

E419: AP Literature and Composition  
Summer Reading Assignment 2017

Your summer reading assignment requires you to read the following:

**Book**

- *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster (specific chapters identified in the instructions that follow, not the entire thing)

**Short Stories**

- “Sonny’s Blues” by James Baldwin
- “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor
- “A Temporary Matter” by Jhumpa Lahiri

**Poetry (attached)**

- “To Autumn” by John Keats
- “Storm Warnings” by Adrienne Rich
- “Desert Places” by Robert Frost

Moreover, there is a significant written component contained in this packet.

All of your work is due on the first day of class without exception. Late schedule changes do not excuse late or missing work. You--not your teachers, your counselors, or your parents--are responsible for making sure your work is complete and ready on the first day of class.

This assignment should serve as a signpost for the level of serious, analytical, and scholarly work we will be doing in AP Literature. Should you find the summer reading tasks overwhelming, you may wish to examine other senior English courses. Should you find the desire to *plagiarize* overwhelming, you should definitely reevaluate your course readiness and college aspirations, as such behavior can and has resulted in failure of the assignment and/or course; removal from NHS, AP courses; and--at the collegiate level--expulsion from university coursework. We cannot stress enough the importance of first, completing the assignment entirely; and second, producing your independent, authentic work. Please do not complete this assignment using peers or any other sources. We take academic integrity very seriously.

Finally, while analysis is obviously the emphasis, we expect careful proofreading to ensure professional, polished mastery of English grammatical and wording conventions.

**Part I: Identifying and Explaining Connections**

**“Sonny’s Blues” by James Baldwin**

First, read Foster’s chapter “Geography Matters....” Then, read “Sonny’s Blues,” annotating it as necessary, and complete this chart, which we expect to be **thorough** and **comprehensive**, covering **varied and multiple places in the story**. “Just a few” entries is not enough. The charts will help you discuss the prompts (in writing) on the final page of this handout.

<b>Quote passages from <i>Foster’s chapter</i> that help in analyzing the setting of “Sonny’s Blues”</b>	<b>Specific evidence from the <i>story</i>. For some Foster quotes, you’ll want to include several different quotes from the story--again, be thorough.</b>	<b>Commentary: Explain the connection without repeating the other columns.</b>
<b>1) “Joseph Conrad, England’s greatest Polish writer, sends his characters into hearts of darkness (as he calls one tale of a trip into Africa) to discover the darkness in their own hearts” (178-179).</b>	<b>1) Sonny says, “I’m all right now and I think I’ll be all right. But I can’t forget where I’ve been...and what I’ve been” (43).</b>	<b>1) Sonny spends time in jail,, which the narrator saw as a disaster for his younger brother. But really, going to jail is what saved Sonny. Jail allowed Sonny to evaluate himself, and he came out a different man who had more promise to live a better life. While he knows he can always fall back into trouble, his time in jail helped him better understand who he was.</b>

<b>Quote passages from <i>Foster's</i> chapter that help in analyzing the setting of "Sonny's Blues"</b>	<b>Specific evidence from the <i>story</i>. For some Foster quotes, you'll want to include several different quotes from the story--again, be thorough.</b>	<b>Commentary: Explain the connection without repeating the other columns.</b>

## “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”

First, read Foster’s chapters “Yes, She Is a Christ Figure, Too” and “...More Than It’s Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence.” Then, read “A Good Man Is Hard to Find,” annotating it as necessary, and complete this chart, which we expect to be **thorough** and **comprehensive**, covering **varied and multiple places in the story**. “Just a few” entries is not enough. This chart will help you discuss the prompts (in writing) on the final page of this handout.

<b>Of the Christ-figure traits that <i>Foster</i> identifies, which does the Misfit invert or warp? List as many as apply from his chapter.</b>	<b>Specific evidence from the <i>story</i></b>	<b>Commentary: You DO NOT need to include commentary here. Your explanation of connections will come in an AEC paragraph (Q#3).</b>

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## “A Temporary Matter”

First, read Foster’s chapters “He’s Blind for a Reason, You Know” and “Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion.” Then, read “A Temporary Matter,” annotating it as necessary, and complete this chart, which we expect to be **thorough** and **comprehensive**, covering **varied and multiple places in the story**. “Just a few” entries is not enough. This chart will help you discuss the prompts (in writing) on the final page of this handout.

