

June 2019

**Dear Student,**

You have elected to study 12 AP English Literature and Composition this coming academic year. This is a college course that stresses challenging reading, in-depth analysis, and advanced written responses. You will be reading novels, plays, poems, etc. by great authors from various time periods.

The AP Literature course is a demanding as well as rewarding one, and you are to be congratulated for your initiative. The work listed below is required summer reading for all AP students. In addition to completing the literature assignment, you must study the literary terms section.

**READINGS:** While not required, it is suggested that you purchase your own copy of the play so that you can make notations concerning style, characters, plot, themes, rhetoric, literary devices, and whatever else strikes you as important in remembering the piece of literature for further discussion. Post its are a great way to keep track of ideas as well.

*A Streetcar Named Desire* Tennessee Williams  
and the Literary Terms Handout

**ASSIGNMENT:** Read the play *A Streetcar Named Desire* and answer the questions. Questions will be collected and graded in **first week** of school. In addition, study the list of literary terms needed for analysis and be prepared to take a test on terms when you return. Final assessment for the summer assignment will result in an exam and at least one essay based on the play during the first two weeks of school.

**Happy reading! Have a great summer!**

Mrs. D'Amico

Name:

*A Streetcar Named Desire*

**Question Guidelines: Answer 1- 2 thoroughly. Minimum of 3 paragraphs for each.**

SYMBOL: see literary terms list for further description

THEME (Overall meaning of work): see literary terms list for further description

1. A symbol is an object, action, or event that represents something or that creates a range of associations beyond itself. Focus on **one** symbol and analyze how that symbol functions in the work and what it reveals about the characters or themes of the work
2. In many works of literature, a physical journey—the literal movement from one place to another plays a central role and aids in the meaning of the work as a whole (connect to a theme on human condition). Discuss this journey using specific scenes from the play.

**Question Guidelines: Answer 3-5 in full detailed sentences.**

MOTIF: see literary terms list for further description

3. The distinguishing trait of the play is its essential conflict between illusion and reality. Discuss this in relation to Blanche and Stanley's complex relationship.
4. Characterize Blanche based on her speech, stage directions of her mannerism, her reactions to others, what we learn about her background, her dress and her name.
5. Discuss one motif and explain what it is and how it functions. (Light, Music, Colors)

**Question 6: Answer thoroughly. Plot details can be bullet point but description of why scene stands out and thematic connection needs to be in paragraph(s) form. Play is divided into 11 scenes**

6. After you have finished the play, write a reaction about **ONE** of the most memorable scenes for you. Include in your reaction the following:
  - Bullet points for key components: include characters, events, setting, details
  - 3 lines that encapsulate the essence of the scene and why
  - A description of why this particular scene stands out amongst others
  - What the scene reveals about the nature of man (connect to a theme on human condition/nature of man)

**Note: This is independent work. No two assignments should be the same. Copying from each other or from internet sources will result in a zero. Answers should be typed (Times New Roman, 12 point)**

## **AP Literary Terms and Vocabulary to know**

You will need to identify and understand certain literary concepts for written literary analysis and for the multiple choice section on the exam. There will be a test on these terms when you return to school in September.

### **Diction: the word choices made by the writer**

1. **Elevated**, formal, scholarly -free of slang, jargon, idioms- often contains polysyllabic words, sophisticated syntax, elegant word choice
2. **Colloquial** -conversational language, casual or informal- includes simple words, idioms, slang, jargon, contractions, standard language.
3. **Low** - vulgate, unschooled everyday language- non-standard expressions, often regional

#### Aspects of Diction

- a. **Connotation**: aspect of diction. The implications of a word or phrase, not a literal definition
  - b. **Denotation**: the dictionary definition of a word
  - c. **Didactic**: for the primary aim of teaching or instructing
  - d. **Euphemism**: an indirect, less offensive way of saying something considered unpleasant (“passed away” instead of “died”)
  - e. **Epithet**: word or phrase used in place of a person’s name or in association with it (Alexander, the great. Ms. Know-it-all)
4. **Allusion** - reference to something outside the work
    - a. Literary
    - b. Mythological
    - c. Biblical
    - d. Historical
  5. **Apostrophe** -addressing the dead as if living; animating something inanimate; to the absent as if present. *Death, be not proud*
  6. **Conceit**: surprising comparison between 2 very different things (special kind of metaphor or extended analogy) ie: comparing love to a flea
  7. **Elegy**: a poem about a dead person or thing “in memory of”
  8. **Enjambment** : word or phrase that carries over a line break without punctuation
  9. **Foil**: The character’s main function to offer contrast. It helps accentuate the main character’s traits/behavior. Blanche and Stanley in *Streetcar*
  10. **Heroic couplet**: a rhyming pair of lines. *Be our guest, be our guest  
Put our service to the test*

