**AP Literature of Holly Springs High School   
Final Reflection Activities**

**Directions**: During the last weeks of class during your final year of high school, you will reflect a bit on your life thus far and on your future by completing the following assignments and gathering them in a formal portfolio with professional binding. Be prepared to share some assignments in a class and group setting. Every assignment should be:

* Started on a new page
* A thoughtful response to the assigned topic (most entries will be at least ONE page)
* Revised as necessary
* Neatly and legibly written or typed
* In order according to this assignment booklet
* Titled on the top line
* Numbered by assignment (not page) in the upper right corner
* Completely professional and devoid of errors

**REQUIRED ITEMS (you must complete and include ALL these items in your portfolio):**

**COVER PAGE (5 points)**

The cover page must include a picture that represents its contents. It can be a collage, a picture, an original drawing, a painting, etc. Also, it must include: “An Autobiography: <First Name> <Last Name>

**TABLE OF CONTENTS (5 points)**

List the assignment number and title of ALL your assignments in your autobiography. Title and number each contents page.

**INTRODUCTION (10 points)**

Explain the significance of your title, making clear why it is relevant to your life in particular. Also include a brief description of this writing project and its purposes—in your own words.

**EPILOGUE (10 points)**

Do not complete this until you have completed all other assignments as it is meant to be a reflective piece. Imagine that a complete stranger just picked up a portfolio. The stranger reads it from beginning to end. How would this stranger conceive the author? What kind of person appears to have filled these pages? Write a character sketch of the person captures in these pages from an outsider’s point of view. Refer to specific pieces of writing to support the stranger’s impression of the author (you, of course). \*Include this after your last entry of the portfolio.

1. **Eulogy or Legacy Speech (20)**

Here at the beginning of your life after high school is a great time for you to start making plans for your future, but not just the future in terms of what you want to do, but also who you want to be and what kind of lasting impression you want to leave on the world. For this assignment, you will write your own eulogy (or, if that is too morbid for you, write a speech someone would give about you at your 90th birthday party). What do you want people to be able to say about you, your accomplishments, your personality, your impact on those around you and your role in their lives? What do you want people to “miss” about you if you were gone? This is supposed to get you to think about the person you want to be. You will give this speech in class on the last day of class.

1. **This I Believe** <http://thisibelieve.org/> **(20 points)**

In the 1950’s, journalist Edward R. Murrow hosted a radio series call *This I Believe*, in which people shared their most central belief(s). Recently, National Public Radio has resurrected the series and asks listeners to submit essays in which they profess the “core values that guide their daily lives.” Visit the *This I Believe* website and click the “Explore” tab to read the essay that other people from all ages and walks of life have submitted; then visit the “Participate” tab to read “Essay Guidelines” as you prepare to write your own essay. Compose your own statement of belief in approximately 350 to 500 words.

1. **Year in Search** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVwHCGAr\_OE**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVwHCGAr_OE) **(20 points)**

How could you tell a story of your personal experience without writing a narrative of event? Our lives have become dominated by electronics and media, and what we search for, what we pictures we post, what stories we read reveal a lot about our lives and our world. For this assignment, create a video, a storyboard, or a collection of a posts/searches from a variety of sources in order to showcase the events of your life and the world this year. Make sure that it showcases your life, interests, and the parts of the world around you that you are interested in.

1. **Contemplative Letters to Influential Adults (20 points)**

As you face the final weeks of you high school career, write two reflective letters—one letter to your parent(s) or an adult who has served as a guide in your life and one letter to a faculty or staff member at Holly Springs High School who has had a positive impact on your education. You will make two copies of each letter—the original to be given to your recipients the last week of classes and the other copy to be included in your portfolio. Consider including the following elements in your letter:

* Gratitude for their assistance and nurturing
* Regrets and apologies for mistakes
* Examples of their influence on your life
* Memories of pivotal events with specific detail
* Plans for the future
* Impending changes in your and their lives

1. **Advice to Holly Springs High School’s Class of 2021 <** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTJ7AzBIJoI**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTJ7AzBIJoI)**> (20 points)**

Based on your own wisdom as graduation candidates of the Class of 2017, compose a list of helpful hints for next year’s entering freshmen. Provide advice for these students so that they may be in your position four years from now. Use your own experience—your successes and your failures—to guide the Class of 2020. Your words do not need to be written as a formal letter; instead, use the example of “Everybody’s Free to Wear Sunscreen” (attached). In following this song as a model, begin with your most important piece of advice, which you repeat at the end.

