

AP English Literature and Composition: 2025 Summer Reading Assignment

Welcome to AP English Literature and Composition. Your summer reading assignment consists of two major parts. Please read this sheet carefully, use the links provided to deepen your understanding of the expectations, and be sure to complete the assignments in their entirety before coming to your first day of class. Ultimately, this assignment requires you to read, write, and think critically about texts.

Part I: Jane Eyre and Related Poetry

All AP Lit students are required to read *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë.

- o You can sign out a copy of a text from the Staples library prior to the end of the school year. (*you may not write in your school-issued book*)
- o If you choose to purchase your own copy, please purchase the [Penguin Classics version](#). (*your own copy allows you to write in/mark up your text as desired*)
- o There is a [digital version](#) available through Project Gutenberg if necessary, but we encourage you to hold an actual book in your hand.
- o Regardless of which text form you use, please be sure you ***properly cite and mark passages***

Step 1: You are required to keep a journal for *Jane Eyre*, an interesting and challenging novel of literary merit. Expect to hand your journal in during the first week of class in the fall.

- As you read, pause every thirty to fifty pages to record your thoughts, reactions, and questions. You might include interesting quotations, insights about characters, reflections on setting, and similar observations. Do not just summarize the plot.
- If you encounter any confusion as you read, do your best to negotiate it, understanding that it is a valid and necessary part of reading and understanding a challenging text. A great exercise is to record your questions and sticking points and explain how you dealt with them.
- When you have finished the book, you should have a journal that contains roughly 10-12 entries.
- Our expectation is that your entries reflect your genuine and thoughtful response to the reading. They should not be plot-driven or simply list characters and facts from the text. The journal will serve to facilitate our class discussions and writing early in the year.

Step 2: Once you have read *Jane Eyre*, you will read and annotate [this collection of Victorian Poetry](#). Please be sure to read the document and strategies for annotation at the beginning of this document. These poems function as *illuminating texts* because they not only complement the themes explored through the novel, they also were composed in the same historical time period as *Jane Eyre*.

As you read these poems, take notes on where you see them deepening your understanding of the themes suggested throughout *Jane Eyre*. You may wish to group poems by the subjects that they address. The poems deal with the subjects of:

religion
science
nature
social norms,
social justice (and the lack thereof),

gender
family
childhood
gothic

You should expect to use these poems and your annotations about the poems in the first few weeks of school in the Fall.

Part II: Choice Novels

You are required to select TWO other novels (your choice) that adhere to the following standards:

- o Your choices should be FICTION (novels) of [literary merit](#).
- o Avoid plays, nonfiction works, collections of short stories, and young adult or popular fiction texts.
- o Avoid texts traditionally taught as part of the English or Social Studies curriculum.

Here are some examples of curriculum titles to avoid: *Animal Farm*, *Catcher in the Rye*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *Heart of Darkness*, *The Round House*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *The Metamorphosis*, *The Color Purple*, *The Bluest Eye*.

During the fall semester, you will be required to complete a major paper that will require you to focus on a substantive text of literary merit that you have not already read for a class at Staples or will read for AP Lit. Therefore, a careful choice of novels for your summer reading is more likely to provide you with a solid foundation for that paper. **On the next page are a few of the novels that students have used successfully for this essay in the past.**

We recommend that you *a/so* keep a journal or take notes as you read your three chosen texts. A written record of your reading—especially interesting quotations—will be useful to you when beginning your Lit Ex experience.

Have a wonderful summer, and we look forward to seeing you at the end of August!

Some Past Literary Exploration Paper and Summer Reading Titles Students Have Chosen

(Note that some of these may be assigned texts in some classes at Staples; remember that you may only choose texts that were *not* assigned to you in a previous class. For example, an AP Lit student who was not assigned *Pride and Prejudice* in his or her sophomore year might legitimately choose it for summer reading).

Americanah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

As I Lay Dying, William Faulkner

All the King's Men, Robert Penn Warren

Appointment in Samarra, John O'Hara

Beloved, Toni Morrison

The Confederacy of Dunces, John Kennedy Toole

The Count of Monte Cristo, Alexandre Dumas

Emma, Jane Austen

A Farewell to Arms, Ernest Hemingway

Giovanni's Room, James Baldwin

The Goldfinch, Donna Tartt

The House of Mirth, Edith Wharton

Invisible Man, Ralph Ellison

Lucy, Jamaica Kincaid

Middlesex, Jeffrey Eugenides

Midnight's Children, Salman Rushdie

The Namesake, Jhumpa Lahiri

Never Let Me Go, Kazuo Ishiguro

Old School, Tobias Wolff

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit, Jeanette Winterson

Pale Fire, Vladimir Nabokov

The Plot Against America, Philip Roth

The Sea-Wolf, Jack London

This Side of Paradise, F. Scott Fitzgerald

To the Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf

Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte