

**Rosati-Kain Academy English Department Best of British Literature  
Summer Reading/Writing Assignments for the Class of 2026**

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.

- Everyone needs to read *Macbeth* 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.
  
- The witches chant the line “Fair is foul and foul is fair” in the opening scene of this play. What do you believe they mean by this? In what ways does this theme reveal itself during the drama? Give at least three specific examples.
  
- It is essential that a Shakespearean tragic hero suffers a downfall brought about by his own major flaw and outside contributing sources. Identify what you believe to be Macbeth’s major character flaw (hint: it is stated in a line in the play). What are the outside sources that contribute to his downfall? Does one source play a larger role than the others? If so, which one and why?
  
- Macbeth, Banquo, and Macduff are all warriors and accustomed to the brutality and violence of battle, yet it is only Macbeth who gives in to his worst self and becomes a murderer. Explore three characteristics that make Macbeth different from these two other men and all of the other nobles in the play.

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

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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 (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:

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