Completing the following short writing assignments will let you practice your literary analysis. Whenever I ask for an example from literature, you may use short stories, novels, or plays. If your literary repertoire is thin and undeveloped, use the Appendix to jog your memory or to select additional works to explore. At the very least, watch some of the “Movies to Read” that are listed on pages 318-320. Please note that your responses should be paragraphs—not pages.

Regarding length, one paragraph of four to six sentences for each set of questions will do.

**Due Tuesday, September 6**

**Introduction: How'd He Do That?**
How do memory, symbol, and pattern affect the reading of literature? How does the recognition of patterns make it easier to read complicated literature? Discuss a time when your appreciation of a literary work was enhanced by understanding symbol or pattern.

**Chapter 1 -- Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not)**
List the five aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to something you have read (or viewed) in the form used on pages 3-5.

**Chapter 2 -- Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion**
Choose a meal from a literary work and apply the ideas of Chapter 2 to this literary depiction.

**Chapter 3: --Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires**
What are the essentials of the Vampire story? Apply this to a literary work you have read or a film you have viewed.

**Due Monday, September 12**

**Chapter 4:--Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?**
Define intertextuality. Discuss 2-3 examples that have helped you in reading specific works.

**Chapter 5 -- When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare...**
Discuss a work that you are familiar with that alludes to or reflects Shakespeare. Show how the author uses this connection thematically. Read pages 40-41 carefully. In these pages, Foster shows how Fugard reflects Shakespeare through both plot and theme. In your discussion, focus on theme.

**Chapter 6 -- ...Or the Bible**
Read "Araby" (attached). Discuss two Biblical allusions that Foster does not mention. Look at the example of the "two great jars." Be creative and imaginative in these connections.

**Chapter 7-- Hanseldee and Greteldum**
Think of a work of literature that reflects a fairy tale. Discuss the parallels. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation?

**Chapter 8-- It's Greek to Me--**
Discuss a recent novel or film (or even video game) that alludes to a Greek myth.
Due Monday, September 19

Chapter 9-- It's More Than Just Rain or Snow
Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work, not in terms of plot.

Chapter 10--Never Stand Next to the Hero
Explain why Foster says “It takes a village to murder a character” (89). What does this quote have to do with the title of this chapter?

Chapter 11 --...More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence
Present examples of the two kinds of violence found in literature. Show how the effects are different.

Chapter 12 -- Is That a Symbol?
Use the process described on page 113 and investigate a symbolic object in something you’ve read or watched. Be creative, but don’t go overboard.

Chapter 13 -- It's All Political
Assume that Foster is right and "it is all political." Use his criteria to show a literary work is political.

Chapter 14 -- Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too
Apply the criteria on page 126 to a major character in a significant literary work. Try to choose a character that will have many matches. This is a particularly apt tool for analyzing films -- for example, Star Wars, Cool Hand Luke, Excalibur, Malcolm X, Braveheart, Spartacus, Gladiator and Ben-Hur.

Due Monday, September 26

Chapter 15 -- Flights of Fancy
Select a literary work in which flight signifies escape or freedom. Explain in detail.

Chapter 16 -- It's All About Sex... & Chapter 17 -- ...Except the Sex
OK...the sex chapters. The key idea from this chapter is that "scenes in which sex is coded rather than explicit can work at multiple levels and sometimes be more intense that literal depictions" (149). In other words, sex is often suggested with much more art and effort than it is described, and, if the author is doing his job, it reflects and creates theme or character. Choose a novel or movie in which sex is suggested, but not described, and discuss how the relationship is suggested and how this implication affects the theme or develops character.

Chapter 18 -- If She Comes Up, It's Baptism
Think of a “baptism scene” from a significant literary work or film. How was the character different after the experience? Discuss.

Chapter 19 -- Geography Matters…
Discuss at least two different aspects of a specific literary work that Foster would classify under “geography.”

Chapter 20 -- ...So Does Season
Find a poem that mentions a specific season. Then discuss how the poet uses the season in a meaningful, traditional, or unusual way. (Submit a copy of the poem with your analysis.)
**Due Monday, October 3**

**Interlude -- One Story**
Write your own definition for archetype. Then identify an archetypal story and apply it to a literary work with which you are familiar.

**Chapter 21 -- Marked for Greatness**
Figure out Harry Potter's scar. If you aren't familiar with Harry Potter, select another character with a physical imperfection and analyze its implications for characterization.

**Chapter 22 -- He's Blind for a Reason, You Know & Chapter 23 -- It's Never Just Heart Disease. . .And Rarely Just Illness**
Recall two characters who died of a disease in a literary work. Consider how these deaths reflect the "principles governing the use of disease in literature" (222-224). Discuss the effectiveness of the death as related to plot, theme, or symbolism.

**Chapter 24 -- Don't Read with Your Eyes**
After reading Chapter 24, choose a scene or episode from a novel, play or epic written before the twentieth century. Contrast how it could be viewed by a reader from the twenty-first century with how it might be viewed by a contemporary reader. Focus on specific assumptions that the author makes, assumptions that would not make it in this century.

**Due Monday, October 10**

**Chapter 25--It's My Symbol and I'll Cry If I Want To**
Summarize Foster’s ideas in this chapter.

**Chapter 26 -- Is He Serious? And Other Ironies**
Select an ironic literary work and explain the multivocal nature of the irony in the work.

**Chapter 27 -- A Test Case**
Read "The Garden Party" by Katherine Mansfield, the short story starting on page 262. What does the essay that follows comparing Laura with Persephone add to your appreciation of Mansfield's story?

**POSTLUDE: Who’s in Charge Here?**
Who is Roland Barthes and what is his article “The Death of the Author” about? Answer the question--"Who’s in Charge Here?"

**Envoi**
Choose a motif not discussed in this book (as the horse reference on pages 304-305) and note its appearance in three or four different works. What does this idea seem to signify? What does “envoi” mean?
In this practical and amusing guide to literature, Thomas C. Foster shows how easy and gratifying it is to unlock those hidden truths, and to discover a world where a road leads to a quest; a shared meal may signify a communion; and rain, whether cleansing or destructive, is never just rain. Ranging from major themes to literary models, narrative devices, and form, How to Read Literature Like a Professor is the perfect companion for making your reading experience more enriching, satisfying, and fun. About the Author Tom Foster is Professor of English at the University of Michigan, Flint, where How to Read Literature Like a Professor is a New York Times bestseller by Thomas C. Foster that was published in 2003. The author suggests interpretations of themes, concepts, and possible symbols commonly found in literature. The book brands itself as "A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines," and is commonly used throughout advanced English courses in America. The book also includes sample interpretations of Katherine Mansfield's short story, "The Garden Party".