

ONW Senior AP Literature Scholars,

Greetings and welcome to AP Literature and Composition! We will build on the analytical and writing skills you have developed in previous English classes, but with a focus on novels, plays, and poetry.

Prior to the start of school next year, you should read one of the following contemporary novels:

- *Circe* by Madeline Miller
- *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy
- *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead

You should not choose a title you have already read, either on your own or for another class. It is best if you purchase or download your own copy. If this is not possible, please contact Ms. White or Dr. Guidry about borrowing a copy. Avoid library books unless you can renew them through the first month of school.

The work you do this summer is the foundation for the beginning of next year. You should complete your reading by the first day of class. All students will write an on-demand (in-class) essay over their chosen title shortly after school starts, and we will continue working with these titles for the first several weeks of school in small group and whole class discussions, Socratic seminars, passage analyses, and other activities. If you do not read during the summer, you will begin the school year already behind.

You will not turn in any required written assignments, but we strongly recommend you annotate and take notes. The next page contains key concepts for AP Lit, so the best preparation you can do for the beginning of school is to think, write, and/or annotate about those concepts and how they apply to your novel. You should be able to discuss and write about those key concepts for your novel starting day one of class.

You may earn college credit for senior AP Literature in one of two ways. First, you may take the AP exam in May 2025. College credit awarded depends on your exam score and what your chosen college awards. Second, you may enroll in College Now. Our class counts as two classes at JCCC: Composition I and II; you will enroll and pay for each semester separately. If you are considering College Now, we recommend that you read further information about College Now at:

<https://www.jccc.edu/admissions/early-college/high-school-concurrent-enrollment/>

We are excited to work with you and anticipate a challenging, stimulating, and rewarding year. Please feel free to email us if you have any questions. We will check email periodically throughout the summer.

Sincerely,

Kristen White (kmwhite@olatheschools.org) - Room 1308
Cameron Guidry (cjguidry@olatheschools.org) - Room 1309

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Need help choosing a book? Read reviews at the following links:

Circe: <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/madeline-miller/circe/>

The Road: <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/cormac-mccarthy/the-road/>

Nickel Boys: <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/colson-whitehead/the-nickel-boys/>

Novel Preparation

As you read, you should annotate, take notes, and/or write journal entries in order to understand and recall important aspects of the novel as well as prepare you for deeper analysis. Focus on the AP Literature course standards and concepts below. These notes will not be submitted for a grade, but will be very useful.

Structure: Organization of a text (exposition, conflict, climax, etc.) as well as sequence and use of time (flashbacks, jumps forward, and overall pace)

- Are events told sequentially? Does the author employ flashbacks or jumps in time?
- What is the central conflict of the novel? What makes the conflict complex and thought-provoking?
- What point in the novel marks the climax, where the central conflict is at its greatest intensity?

Narration: The narrator or speaker's perspective

- What is the novel's perspective—1st person, 3rd person limited, 3rd person omniscient? Does the narration focus exclusively on one character, or shift between multiple characters?
- How does the chosen perspective affect your understanding of key characters and events?
- Is the narrator reliable? If not, how and why? What might be different in reality vs. their perspective?

Setting: The time, place, and social environment of a text

- What is the time period for the text? Is it contemporary to the author?
- Where is the novel set? Is that setting realistic, partially realistic, or fantastic?
- What is the social environment in your novel? Consider the main characters' age, culture, social group, class, and other distinctive features.

Characters: The individuals within a text

- Are there clear protagonists and antagonists? If not, why not?
- How should the reader feel about the main characters? (This usually signals the author's attitude.)
- How does the protagonist develop over the course of the novel?
- Identify key dynamic relationships in the novel. What makes those relationships shift? How do those characters change each other?

Style: The author's syntax, word choice, literary techniques, and other distinctive elements

- How would you characterize the writing style? Consider aspects like formality, length and complexity of sentence structure, use of dialect, and level of vocabulary.
- What literary techniques characterize the author? Do they frequently use sensory language and detailed descriptions? How often is figurative language essential to understanding the meaning?

Theme: A central message of a work. Themes are claims about life, human nature, or the human experience. A theme is NOT a single word. (Example: "Revenge" is not a theme. "Revenge cannot bring long-term fulfillment" could be a theme.)

- What characters and their choices do the author view with approval and which with disapproval?
- What characters experience positive and negative outcomes? Are those outcomes the result of their own choices or external factors?
- What symbols can you identify in the novel? A symbol is something invested with greater meaning both inside and outside the novel. It is often an object, but it could be a setting, a season, a color, even an experience. Symbols can often provide clues to themes by highlighting what the author values.
- What central beliefs can you identify from your novel? Consider what the author seems to think about what makes life meaningful, what brings characters happiness or redemption, and human nature in general.