**CHOICE ITEMS (You must complete at least 6 of the following items and include in your portfolio; be sure to clearly mark each entry as its corresponding number below. (10 points each, total 60 points)**

1. **Personal Book Choice (This counts as 2 projects, if you complete it. Please make sure you verify the book with me first)**

Throughout your high school career, you have been told what books to read. You have been exposed to books from around the world, from different places in time, and even from worlds that were wildly different from our own. For this assignment, you will choose a book of literary merit (something that could show up on an AP exam) that you have always wanted to read, but couldn’t. Then, you will complete an abbreviated Major Works Data Sheet for that book. You must include the following: 1) Title, Author, Genre 2) Summary of the book 3) Major character list 4) Symbols and themes 5) Important quotes and explanations 6) After you finish reading it, answer: Does it deserve to be called a “work of literary merit”? Why or why not?

1. **When I was Eight-and-Ten**

Contemplate when you were one year (or two or five or eight years) ago and how you are a different person today because of a hard lesson that you had to learn the hard way. Using Housman’s “When I was One-and-Twenty” (attached) as your model, write a two-stanza ballad about the advice you did not heed and the tragic or heartbreaking lesson you learned as a result.

1. **If I Had High School to Live Over**

Begin this crucial week in your life by reflecting on the past four years. Read Erma Bombeck’s essay “If I Had My Life to Live Over” (attached) and use it as a model to honestly and seriously evaluate your high school career. Following Bombeck’s model, compose a list of the ways you would have lived your high school life differently if you could go back in time and begin again as a freshman.

1. **Argumentative Speech**

This year, we have discussed life, literature, society, and more. This is your chance to write a speech that makes some sort of argument about life, politics, society, etc. Urge us to be aware of something, to take action, or to stop something. Considering all of the topics that we have discussed this year, or you have discussed in other classes or with friends, pick something that you are passionate about. Then, write a 3-4 minute speech.

1. **Personal Alphabet**

Browse through a dictionary, looking for adjectives to describe yourself. Know the meaning of the words you select and be able to explain how each word you’ve chosen fits you. Choose at least ONE adjective for each letter of the alphabet. Be sure to choose the adjective form of words. For example, “excite” is a verb and “excitable” is an adjective. “Exciting” is a participle so it can be used as an adjective…BUT “excitable” and “exciting” mean very different things.

1. **Likes/Dislikes List**

Make TWO columns, one titled “Likes” and the other “Dislikes” and list from TEN to FIFTEEN specific items in each column regarding items/events about Holly Springs High School. Avoid naming specific classmates and teachers by generalizing. For example, “that crazy teacher that’s making me write a stupid biography” instead of my name!

1. **Sensory Experiences**

The five senses allow us to perceive whatever is tangible, or concrete. A sensory experience is something we can taste, touch, smell, see, or hear. For example, ice-cold watermelon, hot dogs sizzling over a charcoal fire, mosquito bites, fireworks, and the music of the ice-cream wagon are sensory experiences I associate with a Fourth of July picnic. Describe a specific time and place which recalls rich sensory experiences for you. Include at least TWO details that appeal to each of the FIVE senses.

1. **One Medium Suitcase**

Imagine that you are leaving home forever and you can only take what you will fit in one medium-sized suitcase with you. Specifically, what will you take with you and why? Explain.

1. **Metaphorical Definitions**

This kind of definition helps make abstract words easier to understand by giving a specific concrete example. A famous metaphorical definition is “Happiness is a warm puppy.” For you, happiness may be something very different—a raise in your allowance, a banana split, a room of your own. Write metaphorical definitions of TEN different abstract nouns. Your concrete example must be something that you can sense—taste, touch, smell, see, or hear. Your definitions should follow the format below:

*METAPHORICAL DEFINITION = ABSTRATCT NOUN + IS + CONCRETE EXAMPLE*

1. **Room Sweet Room**

We are territorial animals, instinctively seeking a place we can call our own. The rooms we live in and how we decorate them are as revealing as our clothing. Examine your own room, not just by listing the things in it, but by conveying the feelings you have for the room and items in it.

1. **Personal Metaphors**

Make a list of metaphorical comparisons. Think, “If I were an animal, what kind of animal would I be?” For each item, write the general label and then your specific comparison. Be realistic, be somewhat honest, and be able to explain your choices. Don’t say you are a rose if you’re really a daisy.

