

THE ASSIGNMENT-AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

Read and enjoy *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood.

Also read the following chapters (and more if you wish) from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, by Thomas Foster:

1. Quest; 2. Communion; 11. Violence; 16. All about Sex; 17. Except Sex.

- As you read Foster, **annotate**, marking places that seem interesting, new, informative, or funny.
- Read and **annotate** *Handmaid's Tale*, marking places that seem striking, significant, moving, or puzzling.
- After you have read both books, go back and look through *The Handmaid's Tale* to **find five significant passages** (from one to three paragraphs) each of which relates in some way to one of the assigned chapters from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. Each of the five chapters should be addressed individually in one journal entry.
- **For each passage, write one page** (typed, double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font) **applying the ideas and approaches in a relevant chapter** to your analysis of and response to the passage.
 - For example, you might look at the scene about Offred's partial breakfast when Cora drops the tray near the beginning of chapter 25 of *The Handmaid's Tale* (where there seems to be some kind of agreement going on) in relation to Foster's discussion of meals often being a kind of communion, a coming together of a community. What possibility for communion is developed during this meal? (Is a food fight in the offing?)
- **Title each entry with the name of the chapter from Foster, followed by quoting the passage from *The Handmaid's Tale* and citing the page number in parentheses after.**
- The response itself should be about **one page**, *without the quotation*.
- There should be **five entries in all**. Again, there will be one entry for each of the five Foster chapters each on a different passage from the novel.
- Bring these responses (ALREADY PRINTED) and both books to class the first day of school.

Try to have some fun here. Play with ideas. Don't worry about being "right" but enjoy exploring how your main character—who seems to be stymied at every turn—is a questing knight. What dragons is she slaying? Or consider how violence is concerned—how do the descriptions of the bodies hanging on the wall affect how Offred views her world? How about how *you* view her world?

Remember, these aren't formal essays. They are informal explorations written **to yourself—a kind of conversation with yourself about the passages**. We are not asking you to say what happens in the story. **Please do not retell the story.**