

Summer Reading Assignment 2026

AP English 4 Governor Livingston High School

The Reading

How to Read Literature Like a Professor:

1. Read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, by Thomas Foster. This book is widely available and can be purchased on Amazon.com, both new and used copies. (Make sure to purchase the correct text. There is also a newer book out by Foster, *How to Read **Novels** Like a Professor*. The book you will need to read is *How to Read **Literature** Like a Professor*.) **Read this book first.**

HTRLLAP is an engaging, interesting and often amusing guide to help students understand the overarching themes, symbols, motifs, allusions, and literary devices authors employ when crafting a work of imaginative literature. The book will act as the foundation for literary discussion throughout the year. *HTRLLAP* will help students become close readers in AP English and in all their college literature classes, enabling them to identify and appreciate recurring themes, symbols, and allusions in literary works.

One selection from the following list:

2. Choose one novel or play from the following list and read that selection. These three texts have been included on past College Board's AP English and Literature Exams. **Read this text second.**

Reading Choices

The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan

"Four mothers, four daughters, four families, whose histories shift with the four winds depending on who's telling the stories. In 1949, four Chinese women, recent immigrants to San Francisco, meet weekly to play mahjong and tell stories of what they left behind in China. United in loss and new hope for their daughters' futures, they call themselves the Joy Luck Club. Their daughters, who have never heard these stories, think their mothers' advice is irrelevant to their modern American lives – until their own inner crises reveal how much they've unknowingly inherited of their mothers' pasts"

(https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7763.The_Joy_Luck_Club).

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

"The unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, *The Kite Runner* is a beautifully crafted novel set in a country that is in the process of being destroyed. It is about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption; and an exploration of the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, their lies"

(https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/77203.The_Kite_Runner?from_search=true&from_srp=true&qid=CKSbmZKXgc&rank=1).

Fences by August Wilson

"The protagonist of *Fences* (part of Wilson's ten-part Pittsburgh Cycle plays), Troy Maxson, is a strong man, a hard man. He has had to be to survive. Troy Maxson has gone through life in an America where to be proud and black is to face pressures that could crush a man, body and soul. But the 1950s are yielding to the new spirit of liberation in the 1960s, a spirit that is changing the world Troy Maxson has learned to deal with the only way he can, a spirit that is making him a stranger, angry and afraid, in a world he never knew and to a wife and son he understands less and less" (<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/539282.Fences>)

Students are responsible for obtaining the books. If this is a problem, please email Ms. Basumatary at mbasumatary@bhpsnj.org, and she will arrange for you to borrow a copy.

The Writing

1. Write a 1 ½ page essay applying the ideas from one of the chapters in *HTRLLAP* to the novel or play that you read. For example, the green light in *The Great Gatsby* is a symbol for hope and promise and Gatsby's dreams for the future. One of the chapters in Foster's book is about symbols in literature; therefore, if you had read *The Great Gatsby* your paper could apply that chapter to the novel. Be sure to connect each of your ideas to a specific piece of Foster's writing (directly quote, paraphrase, or summarize a portion of the text and cite the page number).

Since this is a short essay do not apply more than one of the chapters in Foster's book, though several might apply. Make sure your paper is in MLA format and be prepared to submit a hard copy of it on the first day of school. Late papers will lose ten points for each day that your paper is late.

2. Be prepared the first week of school to write a 40 minute in-class essay about the novel or play that you read. The essay prompt will be provided in class.

Teachers will be checking email periodically over the summer. Students with questions may contact their teacher over the summer or email Dr. Basumatary at mbasumatary@bhpsnj.org