

# AP English Literature Summer Reading

Greetings and welcome to AP English Literature! This is a fun, yet challenging course designed to strengthen your writing skills and broaden your abilities in analyzing literature. In preparation for our study in the fall, you do have some work to complete over the summer. Please see below for more info. All readings and assignments are expected to be completed and ready to turn in on the first day of school. I may not ask for a submission right away, but in case I do, you should be ready!

## **Assignment 1: Poetry Analysis (Written Reflection Required)**

Much of our studies will revolve around poetry. We will study poetry in full units and also on a weekly basis. In preparation for this, I would like you to complete an assignment that tells me your interpretation of “great poetry.” Select a poem that you consider to be worthy of study and instruction in AP English Literature. Then, write a 250+ word response explaining what makes this a “great” poem. I will not put any parameters on you, I simply want to know what you think makes a poem worthy of your time. Avoid online assistance in completing this assignment. There is no “wrong answer!” Make sure you include in-text citations, and include a works cited page. Your paper must be in MLA format.

## **Assignment 2: Choice Read of Literary Merit (Written Reflection Required)**

Throughout the year we will be reading several novels and plays in preparation for the AP English exam. Select a title to read over the summer. College Board frequently labels books or plays as titles with “literary merit,” although they never define that label. Choose a novel or play to read this summer that, in your opinion, has literary merit. Then, upon completion, write a 250+ word reflection explaining what that phrase means to you, and why this novel or play has literary merit. You may choose an additional title off of the list of suggested titles or you can research some common titles mentioned on the AP English Literature exam. Please do not re-read something or choose something below your reading level. Make sure you include in-text citations, and include a works cited page. Your paper must be in MLA format.

## **Assignment 3: Choice Read #2 (Book Review Required)**

In preparation for our first week of written analysis, you need to select one title off of the approved list and read it over the summer. Some titles are very long, but others are quite short, so there is no reason not to complete this assignment! If you choose a title off of this list for Assignment #2, you need to choose an additional title as well. Overall, you are required to read two books this summer in preparation for AP Lit. I urge you to read texts that are challenging, diverse, and different from what you normally read. Upon completion of reading, you will write a 600+ word book review. Make sure you include in-text citations, and include a works cited page. Your paper must be in MLA format.

### ***Writing the Book Review***

Book reviews typically evaluate recently-written works. They offer a brief description of the text’s key points and often provide a short appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the work. Readers sometimes confuse book reviews with book reports, but the two are not identical. Book reports commonly describe what happens in a work; their focus is primarily on giving an account of the major plot, characters, and/or main idea of the work. By contrast, a book review gives readers a sneak peek at what a book is like, whether or not the reviewer enjoyed it, and details on purchasing the book.

## BEFORE YOU READ

Before you begin to read, consider the elements you will need to include in your review. The following items may help:

- **Author:** Who is the author? What else has s/he written? Has this author won any awards? What is the author's typical style?
- **Genre:** What type of book is this: fiction, nonfiction, romance, poetry, youth fiction, etc.? Who is the intended audience for this work? What is the purpose of the work?
- **Title:** Where does the title fit in? How is it applied in the work? Does it adequately encapsulate the message of the text? Is it interesting? Uninteresting?
- **Preface/Introduction/Table of Contents:** Does the author provide any revealing information about the text in the preface/introduction? Does a "guest author" provide the introduction? What judgments or preconceptions do the author and/or "guest author" provide? How is the book arranged: sections, chapters?
- **Book Jacket/Cover/Printing:** Book jackets are like mini-reviews. Does the book jacket provide any interesting details or spark your interest in some way? Are there pictures, maps, or graphs? Do the binding, page cut, or typescript contribute or take away from the work?

## AS YOU READ

As you read, determine how you will structure the summary portion or background structure of your review. Be ready to take notes on the book's key points, characters, and/or themes.

- **Characters:** Are there characters in the work? Who are the principal characters? How do they affect the story? Do you empathize with them?
- **Themes/Motifs/Style:** What themes or motifs stand out? How do they contribute to the work? Are they effective or not? How would you describe this author's particular style? Is it accessible to all readers or just some?
- **Argument:** How is the work's argument set up? What support does the author give for her/findings? Does the work fulfill its purpose/support its argument?
- **Key Ideas:** What is the main idea of the work? What makes it good, different, or groundbreaking?
- **Quotes:** What quotes stand out? How can you demonstrate the author's talent or the feel of the book through a quote?

