

AP Language and Composition
Summer Reading, June 2026

Welcome to AP Language and Composition! Much of this course will involve studying the ways in which an author can connect to his or her reader, forming compelling arguments using evidence from a text, and establishing a strong connection between a reader and a work of literature.

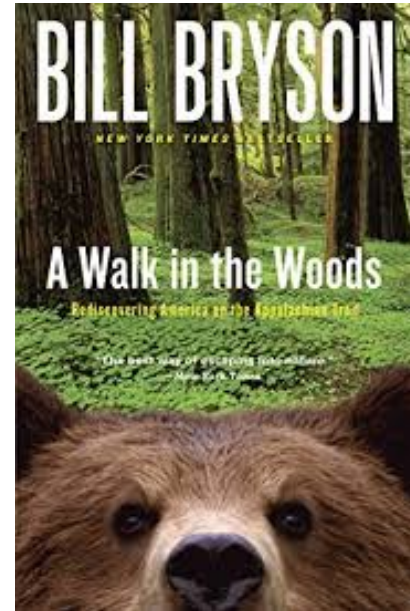
There are two titles for you to read this summer. As you read, consider not only the plot but why and how the text is constructed in a particular fashion.

Assignment #1 – Bill Bryson’s *A Walk in the Woods*

In *A Walk in the Woods*, Bill Bryson captures his intent to walk the entire span of the Appalachian Trail, which covers over 2,000 miles of the East Coast. This nonfictional narrative provides a series of adventures that show Bryson much about not only the American culture, but about himself.

Any author sets forward to convey a central message; this message, oftentimes referred to as the author’s purpose, is best understood when examining the work of literature as a whole.

After completing Bill Bryson’s *A Walk in the Woods*, reflect upon the closing lines of the book to create an original thesis explaining Bryson’s purpose in writing his memoir and how Bryson works to bring this purpose to life for readers. Construct a four-paragraph essay that uses specific and relevant evidence from the text to support your interpretation of the author’s central message and how various strategies are used in the narrative.



This four-paragraph essay should be an original work – there should be no collaboration and no utilization of outside resources (including A.I.). The essay should be done on a Google Doc that you share with me prior to starting the writing process. The essay as a whole should be two double-spaced pages, which should let you have the room to focus on what you see as Bryson’s specific intent and relevant examples. Should you want to use quotations, be certain that you both cite them in the proper MLA format and use the quotations for a larger purpose.

Remember that the work you submit should be original and unique; it is expected that you read the text and write the paper without any assistance, as any instances of plagiarism or the use of A.I. will result in all parties receiving a 0 for the assignment.

Once class schedules are finalized in August, I will email you with the code for your particular class section. The final essay should be submitted prior to the first day of school; if you find you are unable to submit, please print a copy to turn in. Points will be deducted for late assignments.

Assignment #2 – F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*

There’s no written assignment for this title, but we will be using it in September as a part of our first unit, and there will be an in-class assessment as a piece of the fall.

As you read Fitzgerald’s novel, you consider not only the plot but also the structure of the text. This is a great (pun intended) chance to think on the ways in which the author captures a scene, constructs a narrative flow, and fosters the reader’s interest in the novel as a whole.

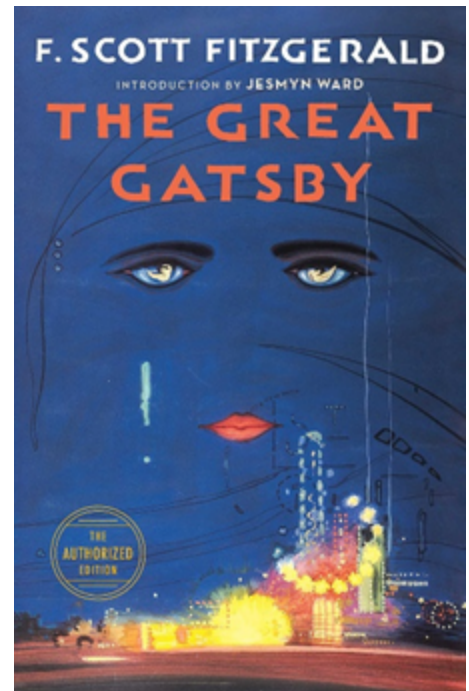
You may consider making note of passages that seem particularly interesting but be sure that you are looking beneath the surface. Some of the questions you may ask include:

Why does Fitzgerald create a character in the way in which he does?

In what ways does Fitzgerald offer tidbits of information to the reader, allowing the storyline and characters to develop over time?

What authorial choices are made when structuring each of the chapters? Where does each begin, and where does it close?

What impact do these choices have on the audience?



You will find that conducting a close reading of the text is essential for this course; students in AP English courses should not need to use Spark Notes or any other resources, even if used after doing the reading itself.

You will be assessed on the novel in early September. The assessment may include short answer and multiple-choice questions based on passages from the novel and/or articles of criticism based on Fitzgerald’s novel.