AP English IV Summer Reading Annotation Guide

Dr. Kara Jacobi

2026-2027 Academic Year

Summer Reading Assignment:

1. Read and annotate *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen** – annotation check on **the second day of school**

2. Review vocabulary, literary terms, and MLA style packet (on MSA). Define any words you do not know. We will begin to discuss this in class on **the third day of school**, so you should have reviewed all of the information by then. You should make a copy of the document to save in your own shared folder; you can make notes on your own copy. We will return to these resources throughout the year.

****Be sure you have the Norton Critical 4th Edition (ISBN: 978-0393264883)**, as we will also read supplemental essays included there once the school year begins.**

You must have **your own, personal copy of the novel that **has not been previously annotated** by another student.You must have **a physical, paperback copy** of this novel to annotate and bring to class, even if you choose to listen to an audiobook to accompany your reading.**

Before the start of classes in August, you should do the following, in this order:

1. **Read this document in its entirety before you begin reading and annotating *Pride and Prejudice*.**
2. **View** this video on YouTube:
    a. **"On Regency England: 'What is the Regency Era?'"**
    b. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sx_jG94W5Hc
    c. Optional: Ellie Dashwood's YouTube channel has many useful videos about the novel and the world Austen's characters occupy.
3. **Listen** to this Podcast using Apple Podcasts on iPhone, Spotify Podcasts, or the show's website:
    a. **On Writing Style and Context: *Novel Pairings* Podcast episode, "5 Tips for Reading Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen"**
    b. https://novelpairings.com/2021/03/02/5-tips-for-reading-pride-and-prejudice-by-jane-austen/
    c. Optional: The page linked above lists several additional useful links related to Austen's writing style and time period/context (Regency England). The links to Columbia and Chicago Public Library provide specific historical context for *Pride and Prejudice*.
    d. Optional: *Novel Pairings* also has two episodes on the novel itself (beware of spoilers!)

4. **Read and annotate** *Pride and Prejudice* in its entirety, using the annotation topics on pages 5-6 of this document. You only need to read the text of the novel itself, which runs from pages 3-266 in the Norton Critical Edition. Annotations will be checked and evaluated for quality (not completion) on the second day of class.
5. Review packet on MSA by the third day of school. Define any words / terms you do not know on your own copy of the document.

This document includes:

1. An overview of annotation practices
2. Options and suggestions for how to annotate your text
3. A list of topics specific to the novel that you should make note of as you read
4. Notes on what activities you will be asked to do in relation to the summer reading novel when school begins
5. A brief biography of the novel's author
6. Links and resources that you can use to explore the context of the novel

Annotation Guide:

Please note that this is a general guide that can be adapted to suit your own needs or the specific text that you are reading. You should start with the suggestions on this guide, then you can adapt your annotation style as you see fit.

1. **Annotating a text**: Annotation refers to marking up your text by physically writing on it, using sticky notes or other markers, and/or taking notes as you read. Annotation is a key skill to learn as you develop into a sophisticated critical reader, writer, and thinker; it is also an important skill that will help you succeed in college classes. The purpose of annotation is to keep a record of your thoughts and questions as you read. This is especially useful to you as you complete your summer reading, as you will read the novel outside of class and will need to retain your knowledge of the text into the first quarter of the academic year. The following is a suggested annotation guide for each method listed above.

    a. **Marking up the text**: **This is the recommended method for annotating**. If you use this method, you will physically write in and on your book as you read. Differentiate your annotations as follows:
        1. Underline key lines and/or passages. An alternative annotation would be to place a star in the margin next to key lines/passages. The purpose of

underlining or marking key passages with a star is to help you remember where to find the most significant portions of the text. Passages may be significant because they highlight key plot events, point out important qualities of the main characters, or emphasize central themes or motifs of the work, which are essential to analyzing the text's meaning. In addition to underlining or marking with a star, it is best to record your thoughts in the margins or in a separate journal so you can remember what you thought was important about the passages.

