

**Mr. Litchfield, Room 101**

**A.P. English Literature and Composition 2017-2018**

**Directions: READ and ANNOTATE** selections 1 and 2. Be prepared to take a test on general knowledge and to discuss the information for both readings. As mentioned before, you will be **REQUIRED** to annotate the text, **marking (highlighting) significant passages** and **writing abundant marginal notes**. You will need to bring both the book and the poetry chapter to class the first day of school so your annotations can be checked. If you are unsure how to mark a book, I have attached an outline that describes this process in detail. Annotations are a portion of the overall grade. In addition, **TYPE** a college admission's essay (3.) for one of the nine prompts provided in this packet. The common **application main essay** must be over 500 words with no maximum, but remember that every **admissions** officer has a big stack to read every day; he or she expects to spend only a couple of minutes on the essay and throw into one of three piles—**excellent, average, or poor**. If that is the case, **MAKE SURE TO PROOFREAD YOUR ESSAY** for spelling, grammar, and mechanical errors, or the admission's officer will automatically toss your essay into the poor pile.

1. ***How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines*** by Thomas C. Foster (Buy your own copy, but a pdf appears on the internet, and you'll need a copy of it to annotate properly to start the year).
2. ***The Norton Introduction to Poetry*** by J. Paul Hunter, Alison Booth, and Kelly J. Mays, "Poetry: Reading, Responding, Writing," pp. 1-27 (I am supplying this chapter for you to annotate).
3. **Write a College Admission's Essay** (use one of the nine prompts).

Choose one of the following prompts and write a college application essay; however, if you know a college essay that you must write to submit with your application, please email me at [jlitch@sjnra.org](mailto:jlitch@sjnra.org) to tell me the topic. Read the "**Five Ways College Application Essays and High School Essays Are Different**" before you begin writing. This essay is due the first Friday that we are in school.

**Prompt #1: Share your story.**

Answer this prompt by reflecting on a hobby, facet of your personality, or experience that is genuinely meaningful and unique to you. Admissions officers want to feel connected to you and an honest, personal statement about who you are draws them in. Your love of superheroes, baking chops, or family history are all fair game if you can tie it back to who you are or what you believe in. Avoid a rehash of the accomplishments on your high school resume and choose something that the admissions committee will not discover when reading the rest of your application.

**Prompt #2: Learning from obstacles.**

You're trying to show colleges your best self, so it might seem counterintuitive to willingly acknowledge a time you struggled. But overcoming challenges demonstrates courage, grit, and perseverance! That's why the last piece of this prompt is essential. The obstacle you write about can be large or small, but you must show the admissions committee how your perspective changed as a result.

**Prompt #3: Challenging a belief.**

Your answer to this question could focus on a time you stood up to others or an experience when your own preconceived view was challenged. Choose this prompt if you have a relevant—and specific!—experience to recount (and reflect on). A vague essay about a hot button issue doesn't tell the admissions committee anything useful about YOU.

#### **Prompt #4: Solving a problem.**

This essay is designed to get at the heart of how you think and what makes you tick. Present a situation or quandary and show steps toward the solution. Admissions officers want insight into your thought process and the issues you grapple with, so explain how you became aware of the dilemma and how you tackled solving it. Don't forget to explain why the problem is important to you!

#### **Prompt #5: Personal growth.**

Just like Prompt #2, the accomplishment or event you write about can be anything from a major milestone to a smaller "aha" moment. Describe the event or accomplishment that shaped you but take care to also show *what* you learned or *how* you changed. Colleges are looking for a sense of maturity and introspection—pinpoint the transformation and demonstrate your personal growth.

#### **Prompt #6: What captivates you?**

This prompt is an invitation to write about something you care about. (So avoid the pitfall of writing about what you think will impress the admission office versus what truly matters to you). Colleges are looking for curious students, who are thoughtful about the world around them. The "what or who do you turn to when you want to learn more" bit isn't an afterthought—it's a key piece of the prompt. Make sure you explain *how* you pursue your interest, as well.

