

## AP English Literature and Composition: 2020-21 Summer Reading Assignment

Welcome to AP English Literature and Composition. Your summer reading assignment is to read, write, and think seriously about **four** novels of [literary merit](#).

- **One of these books is common to all AP Lit students: *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë.**
    - You can sign out a copy of a text in the SS office (2035) by Monday 6/21
    - If purchasing your own copy, please purchase the [Penguin Classics version](#).
    - There is a [digital version](#) available through Project Gutenberg if necessary, but we encourage you to hold an actual book in your hand.
    - Regardless of which version you use, please be sure you properly cite and mark passages
  - **The other three novels are up to you, but they must meet several expectations:**
    - Choose FICTION titles (novels) of [literary merit](#).
    - Avoid plays, nonfiction works, collections of short stories, and young adult texts.
    - Avoid texts traditionally taught as part of the English or Social Studies curriculum.
- If you have questions about texts, email your teacher.

Here are a few examples 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 require** that you 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.

**We recommend** that you *also* 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