AP Literature and Composition Summer Assignment 2026

Summer Reading: John Steinbeck, *East of Eden* [ISBN: 978-0140186390]

Summer Assignment: The College Board focuses the AP Literature curriculum around core literary elements and principles. As you read Steinbeck's *East of Eden,* please **annotate thoroughly,** giving specific attention to the following literary elements, briefly explained by AP below.

1. **CHARACTER:** Characters in literature allow readers to study and explore a range of values, beliefs, assumptions, biases, and cultural norms represented by those characters.
2. **SETTING:** Setting and the details associated with it not only depict a time and place, but also convey values associated with that setting.
3. **STRUCTURE:** The arrangement of the parts and sections of a text, the relationship of the parts to each other, and the sequence in which the text reveals information are all structural choices made by a writer that contribute to the reader's interpretation of a text.
4. **NARRATION:** A narrator's or speaker's perspective controls the details and emphases that affect how readers experience and interpret a text.
5. **FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:** Comparisons, representations, and associations shift meaning from the literal to the figurative and invite readers to interpret a text.

Then, your assignment is to complete **a creative project** that discusses **each of the five literary elements** above in depth. In your discussion of each literary element, please include the following:

1: the function of each literary element (as per AP above)
2: at least one clear example of each element from *East of Eden* (include textual evidence)
3: an explanation or analysis of how the chosen example achieves its function in the novel

For instance, your project might investigate the literary element **Character** by looking closely at Tom Hamilton, examining how he represents the cultural norms of his time, and using the text to support your observations and claims. Your project might take on **Setting** by comparing the Trask ranch and King City in the novel, exploring how Steinbeck's depictions of each convey the specific values of those communities. And so on.

You have many options for the **form** your creative project might take. Here are a few to consider:

- **a podcast, video essay, or other type of movie**
- **a slide presentation**
- **a multipanel storyboard or graphic essay**
- **a tri-fold poster display**

Be creative. Feel free to use whatever content-creation platforms you are familiar with (Canva, Google Slides, Keynote, PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.) and incorporate whatever media or design elements you wish in order to make your project engaging for yourself and your audience. Above all, have fun!

Your creative project, as well as your book annotations, will be due on the first day of class.