1. Animal

2. Car

3. Article of Clothing

4. Day of the Week

5. Food

6. Color

7. Movie

8. Fragrance

9. Types of Building

10. Plant

11. Musical Instrument

12. Geometric Shape

13. Piece of Furniture

14. Song

15. Season of the Year

16. Television Character

17. Cartoon or Comic Character

18. Appliance of Machinery

19. Natural Phenomenon

20. Word

1. **Symbolic Recipe**

Write a symbolic recipe for yourself. This means your ingredients are not blood, muscle, bone, and a hank of hair, but abstract qualities and personality traits (like patience, friendliness, humor). What is really necessary to create you. Follow standard recipe format: a list of ingredients and exact measurements, followed by a paragraph of instructions, advice about the proper sequence of the steps, and any tips or warnings.

1. **Unfinished Sentences**

Complete each of the following sentences by expanding them into short paragraphs. As always, be specific.

1. I usually worry about…

2. I feel angry when…

3. I’m moody when…

4. I’m happiest when…

5. I feel confident when…

6. I feel frustrated when…

7. I feel depressed when…

8. I am comfortable when…

9. I feel nervous when…

10. I feel sentimental when…

1. **Personal Symbol**

Write about an object that has special symbolic meaning for you. It might be a gift from someone you love, an award of which you are proud, a souvenir from a place you miss, a childhood toy you still treasure, a family photograph, whatever. Describe the object, appealing to the senses as appropriate and giving specific details. Also explain what it symbolizes to you.

1. **Map of Life**

Draw a stylized map, beginning with your birth and ending with the present. Along the way, include little labels or diagrams of what you remember as important events, places, and people in your life. Keep all items in order, but leave enough space between individual items to fill in as you think of additional information. Write small since if must fit on ONE page. You may use branching paths or a legend.

1. **Synectics**

Synectics makes the familiar strange and the strange familiar. It is the basis for of all metaphor and involves the process of creative problem-solving. Each of the following sets of questions ask for choices between unrelated answers—answers which can be logically related somehow—and yet, there is no single correct answer but correct answers would rephrase the question as part of the answer. Think carefully about the choices offered, make a choice, and then explain your reasons for choosing as you have. It is your explanation which proves your answer “right” or “wrong”. Answer at least TEN.

1. Which is wiser? A pen or pencil?

2. Which is easier to forgive? A street or a sidewalk?

3. Which is smarter? A clock or a calendar?

4. Which is easier to teach? A question or an answer?

5. Which is like a contest? A cloud or a sunset?

6. Which is more fearful? New or old?

7. Which is like a promise? Mathematics or science?

8. Which is more difficult? A dream or a nightmare?

9. Which is braver? An hour or a year?

10. Which has more pride? An entrance or an exit?

11. Which is easier to close? A road or a map?

12. Which is like a legend? A mirror or a glass?

13. Which is more suspenseful? Rain or snow?

14. Which has less charm? A signature or an autograph?

15. Which is more trustworthy? History or literature?

16. Which is more useful? A friend or an enemy?

17. Which is sadder? Seek or find?

18. Which costs more? A home or a house?

19. Which is happier? Music or art?

20. Which is like a valentine? The truth or a lie?

1. **These Words Belong to Me**

Make a list of words which have special power and magic. Think of common words with uncommon meanings, or even strange new words which allow you to think a new kind of thought. For example, do you know what “serendipity” means? Find out why it’s so wonderful. What ironic about a “scar”? List and define at least TEN words. For each word, explain why this particular word belongs to you.

1. **In Other Words**

Try expressing yourself through someone else’s words. Select at least TEN “Quotable Quotes” which express your philosophy of life. Choose quotations which represent your thought on several aspects of life—not only love, but also faith, success, integrity, character, friendship, etc. List the TEN you have, the attribution (who said it) and a brief explanation of how it fits you.

1. **My Own List of Lists**

The famous book “The Book of Lists” lists facts from history, literature, science, entertainment, etc. For your list of lists, I have selected more personal topics. Write the general labels for each category, and underline it. Then list from SIX to TEN specific items under each category.

1. People who have influenced me…

2. Places that make me happy…

3. Places I would like to go…

4. Things in people which I like…

5. Things in people which I dislike…

6. Things that worry me…

7. Things I would like to know how to do…

8. Things that have moved me…

9. Ideas that intrigue me…

10. My personal favorites…

1. **Look Who I Look Up To**

Think of three people of established reputation whom you admire. You may need to do some formal research on these people, so don’t choose your Aunt Helen unless she’s in the encyclopedia. You must be specific. If you admire Martin Luther King, Jr., saying he fought for civil rights isn’t enough. Exactly what did he do? Devote one solid paragraph to each person, telling what each person has done to deserve your admiration.

