Assignment Overview

- **Read and take notes on** *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, Revised Edition (2014) by Thomas C. Foster.
- **Read and annotate** a book/play of your choice from the list of AP titles below.
- **Write** a first draft of your college essay and bring that draft to class on the **FIRST** day of school.

Assignment Details

1. All students MUST start by reading *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, Revised Edition (2014) by Thomas C. Foster.

2. As you read, take notes on the content of each chapter. These notes will be invaluable to you as we read and analyze literature during the year. **You will be allowed to use these notes on your written assessment for this book.**

3. Read **at least** one of the titles from the list below.
   - *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
   - *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
   - *The Blind Assassin* by Margaret Atwood
   - *Candide* by Voltaire
   - *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker
   - *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck
   - *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens
   - *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare
   - *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad
   - *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison
   - *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte
   - *King Lear* by William Shakespeare
   - *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf
   - *Native Son* by Richard Wright
   - *1984* by George Orwell
   - *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa
   - *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde
   - *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne
   - *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston
   - *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte

**It is highly recommended that you annotate the text in some way in order to help you actively engage with the text. Try applying the concepts from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* to your analysis of the text. Plan to bring these annotations to class. ***You will be allowed to consult these annotations (notes) on your written assessment for this book.***

5. **THE COLLEGE ESSAY!**

Over the summer, take time to research colleges/universities and make a list of your top choices. Many of these institutions will use The Common Application or The Coalition Application. The rest of this packet
contains essay prompts for The Common App, UMD College Park (which uses The Coalition App), Towson University, Morgan State University, and University of Chicago (2018-19 prompts).

- Choose at least one essay prompt (either a prompt that is provided below or another prompt provided by a college/university that you are considering).
- Write a full length essay that responds to the prompt you have chosen.
- Remember to incorporate descriptive language, unique details about yourself, and your own VOICE.
- Bring a hard copy of this essay with you to class on the FIRST day of school.
- We will be working with these essays in class and at home during the first quarter of the school year. **This essay will also be a major first quarter grade.**
- **If you already have an essay from English 11 or AVID 11, please use this assignment as an opportunity to write an additional essay. (In other words, do not simply use your 11th grade essay for this assignment.)**

2019-2020 Common Application Essay Prompts – word limit 650  

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?

4. Describe a problem you’ve solved or a problem you’d like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.

5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.

6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?

7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you’ve already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

2019-2020 University of Maryland, College Park Essay Prompts – word limit 550  
[https://www.admissions.umd.edu/apply/essay.php](https://www.admissions.umd.edu/apply/essay.php)  
[http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/essays.html](http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/essays.html)
Please answer one of the following essay questions in your application. Make sure to include the question itself at the start of your essay. Your essay should be no more than 550 words; the question will not be included in the essay total word count.

1. Tell a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it.

2. Describe a time when you made a meaningful contribution to others in which the greater good was your focus. Discuss the challenges and rewards of making your contribution.

3. Has there been a time when you’ve had a long-cherished or accepted belief challenged? How did you respond? How did the challenge affect your beliefs?

4. What is the hardest part of being a teenager now? What’s the best part? What advice would you give a younger sibling or friend (assuming they would listen to you)?

5. Submit an essay on a topic of your choice.

2019-2020 Towson University Essay Prompt – 300-800 words

Submit a 300-800 word essay on a topic of your choice.
Students are allowed to submit their Common Application essays or any other essay of choice.

2019-2020 Morgan State University Essay Prompt – 500 words

Submit a 500 word essay on one of the three topics listed below.
1. What is the hardest part of being a teenager or young adult today?
2. What matters to you, and why?
3. How do you plan to positively impact society with your degree from Morgan State University?

***University of Chicago 2018-2019 Essay Prompts*** (NOTE: These are from last year!)

Question 1 (Required)
How does the University of Chicago, as you know it now, satisfy your desire for a particular kind of learning, community, and future? Please address with some specificity your own wishes and how they relate to UChicago.

Question 2: Extended Essay (Required; Choose one)

Essay Option 1

In 2015, the city of Melbourne, Australia created a "tree-mail” service, in which all of the trees in the city received an email address so that residents could report any tree-related issues. As an unexpected result, people began to email their favorite trees sweet and occasionally humorous letters. Imagine this has been
expanded to any object (tree or otherwise) in the world, and share with us the letter you’d send to your favorite.

_Inspired by Hannah Lu, Class of 2020_

**Essay Option 2**
You’re on a voyage in the thirteenth century, sailing across the tempestuous seas. What if, suddenly, you fell off the edge of the Earth?

_Inspired by Chandani Latey, AB’93_

**Essay Option 3**
The word *floccinaucinihilipilification* is the act or habit of describing or regarding something as unimportant or of having no value. It originated in the mid-18th century from the Latin words "floccus," "naecum," "nihilum," and "pilus"—all words meaning “of little use.” Coin your own word using parts from any language you choose, tell us its meaning, and describe the plausible (if only to you) scenarios in which it would be most appropriately used.

_Inspired by Ben Zhang, Class of 2022_

**Essay Option 4**
Lost your keys? Alohomora. Noisy roommate? Quietus. Feel the need to shatter windows for some reason? Finestra. Create your own spell, charm, jinx, or other means for magical mayhem. How is it enacted? Is there an incantation? Does it involve a potion or other magical object? If so, what's in it or what is it? What does it do?

_Inspired by Emma Sorkin, Class of 2021_

**Essay Option 5**
Imagine you’ve struck a deal with the Dean of Admissions himself, Dean Nondorf. It goes as follows: you’re guaranteed admission to the University of Chicago regardless of any circumstances that arise. This bond is grounded on the condition that you’ll obtain a blank, 8.5 x 11 piece of paper, and draw, write, sketch, shade, stencil, paint etc., anything and everything you want on it; your only limitations will be the boundaries of both sides on the single page. Now the catch… your submission, for the rest of your life, will always be the first thing anyone you meet for the first time will see. Whether it’s at a job interview, a blind date, arrival at your first Humanities class, before you even say, “hey,” they’ll already have seen your page, and formulated that first impression. Show us your page. What’s on it, and why? If your piece is largely or exclusively visual, please make sure to share a creator's accompanying statement of at least 300 words, which we will happily allow to be on its own, separate page.

PS: This is a creative thought experiment, and selecting this essay prompt does not guarantee your admission to UChicago.

_Inspired by Amandeep Singh Ahluwalia, Class of 2022_

**Essay Option 6**
In the spirit of adventurous inquiry, pose your own question or choose one of our past prompts. Be original, creative, thought provoking. Draw on your best qualities as a writer, thinker, visionary, social critic, sage, citizen of the world, or future citizen of the University of Chicago; take a little risk, and have fun.