

Summer Assignment 2026

“Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers.”

~Charles William Eliot, President of Harvard University from 1869-1909

Welcome to your Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition course! This is a demanding, extensive, college-level course; therefore, you must commence your studies immediately in order to prepare adequately for the year to come. If you have any questions about this assignment, please contact me via email at dori.hirsch@eischools.org, send a StudentSquare message, or stop by room 280 by June 16. It is important that you look over this assignment now and contact me with questions **before the end of the school year**, as I will answer questions during the summer, but I cannot guarantee the speed of my replies. **Read through the entire assignment before the end of the school year** to determine whether you need to ask for any clarification.

Also, it is crucial that you **do not wait until late in the summer to begin these tasks**. Start them soon and spread them out over the summer in order to avoid stress and mental anguish! While *The Great Gatsby* is not an especially difficult read, it is a full-length novel and you also have a significant amount of written work to complete based on it. Spread the work out and pace yourself accordingly. Please keep in mind that these assignments will comprise a **significant portion of your first quarter average next year**. Complete the assignments below **precisely according to the instructions**. **Your vocabulary flashcards, note packet on *The Great Gatsby*, and written response on *The Great Gatsby* are due on Friday, September 11, 2026.**

1. Flashcards based on the attachment: literary terms. There are 19 numbered terms listed; however, figurative language, irony, and point of view all also consist of sub-terms, which **must also each have their own flashcard**. Therefore, you must create a total of **32 flashcards**. For **each** of the terms listed, create a **flashcard** with a definition of the term **written in your own words**. **Do not copy directly from the sheet**. Process what the term means and determine your own words to explain the definition. The cards will be checked in class on Friday, September 11. You may create either physical flashcards on index cards or cut-up paper, or you may use a flashcard app. Study all these terms (you likely already know many of them!) and memorize your definitions of them. You will be tested on these terms a few weeks into the school year.

2. Read the novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. This classic, famed piece of American literature is set on LI and in NYC in the 1920s (which is also when it was written) and explores themes related to social class, the American dream, love and loss, attachment to the past, and more. You are going to create a **note packet** on the novel (which you will do for every major work we read in the course next year) by **carefully and thoroughly completing ALL of the following:**

- Keep a complete list of **characters**, with a description of each (main characters should be described in more detail; minor characters can be described minimally).
- Write a **brief but thorough plot summary** of each chapter. Try to use bullets rather than writing paragraphs.
- Note the **setting(s)** of each chapter and briefly describe it/them (this can be a bullet/bullets at the beginning of each chapter summary).

- Throughout the novel, make notes about the **conflicts**. Analyze **three (3) major conflicts in the novel** by examining: how each conflict arises, for or between which characters the conflict exists, how the conflict develops, and how it is resolved. You also need to include and analyze **one direct quote for each** conflict (the quote can relate to any element of the conflict). This should be completed in chart, outline, or bullet form.
- Choose eighteen (18) unfamiliar **vocabulary** words (2 per chapter)—for each, copy the phrase or sentence in which the word appears in the novel, with the page number; then, look up the definition and write it in your own words; finally, write an original sentence using the word correctly. Please make sure the words are **numbered** and **in their own section** of the note packet (don't include them with the chapter summaries).
- State a **theme** of the novel (themes are stated in a sentence and convey a major message of the work). Select three (3) direct quotes which support the theme. List the quotes and **individually, thoroughly analyze** how **each** one supports the theme.

3. **Complete the written response on *The Great Gatsby***: Answer this prompt in **2-3 well-developed paragraphs**. This should be thorough and analytical, but it is not a full-length essay. Be sure to support your responses with specific details from the text (a mix of quotes and paraphrases). Always cite your evidence! The prompt is:

- Analyze the overall impact of the **narrative perspective** in the novel. Questions you may wish to consider and address include: Is Nick a reliable narrator? Is he limited as a narrator in any way? What influences how he tells the story? Make sure that you are analyzing how the narrative perspective affects (an)other element(s) of the novel (for instance, character development, conflicts, theme, major plot points, etc.).

