

Your summer reading assignment requires both reading and writing. Read the following:

### Book

- Select chapters from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster (available online and in bookstores)
  - Chapter 2: “Nice to Eat With You: Acts of Communion”
  - Chapter 14: “Yes, She’s a Christ Figure, Too”
  - Chapter 19: “Geography Matters...”
  - Chapter 22: “He’s Blind for a Reason, You Know”
  - Chapter 26: “Is He Serious? And Other Ironies”

### Short Stories

- [“Sonny’s Blues”](#) by James Baldwin
- [“A Good Man Is Hard to Find”](#) by Flannery O’Connor
- [“A Temporary Matter”](#) by Jhumpa Lahiri

This packet also contains a written component, as explained in the subsequent pages.

### Due Date

All of your work is due on the first day of class without exception. Late schedule changes do not excuse late or missing work. You—not your teachers, your counselors, or your parents—are responsible for making sure your work is complete and ready on the first day of class.

### Academic Integrity

This assignment should serve as an example of the serious, analytical, and scholarly work we will be doing in AP Literature. Should you find the summer reading tasks overwhelming, you may wish to examine other senior English courses. Should you find the desire to *plagiarize* overwhelming, you should definitely reevaluate your course readiness and college aspirations, as such behavior can and has resulted in failure of the assignment and/or course, removal from NHS, and—at the collegiate level—expulsion from university coursework. We cannot stress enough the importance of completing the assignment entirely and producing your independent, authentic work. **Do not complete this assignment using peers, tutors, the internet, artificial intelligence, or any other sources. We take academic integrity very seriously, and failure to complete authentic, original work will result in failure on this assignment.**

**Part I: Identifying Connections, Taking Notes**

**“Sonny’s Blues” by James Baldwin**

First, read Foster’s chapter “Geography Matters...” Then, read “Sonny’s Blues,” annotating it as necessary, and complete this chart, which we expect to be **thorough** and **comprehensive**, covering **varied and multiple places in the story**. Just a few entries is not enough. The charts should help you with the writing prompts on the final page of this handout.

<b>Quote passages from <i>Foster’s chapter</i> that help in analyzing the setting of “Sonny’s Blues”</b>	<b>Specific evidence from the <i>story</i>. For some Foster quotes, you’ll want to include several different quotes from the story—again, be thorough.</b>
1) “Joseph Conrad, England’s greatest Polish writer, sends his characters into hearts of darkness (as he calls one tale of a trip into Africa) to discover the darkness in their own hearts” (178-179).	1) Sonny says, “I’m all right now and I think I’ll be all right. But I can’t forget where I’ve been...and what I’ve been” (43).

Quote passages from *Foster's chapter* that help in analyzing the setting of "Sonny's Blues"

Specific evidence from the *story*. For some Foster quotes, you'll want to include several different quotes from the story—again, be thorough.

## “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”

First, read Foster’s chapters “Yes, She Is a Christ Figure, Too” and “Is He Serious? And Other Ironies.” Then, read “A Good Man Is Hard to Find,” annotating it as necessary, and complete this chart, which we expect to be **thorough** and **comprehensive**, covering **varied and multiple places in the story**. Just a few entries is not enough. The charts should help you with the writing prompts on the final page of this handout.

<b>Of the Christ-figure traits that <i>Foster</i> identifies, which does the Misfit invert or warp? List as many as apply from his chapter.</b>	<b>Specific evidence from the <i>story</i></b>

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## “A Temporary Matter”

First, read Foster’s chapters “He’s Blind for a Reason, You Know” and “Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion.” Then, complete this chart, which we expect to be **thorough** and **comprehensive**, covering **varied and multiple places in Foster’s chapters**. Just a few entries is not enough. The charts should help you with the writing prompts on the final page of this handout.

<b>“He’s Blind for a Reason”</b> While no one in this story is actually blind, Foster’s ideas still apply. Quote key ideas in Foster’s chapter on blindness that communicate his central arguments about the varied ways in which blindness, sight, light, or dark can function in literature.	<b>“Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion”</b> Quote key ideas in Foster’s chapter on meals that communicate his central arguments about the varied ways in which meals / food can function in literature.

**“He’s Blind for a Reason”** While no one in this story is actually blind, Foster’s ideas still apply. Quote key ideas in Foster’s chapter on blindness that communicate his central arguments about the varied ways in which blindness, sight, light, or dark can function in literature.

**“Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion”** Quote key ideas in Foster’s chapter on meals that communicate his central arguments about the varied ways in which meals / food can function in literature.

**Part II: Paragraph Response—complete after the charts:** For each question, write at least one AEC paragraph. Assertions cannot be facts: they must state an argument. We expect *abundant*—and properly formatted—specific textual evidence to back up your assertion. Keep in mind the value of partial quotes integrated seamlessly into your own writing. Your commentary should engage with the evidence and explain how it proves your assertion.

Your responses to these paragraphs must be typed in Microsoft Word, Google Docs, or a similar word-processing program. Please do not type your paragraphs in Notability. Bring printed copies of your work to class on the first day of school, and ensure your electronic versions are immediately available.

If you've completed your charts thoughtfully, they should be useful to you in answering the questions below. Remember that while analysis is the emphasis, we expect careful proofreading to ensure professional, polished mastery of English grammatical and wording conventions.

**“Sonny’s Blues”—Answer one of the following two questions:**

1. How does the Harlem setting shape the narrator’s attitude towards his brother? To answer this question effectively, discuss evidence related to the setting as well as evidence related to the narrator’s attitude toward Sonny.
2. How does the Harlem setting shape Sonny’s struggles and triumphs? To answer this question effectively, discuss evidence related to the setting as well as evidence related to Sonny’s struggles and triumphs.

**“A Good Man Is Hard To Find”—Answer one of the following two questions:**

3. Foster says that Christ figures in literature offer redemption, hope, and miracle while helping us deepen our sense of a character’s sacrifice. But he also says that Christ figures might be used ironically “to make the character look smaller rather than greater.” By presenting the Misfit ironically (as you evaluated in your chart in the earlier part of the assignment), what does O’Connor reveal about his [the Misfit’s] view of the world?
4. The grandmother looks back to an idyllic past and complains that the world’s values aren’t what they used to be—that, among other things, “a *good* man is hard to find.” Yet the grandmother’s values aren’t necessarily “good,” either. Explain what the grandmother thinks it means to be “good,” and make an argument for how O’Connor uses the irony of the grandmother’s character to critique her [the grandmother’s] values.

**“A Temporary Matter”—Answer one of the following two questions:**

5. Choose a meal from this story. Explain the symbolic significance of the meal, using evidence from both the story and from Foster’s chapter “Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion.”
6. Foster’s chapter “He’s Blind for a Reason” explores the symbolic significance of sight and blindness, as well as the closely related symbolism of light and dark. Write a paragraph that explains how Lahiri uses the symbolic meanings of sight/blindness/light/dark to convey something important about the relationship between Shoba and Shukumar. Include quotes from both the story and from Foster’s chapter.