

Novato High School English Department

Novato High School
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June 5, 2021

Dear Advanced Placement Student and Family:

Welcome to AP Literature and Composition! Before junior year ends, I want to make sure students understand the requirements of this course. The AP Literature and Composition course is a rigorous, college level course. Students who take this AP course should be prepared to do extensive reading and writing throughout the year. In addition to reading and writing, regular attendance and class participation are required. Please make a commitment to attend class every day. Students also need to be prepared to work independently and make their own work schedule. Often I will assign reading with a date that it needs to be completed as opposed to assigning pages to be read night by night. This is based on the college reading model.

In order to start the year with a common literary background, I am asking all Advanced Placement Literature students to read and write on a work this summer. Since this course is considered a college course, literature that we read will have college level content and themes. The work we are reading is *The Woman in White* by Wilkie Collins – a novel about appearance versus reality involving a mysterious woman whose appearance haunts a young artist. Victorian novels are usually long and complex – I encourage you not to wait until the week before school begins to start your reading! I generally begin my re-reading of the novel around July 10. This novel has been made into a film, and you might want to view it to *supplement* your reading. The film is not an accurate representation of the book. There are some copies of the novel available from me (room 2304) to check out of our library, but you can also buy your own copy so that you can fold down pages, make notes, et cetera.

To complement the novel, I am asking students to complete an essay. Choose two characters in the novel and discuss how the two act as foils to each other. Foils are characters who set each other off by contrasting with each other. These characters have something in common also and do not have to be enemies (although they can be). For example, Matsu and Kenzo are foils in *Samurai's Garden* (remember, sophomore year?), Romeo and Juliet are foils in *Romeo and Juliet* (remember, freshman year?), and Phineas and Ferb are foils in "Phineas and Ferb" (remember, Disney Channel?). Please do not retell the story; instead focus on how characters relate to the overall theme, et cetera. You should know that I consider quotations from the text to be essential to a top quality essay. The essay should be 3-4 pages long and should be typed and double spaced. It will be due about two weeks after the beginning of the school year. Please also be prepared to submit it to [turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) (a plagiarism search engine). Also

important - within the first ten days of school, you will also be given an objective exam on the book.

Please go ahead and join next year's Google Classroom; I'll post this letter there also. The code is 4x3sprz. Feel free to contact me with any questions either there or via email. I would be happy to help you over the summer with any problems that arise. My email address is noverson@nUSD.org. I hope you enjoy the novel and have a happy and restful summer, and I look forward to seeing you in the fall.

Sincerely,

Nancy A. Overson
AP Literature and Composition Teacher