

AP LIT SUMMER READING 2021

Hi, and welcome to AP English Literature and Composition. This year's summer reading novel is *Life of Pi*, by Yann Martell. Read the novel and answer the prompts. Enjoy, and see you in September.

Part 1: Journals

Journals are an important part of the AP class. Their main purpose is to record your immediate response to a written work. Journals may be handwritten. The idea behind the journal writing is to reflect, or think deeply, about what you have just read. It is not supposed to be a summary. It is your thoughts. Your response is a valid one if it can be supported by details from the novel, so there are really no “wrong” answers. Try to push yourself to write about one handwritten page for each one. It's easiest to write them right after you finish reading.

1. Look back at chapters 4, 9, 10, and 14. Discuss Pi's thoughts on zoos and their purpose. Zoos in general are a subject of controversy (as Pi points out). Are his arguments convincing? Bring in some examples showing why or why not. Feel free to make connections to your own experiences with the Buffalo Zoo and others you may have visited.
2. Reread chapter 85. Discuss how Martell uses such literary devices as diction and imagery to show Pi's complex reaction to the thunder storm.
3. On page 317, Pi asks a question. Answer it and explain your answer.

Part 2: Essay. CHOOSE ONE!!! (Suggested time - 40 minutes)

- A. Pauline Hopkins wrote, “And, after all, our surroundings influence our lives and characters as much as fate, destiny or any supernatural agency.”

Reflect on how cultural, physical, or geographical surroundings shape psychological or moral traits in a character from *Life of Pi*. Then write a well organized essay in which you analyze how surroundings affect this character and illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole.

- B. In *Life of Pi*, a physical journey - the literal movement from one place to another - plays a central role. Discuss how the journey adds to the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

Thoughts on the “work as a whole.”

When looking at the whole, you’re not necessarily writing about every single aspect of the book. Rather, you’re thinking about how some part of a book contributes to the overall experience of the novel - how do you come to see the novel’s themes? Its mood? Does what you are examining contribute to how characters change or grow over the course of the book? Does it significantly affect the plot or the novel’s outcomes? Your essay should be about 400 - 600 words, not terribly long, so it’s important to focus on one idea in detail rather than trying to look at a lot of different things.

Be sure to :

Have a clear thesis statement in which you state a “defensible” claim. This just means what you want to say about a work. You defend your claim using details from the novel.

Develop your body paragraphs with details and explanations of your ideas. The goal is to show what you think. It should be easy to follow your line of reasoning.

Use language and a writing style that are appropriate for a school assignment. Adopt a sophisticated, academic tone. You are free to write the journals in a more casual, conversational way.

Proofread your work before you turn it in.

Essays are due Monday, September 20.