

AP Language & Composition

“Beauty” books

Cyrano de Bergerac by Edmond Rostand

Widely considered the most popular modern French play, *Cyrano de Bergerac* has dazzled audiences with its wit and eloquence since it premiered in 1897.

Cyrano, a quarrelsome, hot-tempered swordsman, as famous for his dueling skills and pugnacity as for his inordinately long nose, is hopelessly enamored of the beautiful Roxane. She, in turn, is in love with Christian, a handsome but inarticulate and slow-witted suitor. Asked for help by Christian in wooing Roxane, Cyrano pours out his heart in romantic dialogues — delivered under cover of night and dense foliage — and through ardent love letters written in the name of Christian.

The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison

Pecola Breedlove, a young black girl, prays every day for beauty. Mocked by other children for the dark skin, curly hair, and brown eyes that set her apart, she yearns for normalcy, for the blond hair and blue eyes that she believes will allow her to finally fit in. Yet as her dream grows more fervent, her life slowly starts to disintegrate in the face of adversity and strife. A powerful examination of our obsession with beauty and conformity, Toni Morrison’s virtuosic first novel asks powerful questions about race, class, and gender with the subtlety and grace that have always characterized her writing.

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde

In this celebrated work, his only novel, Wilde forged a devastating portrait of the effects of evil and debauchery on a young aesthete in late-19th-century England. Combining elements of the Gothic horror novel and decadent French fiction, the book centers on a striking premise: As Dorian Gray sinks into a life of crime and gross sensuality, his body retains perfect youth and vigor while his recently painted portrait grows day by day into a hideous record of evil, which he must keep hidden from the world. For over a century, this mesmerizing tale of horror and suspense has enjoyed wide popularity. It ranks as one of Wilde's most important creations and among the classic achievements of its kind.

Descriptions from amazon.com