

Ms. D - 11 CP Summer Reading Assignment
How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster

This text is an easy-to-read introduction to the patterns of symbolic meaning in literary texts and is a helpful secondary source for English.

Instructions:

- a. Answer the provided journal questions. Your answers will let you practice your literary analysis and they will help me get to know you and your literary tastes. Whenever I ask for an example from literature, you may use short stories, novels, plays, or films. Your responses should NOT be superficial, but in-depth with specific responses.
- b. Type your journal responses using MLA format – including the correct heading (your name, class name, etc.) and citations for quotes. If you are unsure how to follow MLA guidelines visit Purdue OWL. Please label your journal responses.
- c. Annotating Your Novel
 - i. Highlight or underline notable words, phrases, and/or sentences and write questions, comments, connections, and reactions in the margins.
 - ii. Questions-ask about something you don't understand.
 - iii. Comments-note instances of interesting word choice, imagery, character motivations, and literary devices, etc. that might suggest an author's purpose or theme.
 - iv. Connections-make text-text connections (ways the book relates to another book, a movie, television show, an article, etc.), text-self connections (ways the book relates to you), text-world connections (ways the book relates to things that exist in our society).
 - v. Reactions-this can be something you think is funny or interesting, something you agree with or disagree with.

*****NOTE***** - Submissions must be emailed to me **by our first class meeting** (no exceptions or make-ups allowed) and will be submitted to turnitin.com. Show off what you've learned from 2 years of English with a college professor.

How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster

Journal Questions: Your answers will let you practice your literary analysis and they will help me get to know you and your literary tastes. Whenever I ask for an example from literature, you may use short stories, novels, plays, or films. Your responses should NOT be superficial, but in-depth with specific responses.

Introduction – How'd He Do That?

1. How do memory, symbol, and pattern affect the reading of literature?
2. How does the recognition of patterns make it easier to read complicated literature?
3. Discuss a time when your appreciation of a literary work was enhanced by understanding symbol or pattern.

Chapter 1 – Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not)

1. List FIVE aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to something you have read (or viewed) in the form used on pages 3-5.
2. What is Foster's overall point about journeys or trips in literature?

Chapter 2 – Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion

1. What does "communion" mean?
2. For what reason does Foster suggest that authors often include meal scenes?
3. What does a failed meal suggest in literature?

Chapter 3 – Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires

1. What are the essentials of the vampire story and what do they represent?
2. Apply this to a literary work you have read or viewed.

Chapter 4 – If It's Square, It's a Sonnet

1. Visually speaking, why is a sonnet roughly "square"?
2. Select two sonnets and show which form they are.
3. Discuss how their content reflects the form. (Submit copies of the sonnets, marked to show your analysis).

Chapter 5 – Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?

1. Define "intertextuality".
2. Discuss three examples that have helped you in reading specific works.

Chapter 6 – When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare

1. Discuss a work that you are familiar with that alludes to or reflects Shakespeare.
2. Show how the author uses this connection thematically.
3. Re-read pages 44-46 carefully. In these pages, Foster shows how Fugard reflects Shakespeare through both plot and theme. In your discussion, focus on theme.

Chapter 7 – . . . Or the Bible

1. Why is the Bible so often alluded to in literature?
2. What are some of the ways that writers allude to the Bible?
3. What's the benefit of knowing/understanding Biblical allusions in literature?

Chapter 8 – Hansel and Gretel

1. Think of a work of literature that reflects a fairy tale. Discuss the parallels.
2. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation?

Chapter 9 – It's Greek to Me 1. What does Foster mean by the term "myth"?

2. What are some of the ways that writers allude to mythology?
3. Write a free verse poem derived or inspired by characters or situations from Greek mythology.

Chapter 10 – It's More Than Just Rain or Snow

1. How can weather be symbolic in literature?
2. What are some of the common "meanings" of various types of weather?
3. Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work, not in terms of plot.

Interlude – Did He Mean That?