1. **Remembering the Child**

Imagine yourself a sweet little toddler. How did others see you when you were very little? Interview someone who knew you as a child—one of your parents or grandparents, an older sibling, an aunt of uncle, for example. Write about their favorite memory of you. Some possibilities are when you learned how to walk or ride a bike, a memorable sports game or musical event, a visit to grandparents, a special birthday, a fulfilling and relaxing evening at home, or anything else that stands out.

1. **Memorable Event**

Include a ticket stub, program, or some other tangible evidence to represent an event you experienced this year that in some way was memorable. Describe the event, with who you attended, what was special about it, if you would do it again, etc. For example, you might describe a concert or your favorite group, a special movie you anticipated, a family reunion, or a birthday party. Don’t forget the evidence.

1. **Deck of 52**

The enormously popular “52 Deck” series offers whimsically illustrated adventures and activities—52 Alternatives to TV, 52 Cheap Dates, 52 Relaxing Rituals, 52 Things to Do in a Museum, 52 Great Books, 52 Romantic Films, 52 Adventures in New York (or try our town), etc. Create your own concept for a deck and come up with a working list of what will be on each card. You may collaborate with up to three or more people on this, maybe even dividing the deck into four suits like playing cards.

1. **Ekphrasis**

Select (and include) a painting or photograph which inspires you, and…be inspired! Write a poem, a story, an essay, or even create a parody. Include the original artwork and fully attribute it.

1. **Visually Speaking**

Cut out words, phrases, logos, small photos, whatever impresses you visually and create a collage which expresses your ideas on a specific subject. There should be a title on there somewhere.

1. **Lessons I Learned After It Was Too Late**

It seems that we always learn the most important lessons the hard way, usually when it’s too late, when we’ve already made our big mistakes. Look back over your life and write approximately a PAGE on the lessons you learned after it was too late.

1. **Who Am I?**

Everyone is a combination of many selves. You play a variety of roles, such as student, brother, sister, friend, basketball player, music lover, worker, reader, and the like. Make a list of FIVE nouns that you would use to identify yourself. What does the list suggest about your view of yourself as a person? Explain each role, citing your experiences as illustrations.

1. **Valuable Lessons**

List the TEN most valuable lessons you’ve ever learned. Write a sentence explaining why each lesson was valuable to you. Consider such things as learning to multiply, but also think of the more abstract lessons concerned with wisdom and experience rather than skills. Mull over the list for a few days. Then rank the lessons 1-10 in the margins.

1. **Futures—Fantasy and Fact**

This is a three-part assignment. In the first paragraph, pretend that you can see yourself 10 years from now. Describe your future as it could be if all your wishes came true. This description is “romantic”. In the second paragraph, describe what your life will be like 10 years from now just as you are now. No miracles or magic allowed. This view is “realistic”. For most people, the “romantic” and “realistic” descriptions are very different. In the third paragraph, analyze the discrepancy. Discuss the specific differences between your two descriptions and how you feel about those differences. Finally, explain the steps you can take to find a sensible compromise between the romantic and the realistic.

1. **Nature Lover**

Explore the natural world around you. Pick one item (or an original photograph) and include it on ONE sheet of paper. Then, write a ONE page description on how the naturalist item represents an aspect of your senior year.

**If I Had My Life To Live Over**

**by Erma Bombeck**

The following was written by the late Erma Bombeck, American newspaper columnist,   
after she found out she had a fatal disease.

If I had my life to live over, I would have talked less and listened more.  
  
I would have invited friends over to dinner even if the carpet was stained and the sofa faded.  
  
I would have eaten the popcorn in the 'good' living room and worried much less about the dirt when someone wanted to light a fire in the fireplace.  
  
I would have taken the time to listen to my grandfather ramble about his youth.  
  
I would never have insisted the car windows be rolled up on a summer day because my hair had just been teased and sprayed.  
  
I would have burned the pink candle sculpted like a rose before it melted in storage.  
  
I would have sat on the lawn with my children and not worried about grass stains.  
  
I would have cried and laughed less while watching television - and more while watching life.  
  
I would have shared more of the responsibility carried by my husband.  
  
I would have gone to bed when I was sick instead of pretending the earth would go into a holding pattern if I weren't there for the day.  
  
I would never have bought anything just because it was practical, wouldn't show soil or was guaranteed to last a lifetime.  
  
Instead of wishing away nine months of pregnancy, I'd have cherished every moment and realized that the wonderment growing inside me was the only chance in life to assist God in a miracle.  
  
When my kids kissed me impetuously, I would never have said, "Later. Now go get washed up for dinner."  
  
