

Parental Information for AP Literature and Composition Summer Assignment 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians of AP Literature students,

I am writing to inform you that we will be reading the novel *All the Light We Cannot See* as our summer novel for AP Literature and Composition. This novel won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2015; please read [the Pulitzer jury's description](#). This page is helpful [for an excellent plot summary](#). I also wanted to provide a parent review from a neutral perspective, so to read that, please [read this review](#). If you would like to [see the AP Literature List Committee's recommendation](#) to the governing board for approval of this title. And finally, you may wish to [read the entire process](#) of how the book moved through that committee's work this spring. (In that document, read the minutes of each meeting to see the progress of the discussion of the book which led to its final vote of 100% approval by the committee).

Due to the timing of governing board meetings and the need to get this information to students and parents before the end of the school year, this letter and the final board approval are “crossed in the mail,” so to speak. As of this writing (mid-April 2022) the board has not yet met to vote to approve the title; however, per the links above provided by the committee (the book earned a 100% approval rate) I have confidence that it will be included on the final list.

If you have any questions or concerns about your student reading the novel, please do not hesitate to contact me as soon as possible: I can be reached at rprince@pvschools.net. We can discuss the content of the novel in more detail or assign your student an alternate title, if necessary. If choosing another title is the best option, we need to decide that early in the summer, in order to ensure that your student has enough time to complete the assignment before August.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rachel Prince
AP Literature and Composition Instructor

Continue reading to see the student letter and assignment:



AP Literature and Composition Summer Reading Assignment 2022-23

Dear Students of AP Literature and Composition,

Welcome to your final year of the AP English program, the culmination of your high school endeavors in language and literature. I am looking forward to working with you and helping prepare you for the AP Literature test in May. To that end, I expect that you'll be interested in building your familiarity with AP-style literature; your assignment for this summer is intended to assist you in that goal as well as to prepare you for the activities we'll be doing as soon as the school year starts.

Your assigned novel this summer is *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr.

Most AP students prefer to have their own copies of the novels for annotating, and though that's recommended, it's not required, so feel free to use a borrowed or library copy.

You must complete the assignment on your own (do not work in pairs or groups). While I appreciate that talking about books with friends is one of the great pleasures of reading, I urge students to remember the innate nature of academic "competition" and keep their ideas unique. The AP course will not schedule time for reading this book or completing the assignment during the fall semester; you must be finished with the work and be ready to turn it in on the first day of school. You will take a test and complete an in-class timed writing on this novel during the first few days of class.

A question posted on the College Board website—"Are students expected to do summer reading?"-- has historically been answered by the College Board in the following way: "Many reasons exist for summer reading. Strong students read during the summer, keeping the brain active in academic pursuits. Many schools require summer reading for all students, not just those in an accelerated or honors program. Some schools, in addition to reading selected materials, require one or more written assignments as well."

Teachers nationwide of Pre-AP and AP courses also give further reasons in support of summer reading on the College Board website:

- *Summer reading provides continuity between May and August, helping students continue to grow and develop critical thinking skills.*
- *Summer reading also provides an immediate springboard for August discussion. The chosen reading selections are usually listed on the AP English College Board's reading list as works of literary merit that could be tested on the AP English exams.*

- *Students in Pre-AP/AP should be avid, active readers. Summer reading supports this expectation while directing the activity toward pieces specifically chosen in relation to the AP English courses.*

The cadre of Horizon Pre-AP/AP English teachers are working hard to prepare their students—starting with incoming freshmen—for success on the AP tests they will take as juniors and seniors. To ensure Horizon students’ ability to maintain a competitive edge on these high-stakes, norm-referenced exams, we have extensively studied the summer reading requirements of not only the other PVUSD AP programs but those of neighboring private and charter schools as well. We strongly believe that the rigor of Horizon’s summer expectations are commensurate with those of these schools; our students will be well prepared to meet the challenges of the AP tests.

Reminder to all students: you must have a hard copy of your assignment ready to turn in on the first day of class. You must also retain a digital copy of your assignment in Google Docs in your pvlerners account. Upon request, all students must be prepared to upload their assignments into turnitin.com as a means of verifying originality.

Pacing yourself with the reading, setting aside quality reading time over the course of a few weeks, is the recommended schedule. If you read early in the summer, be sure to review briefly before school starts so the details are fresh in your mind. I will hold you accountable for having understood and remembered the book when we begin assessments/discussions in August.

Your creative assignment, which will be described below, is due on the first day of school in August. We have many analytical, test-prep works to handle during the school year, so this is your chance to do a creative piece. It is imperative to remember, however, that though I am interested in your creative writing talents, you should still complete this assignment to the best of your academic abilities.

Enjoy your summer and your reading (it’s one of my favorite titles, and a perennial student favorite as well). I am eager to get started with you in August!

Regards,
Ms. Prince

Continue reading to see the assignment:



Summer Reading Assignment 2022-23

AP Literature and Composition

Objectives:

- ★ *To provide the preliminary writing sample needed to start this year's contributions to students' cumulative writing portfolio*
- ★ *To exhibit students' ability to construct an effective piece of writing, blending creativity with literary analysis*
- ★ *To show mastery of rhetorical grammar, appropriate tone, effective vocabulary, direct and indirect characterization, and advanced, sophisticated usage*

Instructions (please read ALL of this very carefully):

A common piece of rhetorical grammar (e.g. stylistic punctuation) is the ellipsis (the omission of words or phrases from a sentence, leaving their meaning implied). Writers frequently use ellipses within sentences . . . but imagine if we applied the definition of the term to those complete scenes they leave out. There are many examples of this in *All the Light We Cannot See*; one scene ends and another begins, though the reader can infer that action of some sort has happened between the two.