1. What are the reasons Foster provides that lead him to believe that most writers DO NOT accidentally create the symbols, allusions, and patterns we find when we read critically?
2. Whether we believe a writer intended to do something or not, what's the benefit or noticing that it happened anyway?

Chapter 11 – . . . More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence

1. Present examples of the two kinds of violence found in literature. Show how the effects are different.

Chapter 12 – Is That a Symbol?

1. What's the difference between symbolism and allegory?
2. What, besides objects, can be symbolic?
3. How should a reader approach symbolism in a text?

Chapter 13 – It's All Political

1. Assume that Foster is right and "it is all political." Use his criteria to show that a novel you've read before (or a movie you've seen) is political.

Chapter 14 – Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too

1. Apply the criteria on page 119-120 to a major character in a significant literary work.
2. Try to choose a character that will have many matches. This is a particularly apt tool for analyzing film – for example, Star Wars, Cool Hand Luke, Excalibur, Malcolm X, Braveheart, Spartacus, Harry Potter, and Gladiator.

Chapter 15 – Flights of Fancy

1. Select a literary work in which flight signifies escape or freedom. Explain in detail.

Chapter 16 – It's All About Sex . . .

1. What are some of the things that symbolize sex and/or gender?
2. Why does sexual symbolism exist/occur in literature?

Chapter 17 – . . . Except Sex

1. When writers write directly about sex, what are they really writing about?
2. Why don't writers usually write actual sex scenes?
3. Choose a novel or movie in which sex is suggested but not described, and discuss how the relationship is suggested and how this implication affects the theme or develops characterization.

Chapter 18 – If She Comes Up, It's Baptism

1. Think of a "baptism scene" from a literary work or movie.
2. How was the character different after the experience? Discuss.

Chapter 19 – Geography Matters . . .

1. Discuss at least four different aspects of a specific literary work that Foster would classify under "geography".

Chapter 20 – . . . So Does Season

1. Find a poem (or a song) that mentions a specific season.
2. Then discuss how the poet uses the season in a meaningful, traditional, or unusual way. (Submit a copy of the poem or song with your analysis)

Interlude – One Story

1. Write your own definition for archetype.
2. Identify an archetypal story and apply it to a literary work with which you are familiar.

Chapter 21 – Marked for Greatness

1. Figure out Harry Potter's scar.
2. If you aren't familiar with Harry Potter, select another character with a physical imperfection and analyze its implications for characterization.

Chapter 22 – He's Blind for a Reason, You Know

1. What can physical blindness mirror?
2. What is often the irony behind a blind character?
3. How are darkness and lightness related to sight?

Chapter 23 – It's Never Just Heart Disease. . .

1. What are some of the symbolic possibilities associated with the heart? Why?

Chapter 24 – . . . And Rarely Just Illness

1. Recall two characters who died of a disease in a literary work.
2. Consider how these deaths reflect the “principles governing the use of disease in literature” (215-217).
3. Discuss the effectiveness of the death as related to plot, theme, or symbolism.

Chapter 25 – Don't Read with Your Eyes

1. Choose a scene or episode from a novel, play, or epic written before the twentieth century.
2. Contrast how it could be viewed by a reader from the twentieth-first century with how it might be viewed by a reader from that time period. Focus on assumptions that the author makes, assumptions that would not make it in this century.

Chapter 26 – Is He Serious? And Other Ironies

1. What does Foster mean when he says, “Irony trumps everything”?
2. How can you tell if something is ironic?
3. What does Foster mean when he says, “Irony doesn't work for everyone”?

Chapter 27 – A Test Case

1. Read “The Garden Party by Katherine Mansfield, the short story starting on page 245.
2. Complete the exercise on pages 265-266, following the directions exactly.
3. Then, compare your writing with the three examples. How did you do?
4. What does the essay that follows comparing Laura with Persephone add to your appreciation of Mansfield's story?
5. NOTE: Appropriate responses should be around 500 words.