

English 12AP Summer Reading Assignment

All seniors entering English 12AP in the fall must read Edith Hamilton's *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*, which retells myths from classical literature. Students must complete the following assignment.

- As you read, keep a reading log or take notes in a way that will help you to remember the characters and storylines of each myth.
- Once you have finished reading and have become familiar with the myths in Hamilton's collection, find a poem (*not* lines excerpted from a longer work) written *originally in English* and *before 1950* that alludes directly to one of those myths.
- Be careful to follow these additional guidelines:
 - 1) Be sure that the myth appears not as a brief reference but as an extended allusion.
 - 2) Be sure that the myth is not simply re-told in the whole poem.
 - 3) Be sure that the poem alludes directly to the myth and does not merely parallel or somehow remind you of the events or characters.
 - 4) Be sure that the poet uses the allusion to achieve his own purpose, to enhance the larger meaning of his own poem, a poem that is about something other than the myth. For example, Byron's poem "Prometheus" does not use the myth as an allusion but as the source for the poet's re-telling of the story; that kind of treatment makes the poem *inappropriate* for this assignment. Another example is Poe's "To Helen"; it is not the retelling of the story of Helen of Troy but the allusion to Psyche that would make this poem useful for this assignment. It would remain for you to explain, however, how that reference is an *extended* allusion that somehow enhances the meaning of the whole poem. (But, of course, now that we've given you the example, the poem is off-limits for this assignment.)
- Write a response of approximately 300 words in which you 1) explain why you would call this an *extended* allusion, 2) explain which parts of the original myth the poet seems to be reminding us of (either explicitly or implicitly), and 3) explain how those parts of the myth help the poet to make the larger point of the poem.
- This response must be typed, double-spaced, using 12 point Times font, with standard one-inch margins.
- Include a copy of the poem you have chosen to discuss.
- The response will be collected on the first day of class in September.

Hamilton's collection is available at local bookstores and libraries as well as through on-line merchants.

If you are unable to procure a copy of *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*, you may use, as an alternative, *Bulfinch's Mythology*, which—though longer and more challenging—you will find readily available in a number of editions and on line at the following address: <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/bulfinch/thomas/b93fab/>.