2. Write a question mark in the margin next to passages or lines that you find confusing or that you have questions about. It is best to write out your question in the margins or in a separate journal so that you can remember what confused you about the passage.
3. Circle unknown words; look up the new words as you read so that you can both better understand the text and build your vocabulary. Write the definition in your book or in a separate journal. Even if you are slightly unsure of a word's meaning, it's a good idea to look up the word to clarify the meaning.
4. Develop a system of annotations specifically related to your text to help you keep track of specific issues/characters/themes as you read. For example, if the protagonist is named Joe, you might write a "J" next to the passages in the text that describe his character or tell us something important about his character. See more specific suggestions for these types of annotations below, in the annotation guidelines for *Pride and Prejudice.*
5. To reiterate point 1, make sure that you go beyond simply highlighting or underlining; you want to be able to remember WHY you marked these lines when you go back into the text to write your essay or participate in class discussions and activities. Please note that when I give you grades for annotating a text, those that only underline/highlight without making additional notes will earn only partial credit.

b. **Sticky note annotation**: If you prefer not to write on your text or you are using a borrowed copy of a text, you may wish to use a set of sticky notes to annotate your text. For example, you might use the Post-It brand flags (usually four or five different colors). You can decide what color to assign to each detail you want to annotate. You can also write very small, short notes on these skinny sticky note flags, or you may use bigger sticky notes that have more room for your writing. See the more detailed instructions for annotations above.
    1. Place a blue sticky note next to key passages.
    2. Place an orange sticky note and write a question mark on the notes when you come across a passage that is confusing or about which you have questions.

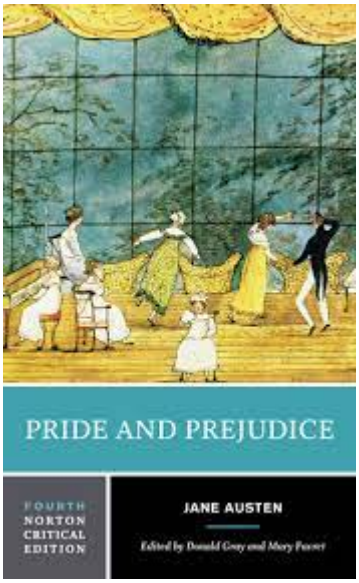
You could also write more detailed versions of your questions in a separate journal. Again, it's very important that you record your thoughts and ideas so you can remember why you are noting these lines or passages.

3. Place a yellow sticky note near unknown or unfamiliar words. Write the definition on the sticky note or in a separate journal.
4. Use the remaining colors to annotate other details about the text (characters, themes, etc.). You might want to assign a different color to each theme or character, or you may want to use the same color but write a short annotation

c. Specific instructions for annotating *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen follow on the next page of this document.

Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen
Published in 1813
Genres: Novel; fiction; novel of manners/comedy of manners; comedy

Please note: the summer reading and annotation assignment is only to read the full text of *Pride and Prejudice* itself (pp. 3-266), not the supplemental materials in the required critical edition. We will work with those supplements once the year begins, so you **DO** need to have the *Norton Critical Edition* of the text.



When we return to class, we will focus on the following key features of this text. Be sure to consider these as you read, while you annotate, and after you complete the novel:

1. Characterization – be able to trace the development of the protagonist -- Elizabeth (Lizzy) Bennet from the start of the novel to its end. Think about how she changes and what incidents spark her evolution. Consider how she is similar to and different from other characters and how relationships with others inform her own development.
2. Love and marriage -- the relationships in the novel represent diverse philosophies on marriage -- why people marry, what is most important in a marriage, what makes a successful marriage. You will be aware of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's marriage from the start, so assess what kind of marriage they have, what motivated their relationship in the beginning, and how their relationship appears to readers in the novel. As other characters marry throughout the text, evaluate the pairings and motivations for those matches.
3. Propriety and customs -- see also "novel of manners" below. What does the novel reveal about customs for upper middle class and upper class families of the Regency Era in England? What customs and practices seem most important? Which characters are known for their propriety and which are not? Why is this designation significant?

4. Money, inheritance, and class -- see also "novel of manners" below. As you read, consider how the possession of money, property, inheritance, reputation, and family name impact the characters' lives and their interactions with one another.
5. Judgment -- considering the novel's title, how do prejudices, biases, and judgments impact the novel's characters and their relationships? Are some characters more judgmental than others? Are there particular reasons why certain characters judge others? How does judging others reflect on the characters doing the judging? What does their judging tell you about those characters and what they value?
6. Interiority and narrative perspective -- see also the link below about Austen's free indirect discourse. Pay close attention to the narrative perspective and which character(s) the perspective seems to align with and which character(s)' thoughts the narrative voice can access. How does Austen's novel capture the concept of "interiority," or characters' internal and private thoughts and subjectivity? How does this focus on interiority impact others of the novel's themes?
7. Novel of manners/comedy of manners -- a novel of manners is a work of fiction that aims to describe a social world in detail. For example, this type of novel may focus on the interactions between members of a social class, attend to the customs and proper behaviors associated with that world, and even comment on or critique aspects of that culture. A comedy of manners is very similar, but the comedy's author will incorporate techniques like irony and hyperbole to create humor as a method of critiquing the mannerisms of a certain class of society (i.e., satire).
8. Be attentive to key scenes (the hosts of *Novel Pairings* call these "set-pieces" and point out balls, dinners, and other social events as good examples of set-pieces) and think about how those scenes relate to larger themes of the novel, how they contribute to character development, and how they function in terms of the plot and novel structure.

