



AP Literature Assignment – Summer 2019

Part I – Macbeth Essay

Read *Macbeth* by Shakespeare. Write a character analysis of Macbeth in which you consider the following questions:

- What is at the heart of Macbeth’s character? Is he essentially a good or an evil person? Why?
- What motivates his actions throughout the play? Is there a sense in which some of his actions are understandable but not excusable?
- How does his character evolve during the course of the play? To what extent does he stay true to his character and to what extent if any does he allow himself to be manipulated by others, including his wife?
- What is your final evaluation of Macbeth? What can we learn from this story that is relevant to the challenges and choices we face today?

Part II – Scarlet Letter Essay

Read *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. According to the introduction on the back cover of the Oxford World’s Classics edition:

“An elderly English scholar sends his young wife, Hester Prynne, to set up their home in the Puritan Boston of the mid-seventeenth century. Arriving two years later, he discovers Hester in the pillory*, cradling her illegitimate child in her arms. Refusing to name her lover, she is sentenced to wear a scarlet A, signifying Adulteress, as a token of her sin. Desperate for revenge, her husband assumes a new name, and in the guise of a doctor begins a cruel and ultimately destructive search for the father of her child.

“*The Scarlet Letter* is a disturbing tale of conflict between a passionate woman and her stern Puritan judges. The laws of scripture and the statute-book are broken by someone who believes in the higher law of her own heart. To read the story is to become drawn into judging Hester: does Hawthorne himself reject or endorse her challenge to the system of moral authority?”

*pillory: a wooden framework with holes for the head and hands, in which an offender was imprisoned and exposed to public abuse.



Write an essay that answers the question quoted above: “Does Hawthorne himself reject or endorse her challenge to the system of moral authority?” Scholars have debated this question since the book was written, so there is no “right” or “wrong” answer, but you must support your answer with evidence from the text.

Your answer may be that Hawthorne either rejects or endorses her challenge, or your answer may be more complex. For example, perhaps Hawthorne endorses certain aspects of her challenge but does not reject the moral system in its entirety.

Remember to write a clear thesis statement. In your conclusion, you may want to consider your own evaluation of Hester from a twenty-first century perspective.

Guidelines for Essays

You must submit both essays to Turnitin.com by midnight on Friday, August 30, 2019:

- **Name of class:** AP Literature 2019-20
- **Class ID:** 21474331
- **Enrollment key:** APLIT

Each essay should be a minimum of three (3) pages and should be a Google Doc in standard academic format (Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced, one-inch margins).

Please note the following:

- Do NOT simply summarize or retell the story.
- You are expected to read the texts and present your own ideas.
- These essays are NOT research papers. You should do your own analysis.
- If you use a summary from the Internet and/or present ideas from the Internet as your own, you will receive a “0.”
- If you submit an essay with passages that were copied and pasted or paraphrased from the Internet, you will receive a “0.”



Both essays must be submitted to Turnitin.com by midnight on Friday, August 30, 2019.

If the essays are not submitted on time, you will receive a “0.”

No excuse will be accepted. You must find a working computer or other electronic device to ensure that you submit your essays on time. You can come to school to use a computer if needed.