

# **Honors American Literature**

## **2026 Summer Reading List and Assignment**

### **For 2026-2027 School Year**

#### **Introduction:**

Welcome to Honors American Literature and Composition! American literature is rich in themes of the pursuit of dreams and the exploration of the human condition. I look forward to the discussions that await us through analysis of the summer reading novels. The only supply that you need is a school issued laptop. I will supply anything else that you may use in class. Remember that cell phones and iPads are strictly prohibited. This policy will be enforced.

Honors English classes differ from the regular English classes in both content and the complexity of the work that students are expected to do. In this class, you will be asked to:

- Read closely some of the classics of American Literature
- Learn the strategies of literary criticism and practice those strategies
- Move from merely summarizing material into analyzing, interpreting and evaluating material
- Become engaged with the subject matter-question it, agree with it, disagree with it, compare it to other issues and make connections

The demands of the honors program are such that we must use the summer months to continue our study of literature and keep our minds sharp for next year. My goal is for you to become more proficient readers, writers, and thinkers.

**You must complete and turn in the following assignment no later than Friday, August 28, 2026.** At any point this summer, you may contact me via the [2026SumAmLit Remind @4k2fccg](#). Submission of this assignment is a prerequisite of this course. Failure to submit the assignment will result in a failing grade.

## Overview of Assignment:

This summer assignment is designed to prepare you for the rigorous reading and writing expectations of Honors American Literature. You will closely read two poems and analyze how poets use language and structure to explore identity, justice, freedom, and the American experience.

### Required Poem for All Students

"I, Too" by Langston Hughes

### Choice Poem (Select ONE)

"Theme for English B" by Langston Hughes; "We Real Cool" by Gwendolyn Brooks; "Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou; "Incident" by Countee Cullen; "Mending Wall" by Robert Frost; "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost; "O Captain! My Captain!" by Walt Whitman; "Nothing Gold Can Stay" by Robert Frost.

**Submit all components in **ONE** APA or MLA-formatted must be typed in APA or MLA word document and saved for submission. I will tell you where you can begin submitting the assignment on the first day of school.**

### Assignment Components:

#### Preamble: Author Background

Learning about an author is an important step prior to reading any piece of literature. Sometimes the life, time, or environment of an author's life gives us valuable information and helps to understand their writing better. You should be familiar with their personal and public lives, as well as the major influences of their time period. For each poet (two total), research and write a 200 to 300 word biographical overview. Include important details about the author's life, historical period, major themes, and experiences that may have influenced the poem. Explain how the poet's background deepens your understanding of the work.

#### Part I: Annotation of Both Poems (20pts)

Annotate both poems for vocabulary, figurative language, diction, imagery, symbolism, repetition, shifts in tone, and theme

#### Part II: Analytical Responses (20pts)

Write 300 to 500 words for each poem addressing summary, theme, three literary devices, historical context, and two key quotations.

### Part III: Comparative Literary Analysis Essay (40pts)

Write a 1,000 to 1,500 word essay answering: How do the two poets use literary techniques to explore identity and the American experience? Include a thesis, at least six quotations, literary analysis, historical context, and an APA or MLA Works Cited page.

### Part IV: Personal Reflection (10pts)

Write a 250 to 400 word reflection explaining which poem resonated with you most and what the poems reveal about America and belonging.

### Part V: APA or MLA Format and Mechanics (10pts)

Use Times New Roman 12-point font, double spacing, correct APA or MLA heading, in-text citations, and polished grammar.

### Suggested Summer Timeline

**June 15 to June 30:** Read and annotate both poems

**July 1 to July 15:** Complete analytical responses

**July 16 to July 31:** Draft the comparative essay

**August 1 to August 6:** Revise and proofread

**August 6-28:** Submit final assignment

### 100 Point Rubric

| Category                 | Criteria                                                     | Points |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Annotations              | Insightful and thorough close reading notes on both poems    | 15     |
| Author Background        | Accurate and meaningful biographical research for both poets | 10     |
| Analytical Responses     | Thoughtful and well-supported explanations                   | 20     |
| Comparative Essay        | Sophisticated thesis and in-depth literary analysis          | 35     |
| Personal Reflection      | Meaningful and clearly developed response                    | 10     |
| MLA Format and Mechanics | Accurate formatting and polished writing                     | 10     |

## Academic Integrity

All work must be original. You may use technology for proofreading and organization, but all analysis and writing must represent your own ideas. Be prepared to discuss your work during the first week of class.

Again, this assignment is due no later than Friday, August 28, 2026. If you have questions, please sign up for the *2026SumAmLit Remind @ 4k2fccg*. This is also an assignment to show me what you already know about writing, literary techniques and analyzing. We will continue to work on these elements throughout the course.

Have a Great Summer!

Mrs. M. Crawford (Crawfma)