

How to Read Literature Like a Professor

By Thomas C. Foster

This text is your guide to delving deeper into literature and discovering the mysteries that are so masterfully interwoven in the stories. Seasoned readers see patterns, symbols, and archetypes and are able to more fully understand and ENJOY what they read because of this.

Think about it: when you only read the summaries, you don't care. You just want to pass the test and be done with it. But, when you truly read the book, know the characters, understand their plights, and discover all the hidden gems that give the text its richness, you actually have an experience. *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* is going to help you toward having these rich experiences.

There are 26 chapters that teach you the symbols and patterns, and then chapter 27 is an opportunity for you to test out what you've learned. As you read each chapter, you need to create a log that will serve as a resource for you through the rest of your literature studies (at least here in the IB program).

The minimum for your log must include:

FOR EACH CHAPTER:

1. Title of chapter
2. Basic summary of the idea in your own words (minimum 4 sentences)
3. 1 example of this idea from something YOU KNOW! Just using Foster's examples is not going to help you if you haven't read the texts he's talking about. Think about novels, plays, short stories, and even poems with which you are familiar, and use these as your examples. It's fine to keep coming back to the same text if you see many of these concepts within it!

Ex.

1. Introduction: How'd He Do That?
2. The introduction explains to students that professors are able to effectively interpret literature because they understand patterns and symbols. Foster suggests that literature has "a set of conventions and patterns, codes and rules, that we learn to employ in dealing with a piece of writing" (xiii). The recognition of these things adds to the richness and complexity of the text, and the way to get better at seeing these patterns is through practice. When readers acquire this skill to recognize the consistencies in texts, reading becomes more rewarding and enjoyable.
3. An example of a type of story that is common is coming-of-age story-line. Both *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* provide 1st-person narration from the point of view of a child. Both stories begin with a naïve and innocent child at the start, but through the events in the story, each grows up to learn some of the cruel realities of the world.

Rubric

	Requirement	Points earned/ comments
Summary 2 pts per entry 26 entries Total points possible: 52 pts	Complete summary of the idea in the chapter explained through a minimum of 4 quality sentences.	
Connection 2 pts per entry 26 entries Total points possible: 52 pts	Correct example of this idea	
Spelling and grammar 11 points	There are very few spelling and grammar mistakes (-1)	

	point/ 2 errors up to 11 points)	
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Total: _____/115