#### **Prompt #7: Describe a person you admire.**

Avoid the urge to pen an ode to a beloved figure like Gandhi or Abraham Lincoln. The admissions committee doesn't need to be convinced they are influential people. Focus on yourself: Choose someone who has actually caused you to change your behavior or your worldview, and write about how this person influenced you.

#### **Prompt #8: Why do you want to attend this school?**

Be honest and specific when you respond to this question. Avoid generalities like "to get a good liberal arts education" or "to develop career skills," and use details that show your interests: "I'm an aspiring doctor and your science department has a terrific reputation." Colleges are more likely to admit students who can articulate specific reasons why the school is a good fit for them beyond its reputation or ranking on any list. Use the college's website and literature to do your research about programs, professors, and other opportunities that appeal to you.

#### **Prompt #9: What is a book you love?**

Your answer should not be a book report. Don't just summarize the plot; detail why you enjoyed this particular text and what it meant to you. What does your favorite book reveal about you? How do you identify with it, and how has it become personal to you?

### **Five Ways College Application Essays and High School Essays Are Different**

Are you a high school junior? Your college application is probably your first experience writing a personal statement. From purpose to audience, here's a quick run-down of how college essays are different than the essays you write for English class.

#### **1. Purpose**

A high school essay generally demonstrates to your teacher what you know. An application essay should demonstrate who you are. Colleges want to find out what you're passionate about, and what you would add to the campus community.

## 2. Audience

When your English teacher grades your essays, he puts them into the context of every interaction he has ever had with you. Your personal statement is your one chance to speak directly to the admissions committee and demonstrate who you are beyond grades and test scores. Help colleges learn something about you that they cannot discover when reading the rest of your application. (Tip: Don't treat your essay like a resume!)

## 3. Show, Don't Summarize

College essay topics are often open-ended. ("Recount a time when you experienced failure.") But at heart, all college essays are asking you to demonstrate the same things: your ability to reflect and think critically. Summaries are fine for book reports, but when writing your college essay take the opportunity to really examine how an experience taught you something you didn't previously know about yourself, got you out of your comfort zone, or forced you to grow.

## 4. Authenticity

On a high school essay, it's generally not appropriate to use the first-person. Not only is it fine to make "I" statements in your application essays, but colleges expect your essays to *sound* like you, too! Always be yourself in your application, not the candidate you think admissions committees want to see.

## 5. Originality Counts

When your teacher asks you to analyze the causes of the Civil War, he is going to receive a lot of essays that sound basically the same. Nevertheless, your college essay should be unique and individual to you. College admissions officers tell us that they see many essays about eye-opening travel experiences, the death of a loved one, or "The Big Game." You can still write about these experiences, but the trick is in the details. No one sees the world quite the way you do, so let your personality shine through.

## How to Annotate a Book

This outline addresses why you would ever want to mark in a book. For each reason, the outline gives specific strategies to achieve your goals in reading the book.

1. Interact with the book – talk back to it. You learn more from a conversation than you do from a lecture (this is the text-to-self connection.)
  - A. Typical marks
    - i. Question marks and questions – be a critical reader
    - ii. Exclamation marks – a great point, or I really agree)
    - iii. Smiley faces and other emoticons
    - iv. Color your favorite sections. Perhaps draw pictures in the margin that remind you about the passage's subject matter or events.
    - v. Pictures and graphic organizers. The pictures may express your overall impression of a paragraph, page, or chapter. The graphic organizer (Venn diagram, etc.) may give you a handy way to sort the materials in a way that makes sense to you.
  - B. Typical writing
    - i. Comments – agreements or disagreements
    - ii. Your personal experience
2. Write a short reference to something that happened to you that the text reminds you of, or that the text helps you understand better
3. Perhaps cross-reference to your diary or to your personal journal (e.g., "Diary, Nov. 29 2004")
  - iii. Random associations
    1. Begin to trust your gut when reading! Does the passage remind you of a song? Another book? A story you read? Like some of your

dreams, your associations may carry more psychic weight than you may realize at first. Write the association down in the margin!

