# **Ashford 2: - Week 1 - Instructor Guidance**

# **ENG125 WEEK 1 GUIDANCE**

# ***Why study literature?***

"I know nothing in the world that has as much power as a word. Sometimes I write one, and I look at it, until it begins to shine."

- *Emily Dickinson*

## **This week's overview**

**Welcome to English 125, *Introduction to Literature.*** The title of this week's guidance, "Why study literature?," is a question that I hope you'll have an answer for by the end of this course. Certainly, you may already have some ideas on this topic, but we'll explore the topic more in-depth through this week's reading material and the discussion boards. Every student getting a college degree is required to take a certain number of literature courses (just as every college student is required to take math, science, art, etc.); therefore, there must be some reason behind it. My hope is that, when we arrive at Week 5, you are easily able to offer an answer to this question, and that this answer is meaningful to you.

Please keep this question in mind as you complete the following **reading assignments for this week**:

* Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of *Journey Into Literature*
* Document: "Types of conflict found in literature" (see the Course Materials section at the left)

Please also familiarize yourself with the [Ashford Writing Center](https://awc.ashford.edu/Index.html) if you have not done so already. You will want to make use of the resources available to you not only for this class, but for all of your classes at Ashford.

## **Strategies for this week's assignments**

***You have THREE Discussion forums this week that require your participation:***

* Post Your Introduction (note you are asked to post your introduction on Day 1 and respond to THREE of your classmates)
* Discussion 1: Why read literature? in which we'll begin to explore the question presented to you in this guidance
* Discussion 2: Writing about literature in which we will share thoughts on the value of writing about literature

***You also have a written assignment which is a proposal for your final paper.*** You must choose one of the options in the list of literary prompts. Be sure to look at the **sample Week 1 written assignment** for a clear model of a strong assignment. Note that you must meet a minimum word count for most of the questions. (the copying and pasting of the wording in the assignment does NOT apply to the minimum word requirement).

Your discussion posts all have minimum word counts as well, so I suggest you craft your responses in a Word document beforehand. Be sure you have addressed all elements of the prompt, have a post free of errors, and have met the minimum word requirement BEFORE submitting online.

## **Intellectual elaboration**

Before we begin our journey of literature together, I'd like us all to take a moment and start at "page 1." What I mean by this is to approach this course with an open mind. Some of you might love reading and writing - great! Some of you might be dreading this course. Maybe you've felt (or have been told) that you are not a good writer. Maybe you had a teacher in the past that affected your experience of literature, either positively or negatively. I hope all of you will come to this class willing to write your own story.

The experience you have in this course is entirely up to you - you are the author of your own journey! That's an empowering position to be in. Once you have thought about how you want this story to go, think about how the main character (that's you!) gets there. Very often, the heroes of stories have to face and overcome personal challenges to achieve their goals. They also often have guides and helpers (in this case, you have me, your advisor, the [Ashford Writing Center](https://awc.ashford.edu/Index.html), and the support of your classmates) - but, ultimately, their success depends on their tenacity and work ethic, just as it will for you.

### **Reading the textbook**

This open mind that I'm asking you to have doesn't just involve your approach to this course as a whole; it involves your approach to every task you'll complete throughout the next five weeks.

As you begin reading the textbook, you mind find yourself introduced to new ideas and literary terms. Some people believe that 'studying' literature takes all the fun out of reading - however, this does not have to be the case! Understanding the history of storytelling, literary genres, and elements that authors use can all enhance your appreciation of a literary work. The more you know, the better you are often able to understand and appreciate the complexities of a poem, short story, novel, or play.

For some more thoughts on the benefits of literary study, please watch this short video in which English professor Kevin Pelletier discusses how students can develop their skills of critical analysis:

As you listened to Dr. Pelletier speak, you may have noticed that the qualities of literary study don't just apply to literature; in fact, they can apply to many areas of study and of our lives.

Some of the questions you might think about in relation to this topic include:

* Dr. Pelletier discusses engaging with material. What is the difference between reading a text and engaging with it?
* He also suggests that students consider the process of such engagement and to note that intellectual engagement involves asking meaningful questions. How can asking interesting questions about a text develop one’s capacity to think critically about any subject?
* Dr. Pelletier mentions that such intellectual engagement requires some humility. How do you interpret this statement?

I hope these questions help you begin to craft an answer to the question "Why study literature?", and I hope that you'll continue to develop your answer over the next five weeks.

### **Helpful links for this week's assignments**

[Writing Standards for Students At Ashford University](https://awc.ashford.edu/writing-tools-writing-standards.html)

Ashford Writing Center [Thesis Generator](https://awc.ashford.edu/writing-tools-thesis-generator.html)

**References:**

How English students can develop as literary critics. (2013, April 29). Retrieved March 4, 2015, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDBN0PWh8Ho

I hope you have found the Week 1 guidance helpful! Please check this forum often to ask questions and review guidance that I have posted for your assignments. If you have any questions, please contact me at farrah.hilton@faculty.ashford.edu. I am happy to help!

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