11. **Imagery** - images or sensory details
- Tactile –description of texture or touch (*the air was like moist, black velvet*)
  - Visual – description of what can be seen (*the golden-hued sunset*)
  - Auditory- description of sound (*the wind whispered in the trees*)
  - Olfactory – description of smell (*the fragrant, sweet aroma of flowers*)
  - Gustatory – description of taste (*hot spicy chile salsa burned my tongue*)
12. **Juxtaposition:** normally associated ideas, words or phrases are placed next to each other for comparison. It highlights the contrasts in the two.
13. **Metonymy** – using a word or phrase to represent something else: a part for a whole *The oval office, The crown*
14. **Motif** – repetition or variation of image or idea to develop theme or character *Light and Dark; Summer and Winter; appearance vs reality; objects that reappear – birds, colors*
15. **Ode:** A lyric poem often praises people, the arts of music, poetry, natural , or abstract concepts.
16. **Paradox** – statement that contradicts itself and still seems true *It was the best of times, it was the worst of times*
17. **Sonnet** – a lyrical poem mostly written in iambic pentameter expressing personal feelings or thoughts of speaker. It is emotional.
- English or Shakespearean: 3 quatrains rhymed *abab cdcd efef* and a couplet *gg*. Quatrains develop a thought and the couplet comments on it.
  - Italian or Petrarchan: 8 lines (called an octave) developing a thought rhymed *abbaabba* and 6 lines (the sestet) and any variation of *cdecde*
  - Spenserian: 3 quatrains *abab bcbc cdcd* and a couplet *ee*. In English verse, "alexandrine" is typically used to mean "iambic hexameter" In English verse, "alexandrine" is typically used to mean "iambic hexameter":
18. **Symbol** – sign or mark that takes on emotional meaning. It's the psychological state of a character. Symbols are fluid and flexible. Related to imagery but more fixed
19. **Synesthesia** – describing one sensation in terms of another *blue note, loud shirt*
20. **Synecdoche** – specific form of metonymy. *Wheels for car, all hands on Deck*
21. **Soliloquy** –a lone character speaking his/her thoughts out aloud
22. **Theme:** central message, main idea or meaning of a work. An idea the author wants to convey about a subject. Most themes are not directly conveyed but implied. (Love is a subject. What does the narrator want to say about love? = theme. Usually relates to human nature/human condition.

*ie: Humans are ruled by opposing forces. Mankind's duality in nature recognizes the possibility of the coexistence of good and evil*

23. **Tone:** Effect the subject matter or language description has for a speaker, narrator, writer. Do not discuss tone without using diction to describe
24. **Tragedy:** a noble character who falls from grace. Usually that fall is brought about by some tragic flaw (**hamartia**) on the part of the hero, like ambition, greed, or pride. But it can also just come from bad circumstances, unfortunate coincidence, and rotten luck. *ie: Streetcar Named Desire, Macbeth, Frankenstein*
25. **Understatement:** express a thought or impression by underemphasizing the extent to which a statement may be true. Understatement is the opposite of **hyperbole** and is frequently used for its comedic value. Euphemism is a related term making something negative sound less negative but the goal of understatement is to give something less importance.
- a. He kicked the bucket (as euphemism you are making death sound like something lighthearted or silly rather than serious.
  - b. He passed away (understatement used to shield someone from the harsh truth of death)

## **PART II: Common vocabulary on the exam**

1. Cacophonous
2. Caustic
3. Disdainful
4. Dispassionate
5. Euphonic/Euphony
6. Evoke/Evocative
7. Fervent
8. Hubris
9. Idyllic
10. Jovial
11. Laudatory
12. Ominous
13. Pastoral
14. Resigned
15. Reverent
16. Sanguine
17. Sardonic
18. Somber
19. Sublime
20. Wry

