English 12AP Summer Reading Assignment

All seniors entering English 12 AP in the fall must read Edith Hamilton’s *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*, which is a compilation of myths drawn from classical literature. Paperback editions are available at local bookstores and libraries as well as through online merchants. E-texts can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

As you read, keep a reading log, take notes, or annotate in a way that will help you to remember the characters and storylines of each myth.

After you read, choose one poem from the list below and write a 500-word explication discussing how the allusion in the poem supports the poet’s aim.

Consider the following features of allusion:

1. An allusion is a reference to another work (e.g., mythological, classical, biblical, literary, or historical).
2. An extended allusion is more than an isolated reference but calls to the reader’s mind the entire context of its source in order to comment on the poet’s subject.
3. The reference (classical, biblical, or mythological, for example) is not itself the subject of the work in which it appears. For example, it would not be an allusion if a poem reviews, retells, or revises a myth or part of a myth, as do Pope in “Argus,” Byron in “Prometheus,” Keats in “Ode to Psyche,” Tennyson in “Ulysses,” Swinburne in “The Garden of Proserpine,” Yeats in “The Fascination with What’s Difficult,” and Parker in “Penelope,” and Blake in “Why Was Cupid a Boy?”

You will be graded on the following:

1. Your understanding of the poem and the function of the allusion in that poem
2. Your understanding of how the poet makes use of specific aspects of the original myth, including what may not be explicit in the poem
3. The extent to which you avoid summary in favor of analysis
4. The clarity of your argument—both at the sentence and paragraph levels
5. Your precise use of language
6. Your citation (according to MLA-8 format) of your primary source (the poem) and of outside sources—should you choose to consult them

On the first day of school in September, you must submit to your teacher a hardcopy/printout of your essay (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins) and upload to Turnitin a digital version. Include a copy of the poem you selected.

Choose one poem only from the following list:

1. Jorge Luis Borges, “The Labyrinth” (transl. from the Spanish by John Updike)
2. George Gordon, Lord Byron, “Written after Swimming from Sestos to Abydos (9 May 1810)”
3. Countee Cullen, “Yet Do I Marvel”
4. Henry Constable, *Diana*, Sonnet 10, “Prometheus, for stealing living fire”
7. Samuel Daniel, *Delia*, Sonnet 34, “Why dost thou, Delia, credit so thy glass”
8. Samuel Daniel, *Delia*, Sonnet 43, “Most fair and lovely maid, look from the shore”
9. Samuel Daniel, Rejected Sonnet 12, “The tablet of my heavy fortunes here”
13. Michael Drayton, “To His Coy Love”
14. Ben Jonson, “To Mary Lady Wroth”
16. Thomas Lodge, *Phyllis*, Sonnet 3, “In fancy’s world an Atlas have I been”
17. Thomas Lodge, *Phyllis*, Sonnet 17, “Ah fleeting weal, ah sly deluding sleep”
20. Edgar Allan Poe, “Serenade”
22. Archibald MacLeish, “Psyche with the Candle”
24. John Milton, Sonnet 12, “I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs”
25. John Milton, Sonnet 13, “Harry, whose tuneful and well measur’d Song”
27. Friedrich Schiller, “The Ideals” (transl. from the German “Die Ideale”)  
28. William Shakespeare, Sonnet 53, “What is your substance, whereof are you made”
29. William Shakespeare, Sonnet 55, “Not marble, nor the gilded monuments”

To find these poems online, search, among other sites, Poetry Foundation, Poem Hunter, poets.org, or Poetry 180.

For help with reading a poem, follow these guidelines courtesy of The Atlantic.

For assistance with writing about poetry, consult “Poetry: Close Reading” and “Writing about Poetry” from Purdue University’s online writing lab, “Poetry Explications” from the University of North Carolina’s online writing center, and “Writing about Poetry” from Hamilton College.

Further reading:

To supplement Hamilton’s book, you may wish to consult Bulfinch’s Mythology, which—though longer and more challenging—you will find readily available in a number of editions and online here.

For some thoughts on the importance of understanding allusions, read this post from The New York Times Learning Network and this review from The New York Times Sunday Book Review.

To complete a crossword puzzle on mythology, visit this page from The New York Times Learning Network.

To add poems to your daily reading routine, subscribe to the “feeds” provided by Poetry Foundation, Poetry 180, and poets.org.

To learn more about AP English and Composition, visit the College Board’s course description and student course page.