2015 Summer Reading for Juniors in the AP English Language Course

The Great Gatsby and Fast Food Nation

1. The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Please do not rely on Cliffs Notes or Sparknotes. You will take a test on this novel when you return in August. The first essay of the year will also be on this book, so you will want to know it well enough to find both examples and quotations to use. The following suggestions will most effectively help you to prepare for writing this essay.

- **Annotate the book.** You will be graded on your annotations during the first week. Please purchase a clean copy of the novel; do not use an e-reader or digital version of the novel.

  Your guiding questions for this novel are “What is the Truth about Gatsby?” and “In what sense, if any, is Gatsby great? Please read, analyze, and annotate the novel over the summer in preparation for writing an argumentative essay that agrees or disagrees with the narrator’s position in regard to Gatsby’s “greatness.”

- As you read, underline passages that seem important to you. Note why you have underlined the passage in the margin.
- Write comments in the margins, noting plot developments, theme, character development, and any motifs.
- Note key scenes and plot developments at the top of the relevant pages, so you can find them easily later on. Use the white space at the start of end of each chapter to summarize and note key events.
- Especially note any background information regarding Gatsby, his past life, his actions, words, or beliefs. This is the bulk of your evidence for the argumentative essay.

2. Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal by Eric Schlosser

Your goal is to understand both the message of the book and the way in which the author constructs it. What and how Schlosser writes are equally important, meaning the content of the text is important, but rhetorical style and strategy are just as important. How does Schlosser create such a powerful critique of the industry?

**Annotate the book.** You will be graded on your annotations during the first week.

As you annotate this text, pay particular attention to how to Schlosser uses language to shape his arguments.

You will be graded on your in-text annotations, so begin with an unmarked, clean copy of the book; e-books and digital versions are not allowed for this assignment.

- Comment in the margins on what Schlosser is saying. Agree or disagree with him.
- Underline and mark interesting ideas, imagery (sensory appeals), or notable sentence structures.
- **Mark, distinguish, and label** the use of anecdotes, examples, expert testimony, statistics, and facts – the tools he uses to develop his argument
- **Circle** the use of striking figurative language, such as imagery, metaphor, simile, or personification and mark it with Stars.
• Underline and LABEL Rhetorical Appeals, sections of the book that appeal to the emotions (pathos), logic (logos), and a sense credibility (ethos). For a longer explanation see: http://www.iupui.edu/~uwc/pdf/Rhetorical%20Triangle.pdf

Reading Guide

When you return to school, you will be asked to think about and write on the following chapter by chapter topics. You do not need to write out the answers now; I am giving them to you to guide your reading, to focus your note taking, and to draw your attention to rhetorical techniques. You should be prepared to write on any of these ideas, however.

Introduction: Readers must trust the good character, fairness, and reliability of the writer before they are willing to accept his arguments. The philosopher Aristotle called this quality ethos. Analyze the ways Eric Schlosser establishes his ethos, helping the audience to trust the writer and see the importance of his investigation of the fast food industry. Be sure to explore the chapter fully, particularly the second half.

Chapter 1: Some readers find it counter-productive to Schlosser’s argument against the fast food industry that he would create such a sympathetic portrait of fast food pioneer, Carl Kartcher. Discuss the relevance of providing this background information in formulating an argument.

Chapter 2: Analyze how Schlosser’s strategy of comparison between Disney and McDonalds, and their founders, makes important points about the fast food industry and their marketing strategies.

Chapter 3: Logos appeals to the mind; Pathos appeals to the heart. Pretend you are sociologist Robert Leidner who predicted that as businesses increasingly sought greater efficiency and output, workers would become increasingly “interchangeable”. Write a short response to the fast food industry, in the voice of Leidner, which points out the dangers of this policy toward employees. Referencing this chapter, appeal to both the logos and pathos of your audience. You do not need to use a letter format.

Chapter 4: Analyze how Schlosser explores irony in this chapter titled “Success” through his focus on Dave Feamster’s Little Caesar franchise and the concluding spokespeople (especially Reeves) at the sales seminar.

Chapter 5: Scientifically, Schlosser argues that a key factor in the success of the fast food industry is artificial flavor and coloring. What is the effect of his description of “A typical artificial strawberry flavor, like the kind found in a Burger King strawberry milkshake . . .”?

Chapter 6: “For a moment, we sat quietly on top of the hill, staring at the speedway bathed in twilight, at this oval strip of pavement, this unsettling omen” (135). What is the primary rhetorical purpose of the sentence, in relation to the entire chapter?

Chapter 7: Upton Sinclair argues in his novel The Jungle “Human beings, had been made ‘cogs in the great packing machine.” Who is Schlosser arguing are the “Cogs in the Great Machine” in this chapter? Evaluate the analogy.
Chapter 8: Schlosser concludes “The Most Dangerous Job” accounting the trials of Kenny Dobbins. What is the effect of his placing the dramatic story at the conclusion of the chapter rather than at the beginning of the chapter? Do you see similar patterns of organization in other Schlosser’s chapter? If so, which chapters?

Chapter 9: Analyze how Schlosser combines logical and emotional appeals in this chapter to create an effective message. In other words, how does he manage all this scientific data, making it easier to understand and read? Cite specific strategies such as diction, analogy, facts, cause and effect.

Chapter 10: History, places, people and events are often alluded to in this chapter. Cite at least three specific examples, and explain how these are appropriate illustrations for advancing Schlosser’s argument.

Epilogue: An epilogue is actually a conclusion, which, generally, looks to the future from where a book ends. Explain how the content of this chapter is an appropriate conclusion to Schlosser’s criticism of the fast food industry. How, and why, does he employ specific facts and illustrations?

Afterword: An afterword is included to provide additional information after the initial publication of the book. Why would this additional information be relevant to his argument? Discuss how the content of this chapter helps bolster, or discredit Schlosser’s ethos, particularly the section titled “wrong wrong wrong”.

3. The AP Language Research Paper. AP Language students will write their research papers during the second semester. In preparation for this paper, explore current issues relevant to American culture by following the news and by reading a non-fiction book and articles.

It is highly recommended that you begin reading and reviewing recently published non-fiction books and articles during the summer on an issue of your choice to prepare for this future assignment. See the AP Language summer reading library site, http://library.overlake.org/AP11thEnglishLanguage for the list of pre-approved books, topics, and data base links. Note that the titles in blue are available to preview in our Overdrive ebook collection.