**Independent Reading**

**AP English Language & Composition**

In order to broaden your repertoire of texts, you will be reading a book your own choosing this quarter. In addition to the reading, you'll be keeping a reading journal. **The**

**independent reading assignment is due on March 1st**. This assignment will be worth 80 points.

A note on the quality of your work: One observation from AP readers is that students are not able to wrestle with complex texts. I am not so sure that the ability is lacking. Rather, I think it is the desire or the willingness to read hard texts and think deeply about them that is sometimes missing. It does require discipline to train yourself to read complex texts, but so worth it, not only for the AP tests, but also for college and beyond. Lazy thinking gives you mud for brains. Use these assignments as exercises in compressing your brain mud into diamonds. In other words, sloppy, lazy, 9th grade work is not going to cut it.

**What to read?**

You should definitely choose something you will be interested. Interested does not mean that the task will be fun in the usual sense. In fact, it may be, should be hard. But doing well and succeeding at something hard can be fun.

**Reading Journal Guidelines**

Your journals can be typed (how nice) or handwritten (neatly, in blue or black ink). Please turn in something that screams how proud you are of the work. Each journal has three distinct parts as shown below.

**1. Introductory information as shown below (record all this information in order)**

• Title of work and author

• Genre (play, novel, epic poem, nonfiction text); sub-genre, if applicable (example, not just play for Henry V, but history play).

• Historical context, such as the year published, the literary period, or any historical or literary connections worth noting

• Protagonist(s) and description

• Antagonist(s) and description

• Brief (no more than 200 words) plot summary

• Key themes: the main two or three

• Significant literary elements, such as symbols, motifs, allegory, allusions,

special structure, point of view, etc. Don't just say the book has a lot of symbols, list some and describe them.

**2. 5-7 journal entries (approximately 1,200 words total).**

As you read, use close reading techniques to improve them. Keep a journal in addition to any notes you may make in that process. Your close reading may and should prompt ideas for journal entries. Use any of the following starters for journal entries. **Never summarize the text!!** All journal entries are to be analytical exercises.

Be sure to vary your entry types (don't do the same thing over and over again).

• Start with a quotation from a chapter and comment on it. Why is it important? Extend beyond the text itself. Ex: maybe the passage is important for a character, but how about us?

• Reading between the lines. Sometimes it's what characters don't say that matters. Cite a passage and explain what's really going on. Be sure to show how you know it.

• Analyze the development of a dynamic character: how is it she/he grows,

learns, etc.?

• Cite and explain and ironic passage. How does irony function in the work?

• Cite a passage and analyze the author's style: choice of words, syntax, tone, etc. Why do you think the author used this style for this work? How effective is the passage at achieving the author's purpose?

• Cite and agree, disagree or qualify a point of view in the work (best for persuasive nonfiction). Give context for the point of view first.

• Something else? Think of something. We will add to this list as we go.

Important note: any time you cite a passage, it DOES NOT count toward the word count for your journal entry. You do not have to copy an entire passage though. Why not include a photocopy or, if digital, cut and paste.

**3. A final overview:**

Choose any of the following (400-500 words) For any of these choices, cite

the text in support of what you say.

• Personal reflection: why you liked this book and are glad you read it.

• What you learned about yourself as a reader? What did you learn from studying this book? Be specific.

**DUE DATE: March 1st**

**Rubric**

1. **Introductory Information**

* **Do you have everything discussed above? /20**

1. **5-7 Journal Entries**

* **Does each journal entry offer a deep insight /50**

**Into the skill of the author?**

1. **Final Overview /30**

* **Did you write a great rhetorical analysis that**

**reflects your understanding of the author’s style**

**and the meaning of the text?**