



2025 Summer Reading for Students Entering AP Literature and Composition

I want you to enjoy your summer reading. I hope that the titles listed below provide enough variety for you to find something you love. That said, please understand that the degree to which you take your summer reading seriously is the first evidence you will present to me of how seriously you intend to take the class as a whole. AP Literature is a class about reading and thinking, and I expect to see strong evidence of both in the way you approach your chosen titles.

Each of these texts has appeared on the AP Literature and Composition exam as a recommended title for the open-ended question. As such, these titles are deemed by the College Board as appropriate for study by AP Literature and Composition students. Parents who have concerns about mature content are encouraged to research titles before allowing their students to read. *Students are required to read **two** of these titles but are encouraged to read as many as they like.*

There is no written assignment for you to complete over the summer, but since we will be using these books as a starting point for our studies, you do need to know your chosen books well. A cursory reading or vague memory will not suffice. I suggest that you annotate, create sketchnotes¹, or keep a dialectical journal² as you read. While this is not required and will not be graded, it will facilitate your more complete engagement and memory of the book you choose. Please finish reading your books by the first day of school.

You may choose from the following titles:

1984, George Orwell

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain

The Alchemist, Paul Coelho

The Awakening, Kate Chopin

Beloved, Toni Morrison

The Color Purple, Alice Walker

Great Expectations, Charles Dickens

The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Handmaid's Tale, Margaret Atwood

Invisible Man, Ralph Ellison

Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte

Kindred, Octavia Butler

Macbeth by William Shakespeare

The Merchant of Venice, William Shakespeare

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Ken Kesey

Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen

The Scarlet Letter, Nathaniel Hawthorne

A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens

Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe

A Thousand Splendid Suns, Khaled Hosseini

Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte

¹**Sketchnotes** are a form of visual notetaking that allow you to use words, pictures, and spacial orientation on the page to show connections among characters, ideas, plot points, quotations, symbols, conflicts, and literary devices. You don't have to be a great artist to create helpful sketchnotes! [This video](#) introduces the idea and links to a blog with more details if you want to give this technique a try. (There are lots of examples online to look at.)

²A **dialectical journal** is a reading journal kept in a two-column format. In one column, you quote passages that seem significant (noting the page number), and in the other, you record your thoughts about that passage. What does it make you think about? What does it reveal about character/character development? How does it help distill or add nuance to the thematic interests of the novel? Does it contain a symbol, and if so, what idea does it stand for? Why does that plot point stand out to you? This dialectical journal lets you think, critique, question, summarize, remember, clarify, and process your reading—it's a unique conversation between you and the text.