

AP Lit Summer Reading Assignment 2026

Readings

- George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945)
- Short stories (to be emailed)
- Poems (to be emailed)

Assessments

1. **Reading Test.** Passage identification, chronology, and significance.
2. **Essay Exam.** A **closed book** AP FRQ Q3 Literary Argument essay (search the AP site for example prompts).

How to Read Literature

The best way to get ready for the assessments is to read well. Below are instructions for how to read literary works of art.

Aesthetic Reading

Aesthetics denotes the perception and sensitivity to imaginative beauty, deep feeling, and cognitive complexity of an artistic experience. To read aesthetically thus involved reading feelingly, more so than thinkingly, being carried away by the experience. Here are its protocols.

- 1) Secure a quiet environment, free of distractions.
- 2) Set aside a block of time (at least 30 mins) or a commitment to reading a chapter or section.
- 3) Have a pencil.
- 4) Read with non-judgmental attention without pausing, letting the narrative play out as if a movie, reading it fast enough to stifle the impulse to comment and reflect for too long.
- 5) With your pencil, mark the passages that:
 - a) resonate with you personally
 - b) exhibit emotional registers

- c) hold significance for the entire work
- d) have philosophical complexity
- 6) Mark the passage as quick as possible without pausing to annotate it.
- 7) At the end of the chapter or time block, immediately (in the same day at least) return to the marked passages and do close reading annotations.

Close Reading Annotations

Close reading annotations is the re-reading after the aesthetic experience. Whereas the emphasis in the first mode is fast reading, this mode is slow and contemplative, in which your prior knowledge, connections, and judgements are welcome. Here are its key modalities:

1. **Summarizing** key scenes, chapters, or sections, in your own words to
2. Noticing **patterns** (themes, motifs, repetition, symbols, colors, weather, personality, time, odd details).
3. Socratic **critical thinking**: posing factual, conceptual, and debatable questions for reflection or discussion.
4. Making **connections** to current events, other subjects, books, or films.
5. **Research**: pursue a reference and write what you learn on a post-it and its connection to the text.
6. **Reflect** on how characters, situations, or ideas relate to your own experiences, worldview, or existential questions.
7. Invent your own modality.

By the end, a third or half the book's margins should be filled, the pages worn and weathered.