

2026-2027 AP Literature and Composition Summer Reading

Mrs. Simon, Mrs. Garraway, and Mr. Boisclair

Welcome, readers and writers, to AP Literature and Composition! We look forward to working with you during the next school year. As part of this course, students will read and annotate a novel during the summer.

Reading over the summer helps keep students' minds "in the game" and adds to the number of major literary works they will have read by the time they enter AP Literature. Also, students in a given class arrive at school in August having had a common literary experience, providing them and their teacher with immediate instructional opportunities.

STEPS TO SUCCESS:

STEP 1

You will select 1 book from the list below to read over the summer. These books were chosen for their literary merit, the beneficial content, and for the frequency with which they appear as an option on the AP Exam at the end of the year.

STEP 2

While reading, students are **expected** to annotate in a physical copy to support their comprehension. **If a student is unable to mark up and make notes in their chosen book, they may use sticky notes.** **STUDENTS MUST HAVE A PHYSICAL COPY-NO DIGITAL**

How do I annotate? If you underline something, a note of why must follow.

- Underline or highlight the major points.
- Circle keywords or phrases that are confusing or unknown to you.
- Write notes in the margins restating the author's ideas. What kinds of things should I annotate?
- words and phrases that wowed you or confused you
- important scenes or key sections of dialogue
- character descriptions, key decisions, motivations, and flaws
- questions and inferences that pop into your head as you are reading
- connections you make to other texts, films, t.v. shows, or to your personal life
- figurative language (allusions, alliteration, metaphors, similes, etc.) used effectively

STEP 3

As you read and annotate, consider the following questions. Be prepared to discuss questions like these during the first week(s) of class. If you can answer these types of questions, you will likely be well-prepared for any task(s) your teacher assigns.

- What confused you or surprised you in this text?

- As you read this text, describe how you felt. For example, were you bored, caught up, thinking about characters, thinking about how you might react if in the same situation, enjoying the author's writing style, or enjoying the humor or suspense?
- Which events in the text are most connected to the setting?
- Which character or characters did you think learned the hardest or most important lessons in this text? Why did you choose that character?
- Which character changed the most in the text? How did that character change? What did you learn about that character in watching that change? What did you learn about yourself?
- Which passage in the text would you consider most significant or most important? Why? Did that passage help shape what you considered to be the message of this text?
- The plot (the series of events in the text) and the theme (the lesson or message you take away from the text) are not the same. Think of the text you just read. What is the plot? What is the theme? How does the plot relate to or affect the theme?
- Why did the author choose the narrator he or she did to tell this story?

STEP 4

Students can expect an assignment or assignments and discussion based on their summer reading during the first week(s) of class. Students will not be tested on the books until after the second week of class. However, students must come to the first day of class having read their selected novel, completed their annotations, and prepared to discuss their novel.

Helpful Hint: Don't wait until the week before school begins to try to read your selected novel and complete the annotations. Unexpected events may pop up that could get in the way of you completing your reading on time. Make a plan for the number of pages or chapters you will read per week, and stick to it.

AP Novel List

***Beloved* by Toni Morrison**

Sethe was born a slave and escaped to Ohio, but eighteen years later, she is still not free. She has borne the unthinkable and not gone mad, yet she is still held captive by memories of Sweet Home, the beautiful farm where so many hideous things happened. Meanwhile, Sethe's house has long been troubled by the angry, destructive ghost of her baby, who died nameless and whose tombstone is engraved with a single word: Beloved.

***The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead**

Elwood Curtis has taken the words of Dr. Martin Luther King to heart: he is as good as anyone. Abandoned by his parents, brought up by his loving, strict, and clear-sighted grandmother, Elwood is about to enroll in the local black college. But given the time and the place, one innocent mistake is enough to destroy his future, and so Elwood arrives at The Nickel Academy,

which claims to provide 'physical, intellectual and moral training' which will equip its inmates to become 'honorable and honest men'.

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

1970s Afghanistan: Twelve-year-old Amir is desperate to win the local kite-fighting tournament, and his loyal friend Hassan promises to help him. But neither of the boys can foresee what will happen to Hassan that afternoon, an event that will shatter their lives. After the Russians invade and the family is forced to flee to America, Amir realizes that one day he must return to an Afghanistan under Taliban rule to find the one thing that his new world cannot grant him: redemption.

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

Great Expectations charts the progress of Pip from childhood through often painful experiences to adulthood, as he moves from the Kent marshes to busy, commercial London, encountering a variety of extraordinary characters ranging from Magwitch, the escaped convict, to Miss Havisham, locked up with her unhappy past and living with her ward, the arrogant, beautiful Estella.

Pip must discover his true self and his own set of values and priorities. Whether such values allow one to prosper in the complex world of early Victorian England is the major question posed by Great Expectations, one of Dickens's most fascinating and disturbing novels.