## WHEN YOU ARE READY TO WRITE

Begin with a short summary or background of the work, but do not give too much away. Many reviews limit themselves only to the first couple of chapters or lead the reader up to the rising action of the work. Reviewers of nonfiction texts will provide the basic idea of the book's argument without too much detail.

The final portion of your review will detail your opinion of the work. When you are ready to begin your review, consider the following:

- **Establish a Background, Remember your Audience:** Remember that your audience has not read the work; with this in mind, be sure to introduce characters and principles carefully and deliberately. What kind of summary can you provide of the main points or main characters that will help your readers gauge their interest? Does the author's text adequately reach the intended audience? Will some readers be lost or find the text too easy?

- **Minor principles/characters:** Deal only with the most pressing issues in the book. You will not be able to cover every character or idea. What principles/characters did you agree or disagree with? What other things might the author have researched or considered?
- **Organize:** The purpose of the review is to critically evaluate the text, not just inform the readers about it. Leave plenty room for your evaluation by ensuring that your summary is brief. Determine what kind of balance to strike between your summary information and your evaluation. If you are writing your review for a class, ask your instructor. Often the ratio is half and half.
- **Your Evaluation:** Choose one or a few points to discuss about the book. What worked well for you? How does this work compare with others by the same author or other books in the same genre? What major themes, motifs, or terms does the book introduce, and how effective are they? Did the book appeal to you on an emotional or logical way?
- **Publisher/Price:** Most book reviews include the publisher and price of the book at the end of the article. Some reviews also include the year published and ISBN.

## REVISING

When making the final touches to your review, carefully verify the following:

- Double-check the spelling of the author name(s), character names, special terms, and publisher.
- Try to read from the vantage point of your audience. Is there too much/enough summary? Does your argument about the text make sense?
- Should you include direct quotes from the reading? Do they help support your arguments? Double-check your quotes for accuracy.