Required Activities (we will complete these once school begins; they are NOT due on the first day of class/syllabus review day. Tentative due dates for some assignments are included below):

1. Annotations in your novel will be checked on **the second day of class**. Be sure to use one of the methods explained in this document and refer to specific annotation topics rather than simply underlining or highlighting in one color.
2. There will be a quiz on context (video and podcast) and plot, character, theme, and writing style information from the novel at the **start of the second day of class** (the same day annotations are due).
3. You will participate in class discussions of characters, contexts, plot, themes, and writing style.
4. We will begin to practice AP close reading and literary analysis skills with a focus on characterization, narrative perspective (including free indirect discourse), and irony.
5. You will complete a characterization and foils exercise – Lizzy Bennet vs. other female characters – Jane Bennet, Charlotte Lucas, Lydia Bennet, Mrs. Bennet, Lady Catherine, Caroline Bingley, Georgiana Darcy

6. You will practice passage analysis – with a focus on free indirect discourse and narrative perspective.
7. You will write in response to an AP FRQ (free response question) on *Pride and Prejudice* – this will be a timed essay written in class, using your novel and quoting from the text. You will need to choose a significant scene (set-piece, as the hosts of *Novel Pairings* would say) from the novel, analyze it, and link it to the novel as a whole (likely timing is **the week of August 24**).
8. We will also use the supplemental essays in the Norton Critical Edition as an introduction to literary criticism – you will write a precis and give an informal presentation on articles in critical edition.

About the author:

Jane Austen (1775-1817) is one of the best-known English novelists of the 19th century. She is famous for her comedic novels about polite society, her irony and wit, and her innovative narrative style. Her novels have also continued to be pop culture phenomena to the present day, as countless adaptations of her works continue to grace television and movie screens, and various sequels, offshoots, and reimaginings have been produced. *Pride and Prejudice* is one of the best known and most beloved novels in the English language and is seen as a forerunner of the modern romance genre.

I recommend you read the short biographical note on Jane Austen written by her brother Henry, found on pages 269-270 of the *Norton* edition of the novel.

Additional Links and Resources (please note some of these are also listed above and are required, but most are supplemental and options):

On Regency England: "What is the Regency Era?" (Required)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sx_jG94W5Hc

The Lizzie Bennet Diaries: A video series that modernizes the story (Optional)
https://www.youtube.com/user/LizzieBennet

On Writing Style and Context: Novel Pairings Podcast episode, "5 Tips for Reading Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen" (Required)
https://novelpairings.com/2021/03/02/5-tips-for-reading-pride-and-prejudice-by-jane-austen/

This contains several additional useful links related to Austen's writing style and time period/context (Regency England). The links to Columbia and Chicago Public Library provide specific historical context for *Pride and Prejudice*.
Novel Pairings also has two episodes on the novel itself (spoilers!)

On Writing Style: "What is Free Indirect Discourse" by Jane Austen Centre (Optional)

https://janeausten.co.uk/blogs/jane-austens-work/what-is-free-indirect-discourse

This will help you understand Austen's unique narrative style and her innovative perspective shifts

Literary Criticism for after you read: "Jane Austen and Elizabeth Bennet: The Limits of Irony" by Carole Moses (Optional in Summer; it will be assigned during the school year)

http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/printed/number25/moses.pdf

A scholarly article discussing the links between the novel's protagonist and author. It's probably best to save this for after you finish the novel.

Media (Optional):

Hot and Bothered Podcast is currently recording a season discussing *Pride and Prejudice*, with deep dives into the novel, two chapters at a time, in each episode. The season title is *Live from Pemberly* and can be found anywhere you stream podcasts. It might be useful for you to listen to an episode on the chapters you've just read, particularly as you start the novel and if any chapters are confusing or raise questions in your mind as you're reading. This should not, of course, substitute for reading the novel.

The BBC's excellent and thorough adaptation of the novel, released in 1995 and starring Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle, is available to stream on Hulu with a subscription. I highly recommend this miniseries; you can watch as you read (for example, read the first volume of the novel and then watch the corresponding episode[s]) or when you have finished the novel. This should also not, of course, substitute for reading the novel.

The 2005 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, directed by Joe Wright and starring Keira Knightley and Matthew Macfadyen, is also critically acclaimed, though you may note some differences in characterization and details from what appears in Austen's original novel.