4. **The grading for your summer assignment will be as follows:**

- flash cards (32)—one 50-point grade
- *The Great Gatsby* note packet (**should be typed**)—one 100-point grade
- written response on *The Great Gatsby* (**should be typed**)—one 50-point grade

ALL of the above assignments are due on Friday, September 11, 2026. There will be no exceptions. Failure to turn in these assignments on the due date will result in scores of 0.

We will also spend some time discussing the novel at some point during the first quarter, after which you will write an essay based on a past AP exam prompt.

****REMINDER:** Any plagiarism of any portion of this work, from a book, Internet source, another student, etc. will result in a grade of 0 for all students involved in the plagiarism, with no opportunity to make up the assignment. **This includes AI. If an AI checker returns a greater than 50% chance your work is AI, you will receive a 0.** I encourage you to discuss the stories and assignments with peers, but your final products must **always** be written **entirely in your own words**.

This policy applies to ALL assignments throughout the school year, and will be restated in the course syllabus that you will receive in September.**

ATTACHMENT

AP English Literary Terms

Below, you will find a list of literary terms and devices essential to discussing and writing about literature in an AP English class. You are likely already familiar with many of these terms. Remember that you must create a flash card for each term, in your own words, including the sub-terms listed under figurative language, irony, and point of view.

1. **alliteration**- the repetition of identical or similar consonant sounds, normally at the beginnings of words; “gnus never know pneumonia” is an example of alliteration since, despite the spellings, all four words begin with the “n” sound.
2. **allusion**- a reference made in a literary text to another text, or to a myth, historical or contemporary event, person, place, artwork, or element of popular culture. In literature classes, the most important kind of allusion is literary allusion (i.e. a reference to another literary text). Of course, literary allusions are only truly effective for readers who are familiar with the text to which the allusion refers.
3. **antithesis**- a figure of speech characterized by strongly contrasting words, clauses, sentences, or ideas, as in “Speech is silver, but silence is golden.” Antithesis is a balancing of one term against another for emphasis or stylistic effectiveness.
4. **diction**- refers to the word choices a writer makes. Diction may be described as **formal** (the level of usage common in serious books and formal discourse), **informal** (the level of usage found in the relaxed but polite conversation of cultivated people), **colloquial** (the everyday usage of a group, possibly including terms and constructions accepted in that group but not universally acceptable), or **slang** (a group of newly coined words which are not acceptable for formal usage as yet).
5. **figurative language**- writing that uses figures of speech (as opposed to literal language or that which is actual or specifically denoted) such as **metaphor, irony, and simile**. Figurative language uses words to mean something other than their literal meaning.

TYPES INCLUDE:

- **hyperbole**- deliberate overstatement (i.e. calling a paper cut “a gaping wound”)
 - **metonymy**- referring to something in terms of a closely-associated object (i.e. referring to the U.S. government as “Washington,” because the city is closely associated with the government)
 - **oxymoron**- apparent contradiction (i.e. calling love “a sweet anguish”)
 - **personification**- giving human characteristics to a non-human object (i.e. “the laughing brook”); presenting an abstraction as a person (i.e. Justice as a blindfolded woman holding a set of scales)
 - **synecdoche**- substituting a part for a whole (i.e. referring to a hundred ships as “a hundred sails” or saying, “We have fifteen head of cattle.” [Hopefully, you have the rest of the cattle, too—not just their heads!])
 - **understatement**- the opposite of hyperbole (i.e. calling a gaping wound “a paper cut”)
6. **imagery**- in literature is the verbal evocation of the senses. In writing, that reflects vivid description using any of the five senses.

7. **irony**- can take many forms, and is notoriously difficult to define, but it virtually always involves some sort of contrast between two layers of something—between a surface layer and an underlying layer, or between two opposites. The phrase “ironic twist” is a good one to have in mind, since the word “twist” captures the dynamic, multilayered nature of irony. Irony puts a bend or kink into a situation or story. It exploits paradoxes and contradictions.

