



# Segerstrom High School

*"A Fundamental School"*

SANTA ANA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mr. Duncan McCulloch, Principal

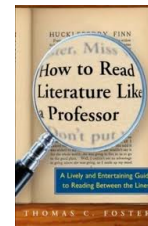
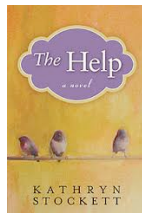
June 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians of Incoming 12<sup>th</sup> Grade AP Literature and Composition Students:

Welcome to AP Literature and Composition! Segerstrom's Instructional Focus is "Think! Create! Achieve!" This focus is the foundation upon which the AP Literature course is built and will be at the center of all we do this year. In an effort to keep your minds sharp and prepare the foundational critical thinking and reading skills you will need for this AP course, we ask that you complete the following assignments. All texts will be provided to students by program verification in August; however, students who want to get a head start on the reading can find the books at local bookstores and/or libraries.

**All students must complete the following summer-reading assignment in preparation for the AP class:**

- Read Kathryn Stockett's *The Help* and complete the attached guided reading questions, which will be due in **the second week of the school year**. Students will, however, receive additional assignments once the school year begins, so it is recommended that students start (and hopefully complete) this assignment during the summer.
- Read Thomas C. Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines*. While you may have read parts of this book in last year's AP Language and Composition course, you will need to read the entire book and complete the attached guided reading questions, which will be due in **the fourth week of the school year**. Again, students will receive additional assignments once the school year begins, so it is recommended that students start (and hopefully complete) this assignment during the summer.



## Expectations for Student Work:

- It is expected that students complete both written assignments according to the directions below by the dates listed. These assignments will be a part of their grade for the first six-week grading period. Students will complete multiple-choice/matching examinations to assess their understanding of each of these texts, and students will write a mandatory AP English Literature and Composition "Open Prompt" on *The Help*. **The essay scores and exam results will count towards the student's grade in English class.** Failure to complete the reading assignment will negatively affect the student's grade.

Sincerely,

The Segerstrom English Department

## Guided Reading Questions for Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*

**Directions:** Each of the following questions must be answered *thoroughly* and *thoughtfully* with **specific textual evidence** (i.e., specific details and quotations) from the text. Each response should be **multiple sentences** (unacceptably brief responses will receive no credit), and submissions that do not include quotations in **every** response will not receive a grade of "A." Responses must be **in students' own words** (all references to other sources, including the text, must be cited appropriately) and **word-processed**, and responses will be submitted to the plagiarism prevention website [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) during the **second week of the school year**.

### Chapters 1-6: Searching for an Idea

1. Aibileen says: "But it weren't too long before I seen something in me had changed. A bitter seed was planted inside a me" (3). What was the cause of her bitterness? What deepens Aibileen's bitterness toward white society as the first six chapters continue?
2. What is it about Miss Celia's background that makes her different from the other club women, and why do you think she wants to be accepted by them so badly?
3. What are some of the "rules" for behavior and expectations does Skeeter get from her mother, and what do these say about the kind of behavior considered proper for young white women of the time? Why do you think Skeeter and her mother have different attitudes about these rules?
4. In what ways has Constantine helped Skeeter to grow up? How has Constantine taught Skeeter kindness and self-respect?

### Chapters 7-28: Writing the Stories

5. How does Aibileen try to counteract the negative effects of Elizabeth's criticism and coldness to Mae Mobley?
6. Why does the opportunity to tell the truth about working for white people weigh so heavily on Minny?
7. Does the vindictiveness of white women for violations of racial lines differ from the violence of white men? How and to what degree are they the same or different?
8. What are some of the ways that Minny shows that she cares about Miss Celia, even though she complains about her?
9. In reference to the book to which she is contributing her story, Minny says, ". . . it's a sorry fact that it's a white woman doing this" (255). What are some of the issues raised by the fact that a white woman is the editor and a contributor to a book about the experiences of black maids?
10. How does the existence of racial hatred and violence in her world affect Skeeter?
11. Gretchen accuses Skeeter of being "Another white lady trying to make a dollar off of colored people" (304). Is this what Skeeter is trying to do? If not, what is motivating her to collect and publish the maids' stories? Is it personal ambition or something more worthy?
12. Skeeter asks her boyfriend Stuart if the civil rights activist that Stuart's ex-girlfriend cheated with was "colored." She feels that, even to her, "that would be horrific, disastrous" (321). What do these feelings reveal about Skeeter, even as she realizes the racism of her society?
13. Although Minny is very strong in some ways, she submits to physical abuse from her husband. What are possible reasons why she takes this abuse and does not stand up to him?
14. What does the incident with the prowler who harasses Minny and Celia reveal about the personalities of these two women?
15. When Minny complains to Aibileen that Celia, her white employer, does not see the lines that separate different classes and races of people, Aibileen tells her that she is "talking about something that don't exist" (367). How does Minny subsequently apply Aibileen's words in her dealings with Celia?
16. Why is it that Celia's appearance makes such an impact on the guests at the Benefit?
17. Why does Minny risk her job and explain to Celia the story behind Hilly and the chocolate pie? What does this show about how Minny has changed over the course of the novel?
18. What does Celia's chopping down the mimosa tree outside her kitchen window signify?

