



## Rosati-Kain English Department

Class of 2021

### Best of British Literature Summer Reading/Writing Assignments

We ask that during the summer you read one play and prepare a college application essay using the prompts from the Common Application. You are responsible for finding your own copy of the play mentioned below.

1. Everyone needs to read *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare. You will discuss this play in your English class. Your written assignment will be due on the first day of class. To prepare for the discussion, please address one of these topics in essay format.
  - o Describe which kinds of stereotypes you notice Shakespeare using. Explain which characters specifically seem to follow a stereotype.
  - o Explain who the “good” characters are and who the “bad” ones are. Justify your choices.
  - o This play falls under the category of Shakespeare’s comedies. Do you believe it is a comedy? If so, explain why; if not, defend your difference of opinion and explain where it should be placed among the four categories of Shakespeare’s works.

Begin with an introductory paragraph. Write well-developed body paragraphs in response to the topic you chose. Use complete sentences and please type and double space your assignment. End with a concluding paragraph. Your headings should be in MLA format.

2. For your second assignment, you are asked to write a first draft of a Common Application College Essay. To write this essay, please respond to one of the writing prompts below:

HERE ARE YOUR PROMPTS (just choose one):

#### Common Application Essay Prompts:

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?

For this essay, you are trying to do the following:

- o Show how capable you are of writing intelligently.
- o Allow the reader to better understand you in terms of being a student (readers don't have to know you personally, i.e. there is no need to share a deep and dark secret).
- o Tell the reader something that can't be conveyed in other parts of the application (i.e. it shouldn't be a list of accomplishments).
- o Convey to the reader how the idea or theme presented in the essay will help you move forward/improve/grow as a student.