TYPES INCLUDE:

- **verbal irony**- when a speaker’s literal words (and their surface meaning) are at odds with his/her actual meaning
- **situational irony**- involves a difference between a character’s expectation (what appears to be about to happen) and actual events, or a difference between a character’s intentions and the actual results of his/her actions
- **dramatic irony**- occurs when a character naively speaks what he/she believes to be the truth, and/or acts on what he/she believes to be the truth, while the audience knows that he/she has got it all wrong
- **cosmic irony**- was a favorite of the ancient Greeks, and is a central feature of many of their myths and tragedies, including *Oedipus Rex*. Cosmic irony occurs when divine forces (gods or Fates) conspire against human beings to destroy them

8. **metaphor**- a figurative use of language, in which a comparison is expressed **without** the use of a comparative term such as “like,” “as,” or “than.”

9. **mood**- is closely related to tone. **Mood** refers to the overall emotional effect or “atmosphere” of a literary work. Mood refers to the kinds of emotions the work evokes in the reader (as opposed to tone, which illuminates the author’s attitudes toward his/her subject). Mood is usually described in terms of emotional states—“dreamy,” “menacing,” “romantic,” “humorous,” “gloomy,” “tense,” etc. One way to think about mood is to consider it as the text’s emotional “weather.”

10. **narrative form**- refers to any or all of the “building blocks” or narrative genres (i.e. novels or short stories, or any fictional work involving plot, including epic, mock-epic, or other long narrative poem [which may also be described using their poetic form]). The building blocks of narrative include such elements as characterization, dialogue, interior monologue, division into chapters, presentation of chronology (linear, circular, fragmentary), foreshadowing, rising action, climax, denouement, etc. It also includes such elements as point of view, tone, mood, and imagery.

11. **onomatopoeia**- the use of words whose sound suggests their meaning. Examples include “buzz,” “hiss,” or “pop.”

12. **paraphrase**- a restatement of an idea in such a way as to retain the meaning while changing the diction and form. A paraphrase is often an amplification of the original text for the purpose of clarity.

13. **poetic form**- refers to any or all of the “building blocks” of poetry—including such elements as the use of stanzas, rhyme scheme, rhythm, meter, caesura, enjambment, alliteration, consonance, assonance, etc. (This list can also include such elements as point of view, tone, mood, imagery, figurative language, and symbolism.)

14. **point of view (often abbreviated POV)**- refers to the perspective from which a story is told. In other words, through whose eyes are we viewing the story?

TYPES INCLUDE:

- **first person**- the narrator or main character speaks directly for him/herself; he/she will be saying things such as, "I walked down the street."
- **third person**- the narrator describes the characters from an outside perspective; the narrator will be saying things like, "He/she walked down the street." Third person narrators can be either **omniscient** or **limited**. **Omniscient** narrators are all-knowing and can share the thoughts of any character in the story. **Limited** narrators are only privy to the thoughts of one (or perhaps a couple of) character(s).
- **second person**- this is a very rarely-used POV, in which "you" is used instead of "I" or "he/she."

15. **satire**- is a form of literary social critique that depends on the use of irony. Traditionally, satire is understood to be a humorous but also deeply moral genre, which seeks to change bad behavior on the part of individuals or society as a whole, by mocking it.

16. **simile**- a directly expressed comparison; meaning, a figure of speech comparing two objects directly, using "like," "as," or "than." **Similes** are easier to recognize than **metaphors** because the comparison is explicit (i.e. "my love is like a fever," "my heart is like a black hole").

17. **style**- the mode of expression in language; the characteristic manner of expression of an author. Many elements contribute to style and, therefore, if a question asks you to discuss style or "stylistic techniques," you may analyze diction, syntax, figurative language, imagery, selection of detail, sound effects, and/or tone (whatever is appropriate to the text being analyzed).

18. **symbolism**- is something which exists literally within the world of a story—a rose, a bird, a rainbow, etc.—but which comes to have an abstract meaning beyond itself.

19. **tone**- refers to the attitude of an author towards the subject matter of his/her written work. *Literary tone* is to written works what "tone of voice" is to speech. Tone is described (much like mood) in terms of emotional/attitude terms (i.e. "angry," "sarcastic," "joyous," "sorrowful," etc.).