AP English Literature and Composition—Summer 2022

Welcome to Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition. This is a college literature course, and it is designed to challenge and strengthen you as a reader, a writer and in your beliefs.

In preparation, you will be reading two novels this summer: *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë and *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison (please do not confuse with the H.G. Wells version which has The in the title—you may certainly read Wells’s, but it will not help with this assignment 😊)

I strongly encourage you to purchase your own copy. I use the Second Vintage International edition from March 1995 for *Invisible Man* (white cover with green bars. black words) and the Penguin Classic version of *Jane Eyre* (girl with white lace on neck, red cheeks). You do not have to have the same version as I, but it will make page numbers easier in August as we discuss.

Invisible Man: <https://amzn.to/39KO4zA>

Jane Eyre: <https://amzn.to/3Ga55zk>

You do not need to annotate, but you should do a thorough job of reading and responding to the discussion style questions.

I am providing some background information/context before the questions. You may also use the internet to help you with understanding. You do not have to use outside sources, but if you wish to, I suggest *Course Hero*, *Spark* and *Shmoop*.

I further recommend that you spread this out over a longer period of time rather than trying to do all of this the week before we begin in August. But, as always, you find your own best path. I have a very limited number of the books; you may come check one out, you may also use the local library

Each novel’s responses should be set up as its own paper. So, *Jane Eyre* will answer four questions and have its own Works Cited page as will *Invisible Man*. Both should be in MLA format please (TNR, 12, DS, standard margins). No minimum word count, but please do not exceed 500 per question. I will collect them on the first day of class). If your printer has gremlins, you may email it to me. mcauleye@santarosa.k12.fl.us

Have a great summer; I look forward to meeting you in the fall.

Coach McAuley

WOMEN’S ROLES IN THE 19TH CENTURY

**The Legal Rights of Women:**

Women in 19th century England had few rights and depended solely on their male counterparts— husbands, fathers, and brothers—for support. Women certainly could note vote, and, once married, a woman’s property and all possessions belonged to her husband. As far as the law was concerned, women’s rights compared to those of children. The law viewed a husband and a wife as one unit, controlled by the husband. Duties of the husband included the wife’s protection; duties of the wife involved absolute obedience to the husband.

For the first half of the 19th century, should a divorce be necessary, the husband kept all property and possessions. He also had all rights to the children; the wife had no right to see the children after the divorce unless the husband agreed to visitation. These rules slowly changed throughout the century, however. By 1939, if a divorce were necessary, the courts allowed mothers of good character to visit and even raise their children.

Husbands could divorce wives for adultery, but women could not divorce their husbands. A wife had to prove adultery and another crime, such as cruelty, desertion, or incest. It was after Brontë’s death, in 1878, when women were able to divorce their husbands on the sole basis of cruelty, and they could retain custody of their children. Furthermore, it was only in 1886 that mothers could be named the guardians of their children should the death of the father occur.

**The Idea of the Ideal Woman:**

Although women had few legal rights, women were treated with care and were generally protected. Should an emergency occur, women were to be saved before men. Women were seen as ideal— symbols of purity and righteousness. Because of these ideas, women were not encouraged to wear makeup, as it would detract from their purity. Likewise, women did not wear overly revealing clothing; they were encouraged to cover much of their skin and even their ankles. As women were pure, their bodies were preserved for their husbands.

**Women as Household Managers:**

The most important duty of women was to manage the household. This involved waking early in the morning—as early risers were viewed as efficient—directing the servant(s), caring for the children, and organizing the family’s social engagements. Of course, frugality and cleanliness were necessary components of a successful household, as well. In running the household, women were always required to be hospitable, well-mannered, properly dressed, and schooled on the regulations of society. For example, jewelry and other fancy adornments were worn only to dinner—not throughout the day, and social calls during the day were kept under a strict timeline of twenty minutes.

Contact with society was of the utmost importance, as the wife was required to organize dinner parties in order to maintain desired relationships in the community and, hopefully, gain prestige with society’s elite. Women made socially required visits on a daily basis to other families’ homes for a variety of reasons, such as visiting a sick friend, giving congratulations, or returning a visit after a party or other social engagement. While relationships were important, they were not started hastily. It took time to build the foundation of a friendship with a family; to simply exhibit friendliness to everyone was considered inappropriate.