Let's use some titles from your previous English classes to find examples. In *The Great Gatsby*, the group leaves the Plaza Hotel in separate cars and tragedy strikes, but we don't see that scene firsthand— we only hear about it later from Gatsby. In *To Kill A Mockingbird*, the jury deliberates behind closed doors and we see them return to the courtroom, but we don't see the scene of their debating the verdict. And though we aren't privy to seeing it played out, the wedding of Romeo and Juliet plays a pivotal role in the rest of the plot. Get the idea?

You will be writing a “ghost chapter” that portrays some action or conversation (ideally, both) that *could* have happened between the actual scenes in the book. Feel free to choose any section of the novel that you like, but here's the kicker: you cannot use *only* existing characters from the novel. You must include realistic portrayals of unseen, minor characters as your creative input into the author's work. You must provide some sort of new information that the reader didn't otherwise get (don't just rewrite an existing scene). To use the above examples as inspiration, here are some ideas:

- The two men who witness Myrtle's death in *The Great Gatsby* are Michaelis, who runs the coffee shop across from Wilson's garage, and the driver of the other car. Very little mention is made of the actual accident, but a scene of dialogue between

these two characters (and another of your own creation) that could have taken place before, during, or after the event would be really interesting.

- Who was on Tom Robinson's jury in *To Kill A Mockingbird*? What actually happened in the jury room during deliberations? A scene depicting this could be illuminating.
- Shakespeare didn't include Romeo and Juliet's actual wedding ceremony; we just know that they'll be meeting at Friar Lawrence's cell. Were they nervous? Hesitant? Blinded with love? Who was there to serve as a witness? So much unknown that could be fascinating to discover.

Remember, you're writing on *All the Light We Cannot See*; the above ideas are just to give you some examples of what I'm looking for. You must stay true to Doerr's plot, setting, and characters (don't turn them into vampires or have them speak in modern slang). Don't forget about Doerr's use of paragraphing, punctuation, vernacular, dialogue, time-period-specific wording, and so on. Be creative, but be very careful to adhere to his style (remembering that style is defined by a writer's choice of diction, syntax, imagery, figurative language, and other literary devices). Once you've read the book carefully, you should have a pretty good idea of Doerr's style; think about the preferred/common literary devices he uses and do the best you can to create some of your own in your chapter.

Don't panic—you won't be writing a chapter as long as those you found in the novel. About 500 words should do the trick (roughly a full, single-spaced typed page). Yes, please single-space your chapter in order to make it look as much like a novel chapter as possible. If you have the tech skills to do it, see if you can match the font and chapter heading/layout to the original, but don't agonize over it.

Include, at the top of your chapter, where we'd find this if it were part of the novel. Stay consistent with Doerr's style of titling his chapters, but write your own title. If your chapter would actually need a new part (Doerr separates his chapters into parts), provide that as well (Doerr uses dates). Include the page number where your chapter would be inserted (e.g. "This chapter would appear on page XX."). If your chapter would actually be in the middle of an existing chapter, let us know where on the page it would be inserted: "This starts on page 132, immediately after "The rising sun makes a pinhole on the horizon.""

Something to keep in mind: the easiest (and, I might add, quickest) option would be for a student to merely grab a "here's what happened before or after" idea—a fast prologue or epilogue. If you have a fantastically creative idea, go for it, but if you're just picking something quickly . . . these chapters do tend to have a "hastily done and without much thought" air to them. Really think. Find a spot in the book where you actually wished, when you read it, that there had been a scene included, or a scene that occurs "offstage," and write that. The effort you put forth in choosing your ghost chapter will be evident!

Your primary goal is to exhibit a very strong understanding of the novel and the author's style, as evidenced by your ability to infer implied action by established characters and the creation of your own character. It should go without saying (but I'll say it anyway) that the novel itself is to be your source; woe betide the student who relies on Sparknotes, Shmoop, or any other literary "training wheels" for assistance in working with the book. For this assignment, you'll need to construct original details that mirror the actual details provided by the author.

To reiterate an earlier point: while I encourage lively discussion about the book (and this title is one that people love to talk about!) I expect that all students will have their own original idea for the ghost chapter. **Do not share your work with anyone else.**

Remember, you must have a hard copy of your assignment ready to turn in on the first day of class. You must also retain a digital copy of your assignment in Google Docs in your pvlerners account. All students must be prepared to submit their assignments to turnitin.com to verify originality.

Here's a checklist of requirements to assist you (and so you'll see how you'll be graded).
Your ghost chapter:

- Is approximately 500 words, typed single-spaced
- Adheres to author's style in content and format
- Specifies where in the book this chapter would appear
- Uses additional character(s) of the student's creation
- Provides new information previously omitted from original novel
- Reveals strong effort at creativity
- Proves strong understanding of the original novel
- Is printed and ready to turn in on the first day of school, with a Google Doc ready digitally to submit to turnitin.com

Have fun with this assignment: I can't wait to see what you produce. Dazzle me!