<b>While no one in this story is actually blind, Foster’s ideas in “He’s Blind for a Reason” still apply. Quote key ideas in <i>Foster’s chapter</i> that are most relevant to this story.</b>	<b>Specific evidence from the story</b>	<b>Commentary: Explain the connection without repeating the other columns.</b>

<b>While no one in this story is actually blind, Foster's ideas in "He's Blind for a Reason" still apply. Quote key ideas in <i>Foster's chapter</i> that are most relevant to this story.</b>	<b>Specific evidence from the story</b>	<b>Commentary: Explain the connection without repeating the other columns.</b>

## “Storm Warnings” and “Desert Places”

First, read Foster’s chapter “It’s More than Just Rain or Snow.” Then, read the poems “Storm Warnings” and “Desert Places,” annotating them as necessary, and complete this chart, which we expect to be **thorough** and **comprehensive**. “Just a few” entries is not enough. The first page of the chart asks for you to analyze the Rich poem, and the second page asks you to analyze the Frost poem. Quote Foster as needed, even if it means using the same quote(s) on the front and back, for each poem. This chart will help you discuss the prompt (in writing) on the final page of this handout.

<b>Quote passages from <i>Foster’s</i> chapter that help in analyzing rain, snow, and/or weather in the poem.</b>	<b>Specific evidence from “Storm Warnings”</b>	<b>Commentary: Explain the connection without repeating the other columns.</b>

<b>Quote passages from <i>Foster's</i> chapter that help in analyzing rain, snow, and/or weather in the poem.</b>	<b>Specific evidence from "Desert Places"</b>	<b>Commentary: Explain the connection without repeating the other columns.</b>

**Part II: Paragraph Response:** For each question, write at least one AEC paragraph. Assertions cannot be facts: they must state an argument. We expect abundant--and properly formatted--specific textual evidence to back up your assertion. Keep in mind the value of partial quotes integrated seamlessly into your own writing. Your commentary should engage with the evidence and explain how it proves your assertion.

Your responses to these paragraphs must be typed in Microsoft Word, Google Docs, or a similar word-processing program. Please do not type your paragraphs in Notability. Bring printed copies of your work to class on the first day of school, and ensure your electronic versions are immediately available.

### **“Sonny’s Blues”**

1. How does the Harlem setting shape the narrator’s attitude towards his brother? Aim for nuance. To answer this question effectively, you will need evidence for the setting as well as evidence for the narrator’s attitude toward Sonny.
2. How does the Harlem setting shape Sonny’s struggles and triumphs? To answer this question effectively, you will need evidence for the setting as well as evidence of Sonny’s struggles and triumphs.

### **“A Good Man Is Hard To Find”**

3. Foster says that Christ figures in literature offer redemption, hope, and miracle as well as help us deepen our sense of a character’s sacrifice. But he also says that Christ figures might be used ironically “to make the character look smaller rather than greater.” By presenting the Misfit ironically (as you evaluated in your chart in the earlier part of the assignment), what does O’Connor reveal about his [the Misfit’s] view of the world?
4. Basically, Foster says that no scene of violence exists for its own sake. So, explain how violence in this story contributes to some larger meaning of the work.

### **“A Temporary Matter”**

5. Choose a meal from this story. Explain the symbolic significance of the meal, using evidence from both the story and from Foster’s chapter “Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion.”

### **“To Autumn”**

6. Argue which season discussed in Foster’s chapter “...So Does Season” you feel is represented by Keats’s “To Autumn.” (It does not have to be autumn: choose which interpretation of season is best reflected in the poem.) Use evidence from both the story and from Foster’s chapter “So Does Season.”

### **“Storm Warnings” and “Desert Places”**

7. “Storm Warnings” and “Desert Places” both literally feature a speaker facing weather, but they are not ultimately poems about weather. Compare (similarities) and/or contrast (differences) in the speakers’ reflections on their situations.