
AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION: SUMMER READING

(CLASS OF 2025)

Dear Class of 2025,

Welcome to AP English Literature and Composition! We will read poetry, research, novels, and plays in this course. We will be writing many different types of essays, papers, analysis responses, poetry, narratives, and more. My hope is that you will be challenged by both the work in the class and the content of the reading. It will be a demanding class, but it will prepare you for the challenges of the Advanced Placement test that you will take at the end of the year. This summer reading assignment is designed to provide you with an opportunity to read a work that you are interested in and demonstrate your analysis skills, knowledge, and work ethic. I am excited for this coming year.

The AP English Lit course will be a culmination of the work you've done for the past three years. You will analyze a text to explore how authors achieve their purpose; creatively compose, synthesize, and support your analysis in a well-crafted argument about the over-arching significance of a text; and explain the why of a work of literature. For the AP English Lit exam, you will need to know how to closely analyze passages of fictitious prose, full novels or plays, and poetry. This assignment will help you with both of those goals (which will also help prepare you for college!).

Part 1: Choose a Novel

You will select one major fiction work from the list of five below, chosen because of the continued relevance of their themes. Select the work that interests you the most. To choose your novel or play, do some research. Research summaries and excerpts before you decide. Don't pick a work just because it looks "easy," or your friend already had a copy; take advantage of this opportunity to make a decision that will affect your life (and grades). Once you choose, if you can purchase your own copy, you can write in the text as you read and use the novel for later assignments. If you do purchase a copy or still have your library copy, please bring it with you during the first week of school.

- *Purple Hibiscus*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood
- *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck
- *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Bronte
- *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Bronte
- *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen
- *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens
- *A Raisin in the Sun*, Lorraine Hansberry
- *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston
- *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker

Part 2: Critical Reading and C-Notes

Read your chosen novel/play critically and thoroughly and take Cornell notes. A cursory reading or merely viewing a film/TV version will not be acceptable. I expect at least eight pages of handwritten, single-spaced pages in ink (each side of your paper counts as a page). You may not type your notes. Your notes must cover the whole book. Use common sense in evaluating whether your notes are lengthy and thorough enough depending on factors such as handwriting size, column size, etc. Your c-notes will be due the first day of school.

As with all c-notes, the right-hand column will contain a clear summary of the novel. Take notes over the plot as well as literary devices – especially why the author is employing those devices (what is the purpose, effect, etc.?). Use the left-hand column of your c-notes wisely; if you include only oversimplified headers or chapter numbers you will not receive full credit. Ask questions, make comments and connections, and interact with the text in the left column. One way to think of this is to use the right-hand column to explain WHAT is happening and the left-hand column to discuss and question HOW and WHY.

Consider what the author is saying about society. Though each of these works is radically different, each author is discussing themes that continue to be relevant. What is the author's overall message, meaning, and/or purpose? How does tone contribute to the work? How do literary devices support the overall message? What are your own reactions?

You should also consider the following elements:

- Date/Time Period of Work
- Genre, Type of Plot, Author's Style
- Point of View
- Characters and Descriptions
- Setting
- Symbols
- Themes
- Significant Quotes (including page number, speaker, situation, and importance)
- Your own reflections on the text, including questions and opinions.

Part 3: Fall FRQ

You will be writing a Free Response Question over your text at the beginning of the fall semester. This would be your first (and only) writing grade for the first few weeks, which is 40% of your overall grade. You must be able to use specific evidence from your work to fully answer the question. Therefore, if you do not take adequate notes, you will not pass this essay.

Things to Consider:

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism, which includes stealing words or ideas from other students or from any source (including but not limited to ChatGPT, Wikipedia, SparkNotes, CliffsNotes, etc.) other than your novel/play will result in your failure of the assignment (0%).

Don't procrastinate. This assignment is for your benefit: it will profoundly affect your grade throughout the semester, it serves as my first impression of your work, and it will broaden your knowledge base for the AP test.

Appendix: Helpful Literary Terms and Rhetorical Devices

Below are a number of terms to assist you in your analysis and c-notes. You should be familiar with them but look up those that are unfamiliar to you. You do not need to use all of them; this list is for your reference only.

Again, remember that it's not enough to simply identify these elements; you must also explain why the author chose to use them and what impact they have. Make sure avoid freshman-level analysis (e.g., "The author uses imagery because he wants us to be able to picture the scene."). Instead, consider the specific words and images used, what tone they suggest, atmosphere they create, or purpose they serve, and then explain why.

- Alliteration (or other sound devices)
- Allusion
- Characterization
- Description
- Dialect
- Dystopia
- Euphemism
- Figurative language
- Flashback
- Foil
- Foreshadowing
- Hyperbole
- Imagery
- Irony – dramatic, verbal, situational
- Jargon
- Juxtaposition
- Metaphor
- Metonymy
- Motif
- Organization
- Paradox
- Parallelism
- Personification
- Proverb / aphorism
- Satire
- Simile
- Slang
- Symbol
- Synecdoche
- Syntax (always include an adjective to describe the syntax; ex: staccato)
- Theme
- Tone (always include an adjective to describe the tone; ex: ominous)
- Understatement

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me over the summer. Although I will check my email periodically, I will not be checking it daily, so do not procrastinate. Please note: emails should contain a greeting (Dear Mrs. Boomer or Ms. Varghese), your question, and your name. I will not answer your email if you do not introduce yourself in it. I hope that you enjoy these selections, and I look forward to having you in class!

Welcome HCP Class of 2025,
Mrs. Boomer and Mrs. Varghese
eboomer@hicd.org / jford@hicd.org



1301 NE 101st Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73131
405-606-8742
www.hicd.org

