

**Summer Assignment for Language A: IB Literature**  
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***How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster**  
***The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz**

The readings and assignments align with standards RL1, RI1, RL2, RL3, RI3, RL6, W2, W6, L1, and L2.

1. Read *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. You may want to consult the following website for allusions, language, and translation: <http://www.annotated-oscar-wao.com/chapter3.html>
2. Read individual chapters of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*.
3. As you read, apply Foster's theory to *The Brief Life of Oscar Wao* by answering/explaining 20 of the topics below (which is based on a chapter) in approximately 250-words. (You may choose 18 of the 25 listed. Your choices and content should not look like anyone else's work.)
4. Your responses will be graded by the provided rubric:

<b>Category &amp; Description</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>  How effectively has the student used the topic and the analysis to show knowledge and understanding of the work?	Does not reach standard	The responses show some knowledge but little understanding of the work used for the assignment.	The responses show some knowledge but little understanding of the work used for the assignment.	The responses show knowledge and understanding of, and some insight into, the work used for the assignment.	The responses show detailed knowledge and understanding of, and perceptive insight into, the work used for the assignment.
<b>Organization and development</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How clear and supported is the claim?</li> <li>• How effectively are references to (evidence from) the works integrated into the development of the ideas?</li> </ul>	Does not reach standard	There is no definitive claim identifiable. Little use of examples from the works used.	There seems to be a claim, though it may be convoluted. Ideas are developed with some integrated examples (evidence) from the works used.	A claim is present and the student uses evidence. Ideas are effectively developed, with well-integrated (evidence) examples from the works used.	A clear and definitive claim is made and well-supported. Ideas are persuasively developed, with effectively integrated examples (evidence) from the works used.
<b>Language</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How clear, varied and accurate is the language?</li> </ul> How appropriate is the choice of register, style and terminology? ("Register" refers, in this context, to the student's use of elements such as vocabulary, tone, sentence structure and terminology appropriate to the task.)	Does not reach standard	Language is rarely clear and appropriate; there are many errors in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction, and little sense of register and style.	Language is sometimes clear and carefully chosen; grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction are fairly accurate, although errors and inconsistencies are apparent; the register and style are to some extent appropriate to the task.	Language is clear and carefully chosen, with a good degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction; register and style are consistently appropriate to the task.	Language is very clear, effective, carefully chosen and precise, with a high degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction; register and style are effective and appropriate to the task.

**Each response will be graded according to the above rubric. The total points will then be divided by 72 for the score.**

***How to Read Literature Like a Professor* Topics. Remember to choose 18.**

**1. Introduction: How'd He Do That?**

How do memory, symbol, and pattern affect the reading of literature? How does the recognition of patterns make it easier to read complicated literature? Discuss a time when your appreciation of a literary work was enhanced by understanding symbol or pattern. (This journal is not based on the reading. You may use any work you have studied in 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade.)

**2. Chapter 1 -- Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not)**

List the five aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to Oscar's journey.

**3. Chapter 2 -- Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion**

Choose a meal from the novel and apply the ideas of Chapter 2 to this literary depiction.

**4. Chapter 3: --Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires**

What are the essentials of the Vampire story? Where is this evidenced in the text?

**5. Chapter 4 -- If It's Square, It's a Sonnet**

Take a theme from the text and write an original sonnet. It can be Petrarchan, Shakespearean, or Blank Verse.

**6. Chapter 5 --Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?**

Define intertextuality. Discuss how the novel is intertextual and how its intertextuality reinforce theme.

**7. Chapter 6 – When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare...**

Discuss the links the text has to a Shakespearean play or poem. Why would the author use this allusion.

**8. Chapter 7 -- ...Or *The Bible***

Discuss how Diaz alludes to *The Bible*. How do the biblical allusions help shape characterization or further theme?

**9. Chapter 8 -- Hansel and Gretel**

What characters represent ones from a fairy tale? Does the author use these ironically or is it archetypal?

**10. Chapter 9 -- It's Greek to Me**

How does Junot's novel use elements of mythology? How and why does Diaz weave these elements?

**11. Chapter 10 -- It's More Than Just Rain or Snow**

How does the weather in the novel create atmosphere and mirror elements of the plot, conflict, or character?

**12. Chapter 11 --...More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence**

Present examples of the two kinds of violence found in literature. How are these elements of violence seen in the text?

**13. Chapter 12 -- Is That a Symbol?**

Use the process described and investigate the symbolism of t

**14. Chapter 13 -- It's All Political**

Assume that Foster is right and "it is all political." Use his criteria to show that the novel is political.

**15. Chapter 14 -- Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too**

Apply the criteria on page 119 to a major character in the novel.

**16. Chapter 15 -- Flights of Fancy**

How does flight signify escape or freedom in the text. Explain in detail.

**17. Chapter 16 -- It's All About Sex...**

**Chapter 17 -- ...Except the Sex**

OK ..the sex chapters. The key idea from this chapter is that "scenes in which sex is coded rather than explicit can work at multiple levels and sometimes be more intense than literal depictions" (141). In other words, sex is often suggested with much more art and effort than it is described, and, if the author is doing his job, it reflects and creates theme or character. Discuss how sex is both suggested and described overtly and how each affects the theme or develops characterization.

**18. Chapter 18 -- If She Comes Up, It's Baptism**

Think of a "baptism scene" from the work. How was the character different after the experience? Discuss.

**19. Chapter 19 -- Geography Matters...**

Discuss what elements Foster would categorize under "geography."

**20. Chapter 20 -- ...So Does Season**

Discuss how season mirrors the plot and heightens conflict in the text.

**21. Interlude -- One Story**

Write your own definition for archetype. Identify and describe common archetypes in the text.

**22. Chapter 21 -- Marked for Greatness**

Discuss Oscar's physicality (his "mark") and its implications for characterization.

**23. Chapter 22 -- He's Blind for a Reason, You Know**

**Chapter 23 -- It's Never Just Heart Disease...**

**Chapter 24 -- ...And Rarely Just Illness**

Who is diseased in the text? Who dies? Consider how these deaths reflect the "principles governing the use of disease in literature" (215-217). Discuss the effectiveness of the illness and death as related to plot, theme, or symbolism.

**24. Chapter 25 -- Don't Read with Your Eyes**

After reading Chapter 25, choose a scene or episode from a novel, play or epic written before the twentieth century. Contrast how it could be viewed by a reader from the twenty-first century with how it might be viewed by a contemporary reader. Focus on specific assumptions that the author makes, assumptions that would not make it in this century.

**25. Chapter 26 -- Is He Serious? And Other Ironies**

Explain the nature of the irony in the work. How is the novel dependent on irony and how does its use reinforce theme?