### Chapters 28-34: Aftermath

19. Why does Stuart withdraw his proposal of marriage to Skeeter? Why is he unable to appreciate what Skeeter has done?
20. How does Skeeter look and dress differently as the events of the novel unfold? What does this suggest about changes in the way she thinks?

21. What is the significance of so many people signing the book that Reverend Johnson gives to Aibileen?
22. Why is Skeeter so eager to get out of Mississippi?
23. After realizing the desperation felt by Lou Anne, Skeeter reflects that the point of the book was: "For women to realize, *We are just two people. Not that much separates us. Not nearly as much as I'd thought*" (492). In what way is this theme revealed in the book edited by Skeeter?
24. How has Aibileen changed through the events in the novel and the publication of the book?
25. How does the publication of the book lead to Minny's freeing herself from her abusive husband?

### **Guided Reading Questions for Thomas Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor***

**Directions:** Each of the following questions must be answered *thoroughly* and *thoughtfully* with **specific evidence** (i.e., quotations) from the text. Each response should be **multiple sentences** (unacceptably brief responses will receive no credit), and submissions that do not include quotations in every response will not receive a grade of "A." Responses must be **in students' own words** (all references to other sources, including the text, must be cited appropriately) and **word-processed**, and responses will be submitted to the plagiarism prevention website [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) during **the fourth week of the school year**.

#### **Introduction: "How'd He Do That?"**

1. How do memory, symbol, and pattern affect the reading of literature? How does the recognition of patterns make it easier to read complicated literature?

#### **Chapter 1: "Every Trip is a Quest (Except When It's Not)"**

2. What are the five characteristics of the quest?

#### **Chapter 2: "Nice to Eat With You: Acts of Communion"**

3. List the things, according to Foster, that eating in literature can represent.

#### **Chapter 3: "Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires"**

4. What are some things besides vampirism that vampires and ghosts represent in literature?

#### **Chapter 5: "Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?"**

5. What is the "big secret" Foster reveals in this chapter? In your response, be sure to define *intertextuality*.

#### **Chapters 6-9: "When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare . . .," ". . . Or the Bible," "Hansel and Gretel," and "It's Greek to Me"**

6. Why do so many writers use allusions to Shakespeare, the Bible, fairy tales, and mythology? What do these allusions do for a piece of literature?

#### **Chapter 10: "It's More Than Just Rain or Snow"**

7. What are some of the things types of weather such as rain, fog, rainbow, etc. can represent in literature? Be sure to consider the contradictory meanings of these elements (e.g., rain can have both positive and negative connotations).

#### **Interlude: "Does He Mean That?"**

8. Answer the question in the title: "Does he mean that?" Be sure to address the fact that this intention can be unconscious.

#### **Chapter 12: "Is That a Symbol?"**

9. (a) Why is symbolic meaning different for each individual reader? (b) What are some of the factors that influence what we understand in our reading?

#### **Chapter 13: "It's All Political"**

10. Summarize Foster's argument about why most literature can be called "political."

#### **Chapter 14: "Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too"**

11. What are the distinguishing characteristics of Jesus Christ that readers should recognize?
12. Foster asserts that a character need not have all of the distinguishing characteristics of Jesus Christ in order to be considered a Christ figure in literature. Why? Explain.

#### **Chapter 15: "Flights of Fancy"**

13. Does a character always have to fly in order for there to be "flying" in a piece of literature? Explain.

#### **Chapter 16: "It's All About Sex" and Chapter 17: ". . . Except Sex"**

14. Why do writers tend to "encode" sex rather than present it explicitly? What are some ways in which they do this?

15. If, as Foster claims, describing sex is “the least rewarding enterprise a writer can undertake,” what purpose does including it have?

**Chapter 18: “If She Comes Up, It’s Baptism”**

16. Discuss the symbolic significance of both drowning and baptism.

**Chapter 19: “Geography Matters . . .”**

17. Why does geography matter in a piece of literature?  
18. Discuss the symbolic significance of specific elements of geography (the south, hills and valleys, etc.).

**Chapter 20: “. . . So Does Season”**

19. Identify the symbolic significance of each of the four seasons.

**Chapter 21: “Marked for Greatness”**

20. Why do writers give characters in literature deformities?

**Chapter 22: “He’s Blind for a Reason, You Know”**

21. If it is difficult to write a story with a blind character, why might an author include one?  
22. Explain what Foster calls the “Indiana Jones principle.”

**Chapter 23: “It’s Never Just Heart Disease . . .”**

23. Why does Foster consider heart disease the best, most lyrical, most perfectly metaphorical illness?

**Chapter 24: “. . . And Rarely Just Illness”**

24. What are the four principles governing the use of disease in works of literature?

**Chapter 25: “Don’t Read with Your Eyes”**

25. Explain Foster’s paradoxical advice to not read with your eyes.

**Chapter 26: “Is He Serious? And Other Ironies”**

26. Explain the claim Foster has been making throughout the book that “irony trumps everything.”

**Chapter 27: “A Test Case”**

27. After reading “The Garden Party” and the sample analyses that follow it, select **three** of the elements discussed in Chapters 1-26, and explain their significance in a story, film, poem, etc. with which you are familiar. **You may not use the examples Foster uses!**