describe the style. E.g., does your author use complex sentences, heaping adjectives atop one another? Does he write short, succinct sentences? Does he make use of a whole variety of points of view? Does he use colorful language and imagery? etc.
5. Make specific reference to the **characters** from the book: to their personal traits; their significance; and to whether you found them empathetic or not—and why.
6. **Finally: your personal response to the book.** What did you like and dislike? What did you find to be controversial and why? How does your Christian perspective affect your response? As much as possible, incorporate #6 throughout. As you respond to #1-#5, provide your personal reactions to each element.

As you respond to the six components above, **DO NOT summarize the plot**.

DO make **specific** reference to incidents and examples from throughout the text to support your points.

DO quote **at least 9 times** from the book, embedding your quotations, and commenting on all of them. Don't quote from only the start of the book or the end: *demonstrate* that you've read all of it.

DO NOT rephrase the plot. Instead, your response to the text should convey clearly to me that you DID read the work—all of it. Do not come in with a PLOT SUMMARY!