Dear Senior,

Congratulations on reaching your Senior year! You have chosen to take AP English Literature and Composition as your twelfth grade English course, and I look forward to sharing the year with you. We need to be ready to jump right into the content of the course when you return in September; therefore, you have summer assignments that you need to complete, which are due on the first day of school (Thursday, September 3rd). These assignments will not be accepted late, so if you do not have them printed and ready to turn in at the beginning of class on the first day of school, you are starting off the year with two zeroes. It is not my responsibility to print your assignments for you, nor will I accept them via email.

There are two books you need to read this summer; both of these books are available for you to check out with your school ID from Rosemont’s library Tuesday, June 9th through Thursday, June 11th from 12:15-2:00. If you do not check them out by then, you are responsible for finding them yourself.

The first book, How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines by Thomas Foster, is non-fiction. Once you read this book, you need to write a response in MLA format. Your response is informal in the sense that I’m not giving you a prompt to guide you through, and that it can be written in a casual style; I just want you to tell me what you learned from the book, what you found interesting, what connections you made with it, etc. Your response should be 500-750 words (please put a word count at the bottom of the page).

The second book you need to read is Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston, which is fiction. I highly recommend that you read this novel after you read Foster’s book because the ideas in his book will help you. After you read the novel, you need to write an Analytical Essay, which should also be in MLA format. Besides telling you that you need an introduction with a thesis statement, a body, and a conclusion to guide your essay, I’m leaving the rest of the structure and topic of the essay up to you. Consider focusing on elements such as symbolism, theme, character, structure, diction, etc. You can fall back on the 5-Paragraph structure (remember TBEAR for body paragraphs), or you can approach it in another way. AVOID PLOT SUMMARY. If you use information from outside sources, you need to correctly cite it. The word count for this assignment is 750-1000 words (please include word count). Additionally, there will be a quiz on the second day of school based on the novel. Lastly, I’ve attached study questions to guide you through the chapters. You don’t need to turn these in, but they will be the basis of our discussion for the first few weeks. You need to try to answer all of the questions, but if there are ones that you are uncertain about, we will discuss them as we progress through the novel in September.

If you have questions about the summer assignments, please come and see me in E206, or email me over the summer (Rebecca-Siegert@scusd.edu). Also, if you have a friend who should have received the summer assignments but did not, please tell them to email me or check the school website. I’m looking forward to next year with you 😊

Sincerely,
Ms. Siegert
Course Description
AP English Literature and Composition is a college-level course that engages students in careful reading and critical analysis of literature, as set forth in the AP English Course Description. Through close reading of selected poetry and prose from around the world, with a major emphasis on British literature, students will deepen their understanding of the way writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure for their readers; additionally, students need to rely heavily on the knowledge acquired in the previous three years of high school English instruction. Daily, students will engage with aspects of the writing process, including appeals of argument (ethos, pathos, logos), and style (syntax, mechanics, diction) In May, students have the opportunity to take the AP Exam, which is administered by the College Board. Through successful completion of the exam (a score of 3 or higher, depending on the college), students may be eligible to earn college credit.

Structure of the Course:
There are weekly vocabulary and literary terminology quizzes, along with regular homework quizzes and unit tests. For each structured unit, you must write an analytical essay, and you have 6 Outside Reading assignments throughout the year. Additionally, there are regular AP-style timed essays, multiple choice AP Exams, and other types of assignments such as verbal presentations and class discussion. Overall, throughout the course of the year, you will write approximately 40 essays and revise many of them.

There are eight main units that are covered throughout the year:

- Summer Assignments
- Anglo-Saxon/Middle Ages Literature
- Contemporary Drama
- Short Stories
- Shakespearean Drama
- Poetry
- AP Test Prep
- Film Analysis
Chapters 1-4
1. How are the dreams of men and women compared in the first paragraph of the novel?

2. What point-of-view is utilized at the beginning of the story?

3. How is the novel told “backwards” in a sense?

4. How long has Janie been gone?

5. Three motifs are introduced in the first chapter: the horizon, the porch, and Janie’s hair. Discuss each one.

6. Why does Hurston use phonetically spelled Southern dialect for dialogue?

7. Chapter two introduces one of the most important symbols of the novel, the pear tree. How is it a metaphor for Janie?

8. Why does Nanny force Janie to marry Logan Killicks?

9. Another important symbol, the gate, is introduced in chapter two. What is it symbolic of?

10. Nanny seems puzzled that Janie is unhappy in her marriage to Logan. How does Janie’s unhappiness show that she’s different from other black women?

11. Throughout the novel, Janie’s is often associated with nature. How is that evident in chapter three?

12. How is the reappearance of the gate at the end of chapter three an instance of foreshadowing?

13. There are two details that Janie associates with the demise of her marriage to Logan; what are they?

14. What does Joe Starks represent for Janie?

15. What do Joe and Janie appear to have in common?
Their Eyes Were Watching God
Study Questions

Chapters 5-8

1. Why is it important that chapter five begins with the narrator saying that Joe didn’t use “speeches with rhymes”?

2. How does the relationship between Joe and Janie quickly change? How does the fact that he doesn’t allow her to speak when he’s elected affect their relationship?

