

AP Literature Summer Reading 2010-2011

You have enrolled in AP Literature and Composition. This tells me that you have a talent for writing and an aptitude for the study of literature. But more importantly, it suggests to me that you share my love for literature—for unearthing the mysteries of a work, for unraveling the layers within characters, for contemplating the reasons authors write and the motivations for the way in which they write. **Both the talent and the interest** are necessary for the student who will succeed in the AP curriculum.

Your summer reading includes a collection of stories from the Bible and mythology, as well as selections from Plato, and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. I have provided you copies of the works from mythology and Plato. You may choose to purchase a copy of *The New American Bible* and *The Oedipus Cycle of Sophocles* (Dudley Fitts, Robert Fitzgerald – Translators) online at barnesandnoble.com for a reasonable price, or you may borrow it from the public library. If your family already owns a bible, you should find the selections in it. If you buy copies, write in the margins. Be active with your reading. In the end, be ready to write about and to discuss in depth what you have read.

If you have questions, I will check my school email from time to time over the summer. In the event you need to contact me with ideas and/or questions, email jmccarthy@palmerschools.org.

Reading Focus

Throughout the year we will study works from various literary time periods, beginning with Dante and Shakespeare and advancing through Postmodernism. However, the works of many of these authors refer back to some of the world's oldest literary tales, captured in the earliest myths, legends and biblical stories. Understanding the ideas behind these stories and the commonalities among these stories will provide us a solid base on which to begin our AP preparation.

Faith is individual and important, but not the purpose of our reading; our study and discussions of these works as literature should not supplant any personal beliefs you hold. Rather, you should consider the stories of mythology and the bible as literature. The following quotes provide a few different perspectives:

- “[Myths] are something intangible, perhaps not literally real, that is nevertheless true in some higher sense.” David Adams Leeming
- “[Myths] are the eternal story of humanity’s quest for self-fulfillment in the face of entropy.” Joseph Campbell

Apply the quotes above to each reading selection. Consider:

To what degree is there literal truth? Philosophical truth?

How do humans use stories to find a meaningful path through apparent chaos?

What archetypes begin to emerge from the summer reading samples?

The selections below include some of the most frequently alluded to figures and situations in literature. Subtle references/allusions to these works arise on the AP Lit test, in other novels, short stories, poems we will read this year or that you will read in college, and in popular movies, TV shows, video games and songs. (Early bonus points: Bring in modern works - song lyrics, movie clips, newspaper/magazine articles, legitimate online articles, etc. - that allude to any of the summer reading selections.)

Biblical Selections

The New American Bible (or equivalent version-It just needs to include Genesis, Exodus, and the New Testament.)

Genesis

Chapters 1,2,3
Chapter 4
Chapter 11
Chapter 12
Chapter 19

Chapter 22

Garden of Eden
Cain and Abel
The Tower of Babel
Abram, the Promised Land
Sodom and Gomorrah
Lot and Lot's Wife
Abraham and Isaac

Exodus

Chapter 2, 3
Chapter 6

Moses and the Burning Bush
Daniel and the Lion's Den

1 Samuel (There are 2 books.)

Chapter 17

David and Goliath

John

Chapter 11

The Raising of Lazarus

Mythological Selections

(in *Man the Myth-Maker*) I have arranged the myths, not in chronological order but in the order I think will make the most logical sense.

Prometheus	32-36
Pandora and Epimetheus	74-77
Demeter and Persephone	234-239
 Dionysus	 49-52
Midas	186-190

Judgment of Paris	photocopy
Daedalus and Icarus	photocopy
Labors of Hercules	http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/Herakles/labors.html