2. Cross-reference the book to other books making the same point.

Use a shortened name for the other book – one you'll remember, though.

(e.g., "Harry Potter 3")

(This is text-to-text connection.)

2. Learn what the book teaches (this is the text-to-world connection.)

a. Underline, circle or highlight key words and phrases.

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b. Cross-reference a term with the book's explanation of the term, or where the book gives the term fuller treatment.

i. In other words, put a reference to another page in the book in the margin where you're reading. Use a page number.

ii. Then, return the favor at the place in the book you just referred to. You now have a link so you can find both pages if you find one of them.

c. Put your own summaries in the margin

i. If you summarize a passage in your own words, you'll learn the material much better.

ii. Depending on how closely you wish to study the material, you may wish to summarize entire sections, paragraphs, or even parts of paragraphs.

iii. If you put your summaries in your books instead of separate notebooks, the book you read and the summary you wrote will reinforce each other.

A positive synergy happens! You'll also keep your book and your notes in one place.

d. Leave a "trail" in the book that makes it easier to follow when you study the material again.

i. Make a trail by writing subject matter headings in the margins. You'll find the material more easily the second time through.

ii. Bracket or highlight sections you think are important.

e. In the margin, start a working outline of the section you're reading. Use only two or three levels to start with.

f. Create your own index in the back of the book!

i. Don't set out to make a comprehensive index. Just add items that you want to find later.

ii. Decide on your own keywords – one or two per passage. What would you look for if you returned to the book in a few days? In a year?

iii. Use a blank page or pages in the back. Decide on how much space to put before and after the keyword. If your keyword starts with "g," for instance, go about a quarter of the way through the page or pages you've reserved for your index and write the word there.

iv. Write down a keyword and a page number on which the keyword is found.

If that isn't specific enough, write "T," "M," or "B" after the page number.

Each of those letters tells you where to look on the page in the question; the letters stand for "top," "middle," and "Bottom," respectively.

v. Does the book already have an index? Add to it with your own keywords to make the index more useful to you.

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g. Create a glossary at the beginning or end of a chapter or a book.

i. Every time you read a word you do not know that seems important for the purposes of reading the book, write it down in your glossary.

ii. In your glossary next to the word in question, put the page number where the word may be found.

iii. Put a very short definition by each word in the glossary.

3. Pick up the author's style (this is the reading-to-writing connection.)

a. Why? Because you aren't born with a writing style. You pick it up. Perhaps there's something that you like about this author's style but you don't know what it is. Learn to analyze an author's writing style in order to put up parts of his/her style that becomes natural to you.

b. How?

i. First, reflect a bit. What do you like about the writer's style? If nothing occurs to you, consider the tone of the piece (humorous, passionate, etc.) Begin to wonder: how did the writer get the tone across? (This method works for discovering how a writer gets across tone, plot, conflict, and other things.)

ii. Look for patterns.

1. Read a paragraph or two or three you really like. Read it over and over. What begins to stand out to you?

2. Circle or underline parts of speech with different colored pens, pencils, or crayons. Perhaps red for verbs, blue for nouns, even green for pronouns.

3. Circle or underline rhetorical devices with different colored writing instruments, or surround them with different geometrical shapes, such as an oval, a rectangle, and a triangle.

a. What rhetorical devices?

i. How he/she mixes up lengths of sentences

ii. Sound devices, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, repetition, internal rhymes, etc.

iii. Pick a different subject than that covered in the passage, and deliberately try to use the author's patterns in your own writing.

iv. Put your writing aside for a few days, and then edit it. What remains of what you originally adopted from the writer's style? If what remains is natural and well done, you may have made that part of his/her style part of your own style.