There would have been more "I love you's".. More "I'm sorrys" ...  
  
But mostly, given another shot at life, I would seize every minute... look at it and really see it ... live it...and never give it back.

**Everybody’s Free to Wear Sunscreen**  
*lyrics based on The Chicago Tribune column by Mary Schmich  
song by Baz Luhrmann*

Wear sunscreen

If I could offer you only one tip for the future, sunscreen would be it  
The long-term benefits of sunscreen have been proved by scientists  
Whereas the rest of my advice has no basis or reliable  
Than my own meandering experience, I will dispense this advice now

Enjoy the power and beauty of your youth, oh, never mind  
You will not understand the power and beauty of your youth  
Until they've faded but trust me, in 20 years, you'll look back  
At photos of yourself and recall in a way you can't grasp now  
How much possibility lay before you and how fabulous you really looked  
You are not as fat as you imagine

Don't worry about the future  
Or know that worrying is as effective as trying to solve an algebra equation by chewing bubble gum  
The real troubles in your life are apt to be things that never crossed your worried mind  
The kind that blindsides you at 4 p.m. on some idle Tuesday  
Do one thing every day that scares you

Sing

Don't be reckless with other people's hearts  
Don't put up with people who are reckless with yours

Floss

Don't waste your time on jealousy  
Sometimes you're ahead, sometimes you're behind  
The race is long and in the end, it's only with yourself  
Remember compliments you receive, forget the insults, if you succeed in doing this, tell me how  
Keep your old love letters, throw away your old bank statements

Stretch

Don't feel guilty if you don't know what you want to do with your life.  
The most interesting people I know didn't know at 22 what they wanted to do with their lives  
Some of the most interesting 40-year-olds I know still don't  
Get plenty of calcium  
Be kind to your knees  
You'll miss them when they're gone

Maybe you'll marry, maybe you won't  
Maybe you'll have children, maybe you won't  
Maybe you'll divorce at 40, maybe you'll dance the 'Funky Chicken'  
On your 75th wedding anniversary  
Whatever you do, don't congratulate yourself too much  
Or berate yourself either  
Your choices are half chance, so are everybody else's

Enjoy your body, use it every way you can  
Don't be afraid of it or what other people think of it  
It's the greatest instrument you'll ever own  
Dance, even if you have nowhere to do it but your own living room  
Read the directions even if you don't follow them  
Do not read beauty magazines, they will only make you feel ugly

Get to know your parents, you never know when they'll be gone for good  
Be nice to your siblings, they're your best link to your past  
And the people most likely to stick with you in the future

Understand that friends come and go  
But a precious few, who should hold on

Work hard to bridge the gaps in geography and lifestyle  
For as the older you get, the more you need the people you knew when you were young  
Live in New York City once but leave before it makes you hard  
Live in northern California once but leave before it makes you soft

Travel

Accept certain inalienable truths  
Prices will rise, politicians will philander, you, too, will get old  
And when you do, you'll fantasize that when you were young  
Prices were reasonable, politicians were noble  
And children respected their elders

Respect your elders

Don't expect anyone else to support you  
Maybe you have a trust fund, maybe you'll have a wealthy spouse  
But you never know when either one might run out

Don't mess too much with your hair  
Or by the time you're 40 it will look 85

Be careful whose advice you buy but be patient with those who supply it  
Advice is a form of nostalgia, dispensing it is a way of fishing the past  
From the disposal, wiping it off, painting over the ugly parts  
And recycling it for more than it's worth

But trust me on the sunscreen

**When I Was One-and-Twenty  
A. E. Housman**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| When I was one-and-twenty |  |
| I heard a wise man say, |  |
| ‘Give crowns and pounds and guineas\* | \*British units of study |
| But not your heart away; |  |
|  |  |
| Give pearls away and rubies | *5* |
| But keep your fancy free.’ |  |
| But I was one-and-twenty, |  |
| No use to talk to me. |  |
|  |  |
| When I was one-and-twenty |  |
| I heard him say again, | *10* |
| ‘The heart out of the bosom |  |
| Was never given in vain; |  |
| ’Tis paid with sighs a plenty |  |
| And sold for endless rue\*.’ \*sorrow or regret |  |
| And I am two-and-twenty, | *15* |
| And oh, ’tis true, ’tis true. |  |

**APPENDIXES**

***A. If I Had To Live My Life Over Again***

***B. Everybody’s Free to Wear Sunscreen***

***C. When I Was One-and-Twenty***

***D. Year in Search https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVwHCGAr\_OE***