## Books to Choose From

- 800 BC** – *The Iliad* - Homer  
**800 BC** – *The Odyssey* – Homer  
**1759** – *Candide* – Voltaire  
**1811** – *Sense and Sensibility* – Jane Austen  
**1813** – *Pride and Prejudice* – Jane Austen  
**1823** – *Frankenstein* – Mary Shelley  
**1838** – *Oliver Twist* – Charles Dickens  
**1847** – *Wuthering Heights* – Emily Brontë  
**1847** – *Jane Eyre* – Charlotte Brontë  
**1850** – *The Scarlet Letter* – Nathaniel Hawthorne  
**1861** – *Silas Marner* – George Eliot  
**1869** – *Little Women* – Louisa May Alcott  
**1884** – *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* – Mark Twain  
**1897** – *Dracula* – Bram Stoker  
**1891** – *The Picture of Dorian Gray* – Oscar Wilde  
**1899** – *The Awakening* – Kate Chopin  
**1902** – *Heart of Darkness* – Joseph Conrad  
**1903** – *The Call of the Wild* – Jack London  
**1911** – *Ethan Frome* – Edith Wharton  
**1915** – *The Metamorphosis* – Franz Kafka  
**1925** – *The Great Gatsby* – F. Scott Fitzgerald  
**1925** – *Mrs. Dalloway* – Virginia Woolf  
**1932** – *Brave New World* – Aldous Huxley  
**1937** – *Their Eyes Were Watching God* – Zora Neale Hurston  
**1937** – *Of Mice and Men* – John Steinbeck  
**1939** – *The Grapes of Wrath* – John Steinbeck  
**1940** – *The Power and the Glory* – Graham Greene  
**1945** – *Animal Farm* – George Orwell  
**1949** – *Nineteen Eighty-Four* – George Orwell  
**1951** – *The Catcher in the Rye* – J.D. Salinger  
**1952** – *Invisible Man* - Ralph Ellison  
**1952** – *East of Eden* – John Steinbeck  
**1953** – *Fahrenheit 451* – Ray Bradbury  
**1954** – *Lord of the Flies* – William Golding  
**1958** – *Things Fall Apart* – Chinua Achebe  
**1959** – *A Separate Peace* – John Knowles  
**1960** – *To Kill a Mockingbird* – Harper Lee  
**1967** – *The Chosen* – Chaim Potok  
**1969** – *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* – Maya Angelou (non-fiction)  
**1969** – *Slaughterhouse-Five* – Kurt Vonnegut  
**1970** – *Grendel* – John Gardner  
**1976** – *A River Runs Through It* – Norman Maclean  
**1977** – *Song of Solomon* – Toni Morrison  
**1984** – *The House on Mango Street* – Sandra Cisneros  
**1985** – *The Handmaid's Tale* – Margaret Atwood  
**1987** – *Beloved* – Toni Morrison  
**1989** – *A Prayer for Owen Meany* – John Irving  
**1990** – *The Things They Carried* – Tim O'Brien  
**1992** – *The Secret History* – Donna Tartt  
**1994** – *In the Lake of the Woods* – Tim O'Brien  
**1996** – *Into the Wild* – John Krakauer (non-fiction)  
**1996** – *Push* – Sapphire  
**1997** – *Cold Mountain* – Charles Frazier  
**1997** – *The Red Tent* – Anita Diamant  
**1997** – *Memoirs of a Geisha* – Arthur Golden  
**1998** – *The Poisonwood Bible* – Barbara Kingsolver  
**1998** – *The Handmaid's Tale* – Margaret Atwood  
**2001** – *Atonement* – Ian McEwan  
**2003** – *The Kite Runner* – Khaled Hosseini  
**2001** – *Life of Pi* – Yann Martel  
**2002** – *The Namesake* – Jhumpa Lahiri  
**2005** – *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* – Kim Edwards  
**2005** – *The Glass Castle* – Jeannette Wells (non-fiction)  
**2005** – *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* – Jonathan Safran Foer  
**2006** – *The Road* – Cormac McCarthy  
**2008** – *Serena* – Ron Rash  
**2008** – *Little Bee* – Chris Cleave  
**2010** – *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* – Rebecca Skloot (non-fiction)  
**2010** – *Room* – Emma Donoghue  
**2012** – *Salvage the Bones* – Jesmyn Ward  
**2013** – *The Goldfinch* – Donna Tartt  
**2014** – *Americanah* – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie  
**2014** – *All the Light We Cannot See* – Anthony Doerr  
**2014** – *A Man Called Ove* – Fredrik Backman  
**2015** – *Go Set a Watchman* – Harper Lee  
**2015** – *The Nightingale* – Kristin Hannah  
**2017** – *Sing, Unburied, Sing* – Jesmyn Ward  
**2017** – *Born a Crime* – Trevor Noah (non-fiction)  
**2018** – *Where the Crawdads Sing* – Delia Owens  
**2019** – *Little Fires Everywhere* – Celeste Ng

### **Suggested Plays:**

*Antigone* – Sophocles

Any Shakespearean play

*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* – Tennessee Williams

*The Crucible* – Arthur Miller

*Death of a Salesman* – Arthur Miller

*A Doll's House* – Henrik Ibsen

*An Enemy of the People* – Henrik Ibsen

*The Importance of Being Earnest* – Oscar Wilde

*Our Town* – Thornton Wilder

*Waiting for Godot* – Samuel Beckett

AP Writing Rubric

Criteria	AP Lit Skill	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
<b>Overall Paragraph</b>	<i>LAN-7.A - Develop a paragraph that includes 1) a claim that requires defense with evidence from the text and 2) the evidence itself.</i>				
Comments:					
<b>Thesis</b>	<i>LAN-7.B Develop a thesis statement that conveys a defensible claim about an interpretation of literature and that may establish a line of reasoning.</i>				
Comments:					
<b>Organization &amp; Reasoning</b>	<i>LAN-7.C Develop commentary that establishes and explains relationships among textual evidence, the line of reasoning, and the thesis.</i>				
Comments:					
<b>Textual Support</b>	<i>LAN-7.D Select and use relevant and sufficient evidence to both develop and support a line of reasoning.</i>				
Comments:					
<b>Control of the Elements</b>	<i>LAN-7.E Demonstrate control over the elements of composition to communicate clearly.</i>				
Comments:					
Total Score: _____ / _____					