**Education and Occupations of Women:**

For their education, women studied subjects that would prove useful in raising the children or in managing the household, such as literature, history, painting, music, and drawing. Males, on the other hand, studied other subjects, such as Latin, physics, science, art, or law. Higher education, or universities, were closed to women until 1848. In their daily lives as adults, women were expected to cultivate themselves at least for a short time each day by engaging in such activities as reading, drawing, playing music, or needlework.

While women of the lower classes sometimes worked outside the home as unskilled factory workers, agricultural laborers, or domestic servants, these options certainly were not appropriate for middle

class women. The primary job of the middle class woman was running the household, caring for her family, and managing social engagements. For middle class women who desired a career outside of the home, they had few options. They could be governesses or medical nurses. Writing was another field that opened to women in this century; note, however, that it was only in 1848, midway through the century, that the Brontë sisters revealed their true, female identities to their publisher and readers.

**The Occupation of Governess:**

Middle class families hired governesses, female teachers, who also belonged to the middle class. Being a governess involved living with a family and teaching the family’s children within the home. Governesses taught their students, who were usually females, the necessary subjects for accomplished ladies: a foreign language, drawing, reading, writing, basic math, music, literature, painting, and history. Although the governess was often of the same social status as the family, she was not a member of the family. She often had no one with whom to converse and spent much of her time alone, being considered beneath the family that employed her. Complicating matters was the education of a governess, which clearly placed her above the other servants in the household. Governesses had their own class within the household in which they were employed—beneath the family, but above the servants.

GOTHIC INFLUENCES

Charlotte Brontë uses elements of the Gothic horror story throughout Jane Eyre. Having originated in Germany, Gothic horror was popular in England in the 18th and 19th centuries. The purpose of Gothic fiction was to evoke a sense of mystery, suspense, fear, and terror. Typically, Gothic stories include mysterious happenings, frightening scenes, and supernatural occurrences as important elements of their plots. Brontë includes several Gothic conventions, including gloomy, desolate landscape descriptions, ghostly encounters, complex family histories, incidents of madness, and revelations of shocking secrets. These Gothic elements add mystery and frightening suspense to *Jane Eyre*. For comparison, other Victorian Gothic literature includes Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Fall of the House of Usher”, published in 1839, and Emily Brontë’s novel *Wuthering Heights*, published in 1847.

EVENTS AND CHANGES IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

Queen Victoria’s reign lasted from 1837 – 1901. During her time, which included the Industrial Revolution, England was transformed from a rural, agricultural country into an industrialized, urban environment of growing cities connected by railways. New types of jobs were available in factories, and people migrated to cities for employment. Women and children worked long hours in dangerous factories for meager pay to help support their families. The concentrated population and poor sanitary conditions led to a series of epidemics, such as typhus and cholera. Communication improved, as people used stage coaches, steam ships, and railways to transport messages, materials, and goods from city to city. Made aware of abuses of workers, poor health conditions in urban slums, and the inescapable cycle of poverty, Queen Victory strove to right some of England’s social and economic wrongs. By the end of her reign, England had developed into a nation of bustling urban communities and towns governed by innovations in science and technology.

Choose **four** of the following questions and answer in paragraph form. Answer each fully. Some responses may be two or three paragraphs, others may be only one. You will be graded on MLA format, fully answering the question, sophistication of thought, integration of quotes, and grammar, usage, mechanics (GUMs). Each answer should use at least two quotations (paraphrase if the quote is longer than 20 words or so). You do not need an introduction, hook, etc. Please include page numbers for quotes—if you use outside sources, you must also include a works cited page. You may have one works cited page combined for all four of the questions. Do not just write a plot review. I have read the novel—I wish to see you interact with it. 😊