3. How does Janie’s position as mayor’s wife distance her from the other women in the town?

4. How does chapter five make comments on white society through criticisms of Joe?

5. What happens with Henry Pitts?

6. What happens with Matt Bonner’s mule? Does Joe really care about the mule?

7. How is the mule symbolic of Janie?

8. How is the porch personified?

9. After Joe hits her for a bad meal, Janie expresses no anger or hatred. What does she realize about their marriage? How is there still optimism in the passage where he hits her?

10. How much time passes between chapters six and seven? What is their marriage like?

11. Why does Joe begin to criticize Janie’s age and looks so much?

12. What comment does Janie make that shows a turning point in her character? What gave her the strength?

13. How is Joe’s refusal of Janie’s food not only literal but also figurative?

14. In order to further herself in her journey towards self-discovery, why is it important that Janie tells Joe everything she does on his deathbed?

15. Why does Janie starch and iron her face?
Their Eyes Were Watching God
Study Questions

Chapters 9-12

1. How is Janie at the third denouement of her life?

2. Hurston uses ambiguity to describe Janie at the funeral. Is she literally behind a black veil? What else could it be?

3. How is the burning of the headrags symbolic?

4. Up to this point, there have been overlaps in the men in Janie’s life. Why is important that Tea Cake doesn’t enter until chapter ten?

5. Hurston carefully draws contrasts between Tea Cake and Joe; what are they?

6. How is Janie’s character different from any other time in the novel up to this chapter?

7. When he walks her home, Janie momentarily worries for her safety, but the feeling passes; why?

8. How is a future relationship alluded to throughout the chapter?

9. Critics say that chapter eleven is truly about the real issues surrounding love: fear, doubt, sincerity, and sacrifice. How are those issues explored? Have these been experienced by Janie in her other marriages?

10. How does Tea Cake feel about Janie’s hair? Why is that so important?

11. How does the symbol of the gate return? How is it different this time?

12. Tea Cake relies on nature to woo Janie; how does this show his compatibility with Janie?

13. Just as she personified Death in chapter nine, Hurston personifies Doubt in chapter eleven; how?

14. Logan and Joe never “courted” Janie; how does Tea Cake?

15. How do the townspeople feel about Janie’s relationship with Tea Cake?
Their Eyes Were Watching God
Study Questions

Chapters 13-16

1. The love between Janie and Tea Cake is tested for the first time in chapter thirteen; additionally, they reveal more of their true selves to each other. How?

2. Summarize the story of Annie Tyler and Who Flung. Why does Janie think about it?

3. Janie obviously loved Tea Cake prior to this; what makes her love him even more?

4. Why does Tea Cake want to go to the Muck in the Everglades?

5. How does Janie come to fully appreciate the black culture of the Muck?

6. How is the flood foreshadowed in the descriptions of the Muck and Lake Okechobee?

7. Compare how Tea Cake is the leader of his community vs. how Joe was the leader of Eatonville.

8. Why does Tea Cake want Janie to work in the fields?

9. Jealousy is a universal emotion; how does it rear its head in chapter fifteen?

10. How does the issue with Nunkie reinforce the love between Tea Cake and Janie?

11. Why does Mrs. Turner seek out Janie’s friendship? What does it say about her?

12. How does Janie have to defend black culture to Mrs. Turner?

13. Why would Hurston introduce a character like Mrs. Turner?

14. How is the contrast between a “white” God and a “black” God explored?

15. Why doesn’t Tea Cake tell off Mr. Turner?
Their Eyes Were Watching God
Study Questions

Chapters 17-20

1. The previous chapter celebrated black culture. How does Hurston explore some of the questionable actions of black culture in chapter seventeen?

2. Although she has been liberated by Tea Cake, how is Janie still oppressed?

3. After Tea Cake hits Janie, the men are jealous and the women are envious; why?

4. How do Tea Cake and Sop-de-Bottom attempt to run Mrs. Turner out of town? What comment is Hurston making about the types of people the Turners are by her choice of last name for them?

5. Why do the people believe a hurricane won’t occur?

6. Why does Tea Cake decide to stay? How is his death foreshadowed?

7. What message does Hurston send about being in touch with God’s signals and messages, as the Indians and the Bahamans are?

8. Tea Cake has forgotten to listen to God; why? What overtook his roots and connection to religion? When does he finally watch God? What about Janie?


10. How does Hurston comment on society through Tea Cake’s comment about Jim Crow laws when he’s helping to bury the bodies?

11. Why is it ironic that Tea Cake taught Janie how to shoot?

12. How have Janie’s overalls become a new symbol?

13. How is the court scene ironic, in terms of the jury?

14. Why does Janie leave the Muck?

15. What does Janie ultimately realize that everyone must do in order to find themselves?