



AP Literature
Summer Assignment 2019

Instructor: Mrs. Errico merrico@ltps.org

Expectations for this course

Advanced Placement Literature and Composition is designed with the intent to *replace* an introductory college-level literature course. Therefore, the expectations for your performance are quite high. No book should be read in isolation. Rather, you are expected to independently research a variety of criticisms, biographical information, and relevant historical context so that you can come to class with a wealth of information.

Secondly, you must annotate as you read. For this reason, it is recommended that you obtain your own copies of the assigned summer reading. [Limited copies are available through the school.] Inexpensive copies in good condition can be obtained at www.amazon.com and www.half.com. Note-taking will ensure that you arrive in class with specific details and ideas at your disposal. The close reading will also aid you in your preparation for the AP exam. Feel free to use post its if you do not buy your own text.

The texts

Read the texts in the following order:

1. *King Lear*, William Shakespeare. Often considered Shakespeare's bleakest play, this tragedy is unrelenting in its examination of betrayal and the ravages of age. And the families are so dysfunctional that this play makes *Sons and Lovers* look like "The Brady Bunch". Happy reading. [By the way: don't use a side-by-side translated edition. Take the training wheels off!]
2. *A Thousand Acres*, Jane Smiley. This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel is a modern adaptation of and a response to *King Lear*. While some of the themes may initially seem unrelated to Shakespeare's play, take a closer look; you'll discover new depths to both works. There are some strong scenes that are difficult to read, but that is exactly Smiley's point. Consider why Smiley would write such a stark portrayal of traumatic events. I promise it's not for gratuitous or sensational purposes.
3. *Hamlet*, William Shakespeare. This tragedy is vital for the understanding and comparison of *King Lear*. Also, there are many references to Hamlet on the AP Lit test, so it is imperative that you have read it. If you have taken English III Honors, please refresh your memory of the play with annotations. If you are coming from AP Lang, you are required to read and annotate the play.

Assessment of Summer Reading

1. You will take an objective analysis test on *King Lear* sometime during the week of September 9th.
2. You will submit a comparative essay on *King Lear* and *A Thousand Acres* via TurnItIn on Monday Sept 9th! Your essay should address the following:
 - ✓ A theme that appears in both works
 - ✓ *A Thousand Acres'* treatment of the theme as a response to *Lear*
 - ✓ The effect of Smiley's work and how it is achieved

Essay guidelines

Be sure that your essay fulfills the following requirements:

- Adheres to MLA formatting and citation guidelines- essays not in MLA will not even be looked over
- Minimum of 6 pages in length (this does not include the works cited page)
- Essay must be structured around a clear, unequivocal thesis statement
- Arguments must be supported with appropriate textual evidence
- Analysis should address literary elements and devices
- Incorporation of literary criticism/critical articles is required; make sure that your argument is paramount (really think about this)!
- Paper should be virtually free of grammar and usage errors