1. Consider how Brontë employs the subjects of sanity and madness, sight and blindness, or fire and ice throughout the novel. What does she say about them? (choose one pairing)
2. Jane searches for autonomy throughout the novel. How is this important for her character, the novel, and for Brontë’s Victorian readers?
3. Discuss how Brontë weaves elements of the supernatural throughout the novel, especially within Rochester and Jane’s relationship.
4. Brontë toys with the motifs of equality and social status throughout the novel. Analyze incidents in the novel where equality and social status are imperative.
5. Explain the importance of the five places Jane lives (Gateshead Hall, Lowood Institution, Thornfield, Moor House/Marsh End, and Ferndean), the significance of each place name, and how each place name represents the quality of Jane’s life at each home.
6. For much of the novel, Jane Eyre holds an ambiguous role in society—not fitting in a specific social class. Discuss at least two instances where this is pertinent to Jane’s development as a character.
7. Compare and contrast the religious characters that Brontë includes in the novel: Mr. Brocklehurst, Helen Burns, and St. John Rivers.
8. A Bildungsroman (a literary genre that focuses on the psychological and moral growth of the protagonist from youth to adulthood, in which character change is important. The term comes from the German words Bildung and Roman). Explain how *Jane Eyre* is a clear example of a Bildungsroman.

*Invisible Man*

NOTES ON ELLISON’S STYLE, SETTING AND THEMES

Ellison’s style echoes that of other African-American writers, particularly those involved in the Harlem Renaissance. His writing teems with sound devices—particularly alliteration—and utilizes anaphora (repetition at the beginning of phrases or clauses to emphasize points) to highlight some of his most poignant points.

Ellison’s focus is the alienation of the African-American in an ostensibly free society. He analyzes the ways in which race is used as a mechanism of power—not only by whites over blacks, but by some blacks (such as Dr. Bledsoe) over other blacks. This alienation becomes apparent through the frenzied tone (driven by syntax) of much of the book.

The central question of the novel is: “How can one person make a difference when all of the avenues to power are occupied by the duplicitous (treacherous)?” No matter where the narrator tries to pursue success and autonomy in an authentic manner, he finds the road ahead of him blocked by those who have decided to collude against those below. His initial solution, to hide in a basement and steal power from the electric company, fails to solve the problem, so he ultimately decides to come forth and pursue change.

While Ellison employs an impressive vocabulary, his style is not formal. It is almost lyric with its considerable use of sound devices. The reader feels like he or she is riding down a river, rather than sitting on a chair.

Similes and metaphors, particularly in the “battle royal,” the Golden Day, and the Liberty Paints scenes, extend the effect of the sound devices as far as emphasizing particular thematic points.

SETTING: HARLEM DURING THE 1930’S

Details of the period are accurate, including descriptions of apartment housing, public transportation, and working conditions.

The descriptions of the college that the narrator attended, as well as the trip around the city and the Golden Day, accurately reflect conditions and expectations placed on black students in the South.

Contemporary problems in racial relations are reflected in the following ways:

* The taboo of white-black romantic relationships is reflected in two ways: the white woman who appears before the “battle royal” as well as the tryst between Sybil and the narrator.
* Black power figures were often seen by other blacks as conspirators with whites. Dr. Bledsoe ultimately reveals himself as this sort of person in two ways: his letters urging the trustees to avoid the narrator and his conversation with the narrator before sending the narrator to New York City.
* The problem of stereotypical dolls and images of blacks is confronted in two ways: when the narrator confronts Clifton for selling Sambo dolls on the street, and when he smashes the coin bank that is shaped as a caricature.
* The benefits (and drawbacks) of the Communist party in American are well represented by the Brotherhood’s machinations in Harlem.
* The conflict between the assimilationists and the separatists within the black community are represented by Dr. Bledsoe and by Ras the Exhorter

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1. How does the way in which Liberty Paints operates reflect racism in society?
2. When the narrator is in the Brotherhood, what are some ways that his race comes to replace his actual identity? Is this also a modern phenomenon?
3. How do the various ideologies presented in the novel all turn out to be ineffective or insufficient?
4. When the narrator encounters other African-Americans in the story, what ideas do they have about the path to success that actually keep them from reaching true success and true equality?
5. Explain Ellison’s view on the nature of mob behavior.
6. In a review of this novel, Saul Bellow writes, “[i]t is commonly felt that there is no strength to match the strength of those powers that attack and cripple modern mankind.” Based on the events of the novel, would you agree with, disagree with, or qualify (Qualify means to provide options that would make you agree or disagree. For example, “Hey Coach, will you get there on time?” “Yes, if the bridge has no traffic”)? Why?
7. What limits does the narrator face as an invisible man, with regard to his ability to effect social change?