

AP Literature and Composition  
Summer Reading Assignment  
Mrs. Kelley (mbkelley@syrdiocese.org)

Novel: *Invisible Man*  
Author: Ralph Ellison

Directions: While reading the novel *Invisible Man*, by Ralph Ellison, keep loose-leaf paper nearby to jot down notes and page numbers; this will make the assignment much easier when it comes time to type your final responses. After reading the novel, answer the following **six** sets of questions on your own as analytically and thoroughly as possible without using on-line or any published criticism to help you. This assignment gives you and me an initial gauge on how prepared you are to read and take notes at the collegiate level. It also indicates how well you can read and follow complex directions for assignments, so read the directions very carefully.

### **Due Date: The First Full Week of Classes**

Format: Type your final responses. Begin each section at the top of a new page; label each new beginning with the section's number and a title stating what this section's content covers. You only need the proper MLA heading at the top of page one.

### **Questions:**

I. Write an **overview of the novel** in **12-14 sentences**. An overview gives the big picture, while leaving out the minor details.

II. State the **point of view** of the novel and who the narrator is. Explain in two to three paragraphs how the point of view affects the novel overall. This is not an essay. Be sure to make reference to literary elements or techniques when appropriate. Please keep the length to **one and a half pages**.

III. List the **major characters**, beginning with the protagonist. We will refer to the protagonist as simply the letters "IM." Give a precise yet very succinct description of who this man or woman is, and the effect/importance/impact he or she had on the protagonist. Major characters in this novel do not appear throughout the novel; they appear in separate major periods in IM's life. Please keep the length of this section to **four to six pages**.

IV. Symbols-There are **several symbols** in this novel. A symbol is a thing that represents or stands for something else, especially a material object representing something abstract. For example, the coin bank in Chapter 15 is a symbol. Make a list and provide the meaning of each symbol within the context of this novel.

V. Motifs-List **three motifs** that occur throughout the novel. A motif is a recurring object, concept, idea, or structure carried through an individual work, such as recurring battles of good versus evil. Look for types of events or types of people that keep appearing throughout IM's life. A motif is important because it allows the reader to see main points and themes that the author is trying to express, in order that one might be able to interpret the work more accurately. Provide **three examples**, noting page numbers of scenes and the character(s) involved that connect to form a motif.

VI. Essay Assignment: Writers often highlight the values of a culture or a society by using characters who are alienated from that culture or society because of gender, race, class, or creed. Using *Invisible Man*, by Ralph Ellison, choose a character in which he/she plays a significant role, and show how that character's alienation reveals the surrounding society's assumptions and moral values. Please do not merely provide a plot summary. The length of this essay should be **three to four pages**.

Your essay should contain:

- a response to the prompt using a thesis that presents an interpretation of the work and may introduce a line of reasoning.
- evidence that develops and supports your line of reasoning.
- an explanation of the relationship between the evidence and your thesis.
- usage, grammar, and mechanics of standard written English.

Please do not hesitate to email me at [mbkelley@syrdiocese.org](mailto:mbkelley@syrdiocese.org) with any questions or concerns that you may have while working on this novel over the summer.