

Summer Reading Assignment: AP Literature and Composition (12th Grade) 2025-2026

For questions about summer reading, please contact Cheryl Henley at henleyvc@leonschools.net.

Our class is the deep, analytical study of literature – poetry and prose. Throughout the year we will read a variety of literary texts, from short stories and poems to plays and full-length novels. Your summer reading involves two texts: *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley, and a reference book of sorts, Thomas C. Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*.

Get a copy of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster and *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. We have a small number of these books at school, so if you do not want to spend the money for your own copy, see Ms. Henley in 103 between May 15th and the end of the year. *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* is also available in PDF format at this address:

<https://mseffie.com/assignments/professor/How%20to%20Read%20Literature%20like%20a%20Professor%201st.pdf>

(easily found by googling “How to Read Literature Like a Professor PDF”).

Read the Introduction and consider why this text is an appropriate one for the beginning of a course about literary analysis. Then, follow the instructions below.

ASSIGNMENT

Once you have finished reading and annotating *Frankenstein*, revisit *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. The book will help you analyze your novel. Use Foster's text for Parts A and B (directions below). Then write part C.

- A. Read all of the following chapters from Foster's book and use them to analyze *Frankenstein*. Part A will be four paragraphs of analysis based on the chapters below.**
1. Chapter 1— “Every Trip Is a Quest”
 2. Chapter 7— “...or *The Bible*”
 3. Chapter 12— “Is That a Symbol?”
 4. Chapter 25— “Don't Read with Your Eyes”
- B. Choose FOUR MORE chapters in Foster (chosen by you) that apply to the novel, and use them to analyze the text. Part B will be four paragraphs of analysis based on four other chapters of your choice.**

For parts A & B, respond to each chapter by writing a well-developed paragraph that explains the main points Foster is making (make sure you paraphrase Foster by putting his ideas into your own words) and show how they apply to *Frankenstein* (each paragraph should be a minimum of 150 words). Include at least two specific textual examples (at least one of which is a direct quote from the novel) that show how the author is using the technique or idea discussed in Foster's chapter. **Use MLA parenthetical citation to indicate where in the novel you found your examples.**

Example of an appropriate analysis paragraph using HTRLLP:

In Foster's Chapter “...So Does Season,” he suggests that *when* a novel takes place is just as important as where. Sometimes season is used in its traditional symbolic context – spring equals new life, winter equals death, and so on, while other times, season (or weather – but that's another chapter!) is used ironically to contrast the events of the text or highlight a particular character's experience. The opening scene of George Orwell's *1984* reflects this idea well. We are told in the first lines that “It was a bright cold day in April,” but by the end of the first page, we learn that this society is experiencing a shortage in electricity because of rationing for “Hate Week” (Orwell 1). The contrast of a bright day in the season of new life and hope and cold nasty wind is one thing, but to follow it up with an ominous mention of the yet-unexplained “Hate Week” prepares readers for the confusing and frustrating paradoxes that they will face throughout the text. Furthermore, the character of Winston also contrasts nicely with the season. He

has a “varicose ulcer” and is winded from climbing stairs. The setting of a bright April day helps to underscore how *not* fresh, *not* new and full of life Winston is.

C. Using *Frankenstein*, type a 500-1000-word essay answering this prompt:

Many works of literature feature a rebel character who changes or disrupts the existing state of societal, familial, or political affairs in the text. They may break social norms, challenge long-held values, subvert expectations, or participate in other forms of resistance. The character’s motivation for this rebellious behavior is often complex.

Using Mary Shelley’s, *Frankenstein* select a character who changes or disrupts the existing state of societal, familial, or political affairs. Then in a well-written essay, analyze how the complex motivation of the rebel contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Once completed, your assignment should be comprised of Parts A-C in one Word document:

- **Part A:** Four paragraphs of analysis (based on the four assigned chapters from *How to Read Literature like a Professor*)
- **Part B:** Four paragraphs of analysis (based on four chapters of your choice from *How to Read Literature like a Professor*)
- **Part C:** One 500-1000 word essay on *Frankenstein* based on the provided prompt.

SAVE YOUR WORK FOR DIGITAL SUBMISSION DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASS NEXT YEAR.

For the assignment on page one, you should be using Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (information below).

***Frankenstein* - Mary Shelley**

At once a Gothic thriller, a passionate romance, and a cautionary tale about the dangers of science, *Frankenstein* tells the story of committed science student Victor Frankenstein. Obsessed with discovering the cause of generation and life and bestowing animation upon lifeless matter, Frankenstein assembles a human being from stolen body parts but; upon bringing it to life, he recoils in horror at the creature’s hideousness. Tormented by isolation and loneliness, the once-innocent creature turns to evil and unleashes a campaign of murderous revenge against his creator, Frankenstein. *Frankenstein* raises profound, disturbing questions about the very nature of life and the place of humankind within the cosmos: What does it mean to be human? What responsibilities do we have to each other? How far can we go in tampering with Nature? In our age, filled with news of organ donation genetic engineering, and bio-terrorism, these questions are more relevant than ever.

Positive Messages	While many mistakes are made by the main characters, the moral messages are
Positive Role Models	Victor’s friends and teachers are all very conscientious and kind; Victor’s mistakes are clearly painted as such.
Violence	Murder, digging up dead bodies, risky experimentation.
Sex	The importance of companionship is underscored; a “wedding night” is an important moment for a character.
Language	N/A
Consumerism	N/A
Drinking, Drugs, Smoking	Victor mentions taking laudanum

Per School Board Policy 2240, Leon County Schools recognizes that certain instructional materials may conflict with a student’s or parent’s value system. In such cases, a parent may request in writing an alternative summer reading assignment. **Please direct inquiries to Cheryl Henley at henleyc@leonschools.net**