

AP English Literature: Summer Writing and Reading, 2026

Dear AP Literature class of 2026-2027,

Beyond the sleeping and sun of summer vacation, senior year awaits! Since applying to college is a momentous part of your first semester, revising and fine-tuning your college essay is part of our first unit. To be ready for that, this summer, please complete a draft of your college essay.

AP English Literature and Composition substitutes for a first-year course in college composition. For many universities and colleges, qualifying on the AP exam allows you to either sidestep a 100-level writing course or receive college credit for it. The aim of this course is to enable you to write effectively in your academic courses and into your professional life. As the College Board asserts, a typical college course of this nature emphasizes analytical and argumentative writing, the kind of writing that “forms the basis for academic and professional communication.” AP English Literature, in particular, asks you to apply your analytical skills to how authors craft the meaning of a literary work, with special attention to the richness of language. Because reading complex literature analytically is an essential component of this class, I would like you to embark on your reading over the summer. Please see the assignments below. I am so excited to start teaching you in the fall!

To do:

- 1) Complete the first draft of your college essay (650-word limit). Here’s the link the common app prompts: [Announcing the 2026–2027 Common App essay prompts](#)
- 2) In addition to your own choices in summer reading, select a novel of high literary merit to read for our class. I’ve included a short list of suggestions below. Please **do not** choose any that you have read before. Allow yourself time to hunt for what you would really like to read!
 - ◆ Annotate as you read. Note the author’s choices regarding perspective, characters, motifs, language, and plot design, considering how they contribute to the meaning of the work as a whole.
 - ◆ What will we be doing with this reading? Creating a study template and then writing a book review. This template is not part of your work for over the summer, but you will be doing it as an initial assignment. You may want to read it (below) so you can bookmark pages to use later!

Adichie, Chimamanda	<i>Half of a Yellow Sun</i>
Allende, Isabel	<i>The House of Spirits</i>
Dostoyevsky, Fyodor	<i>Crime and Punishment</i>
E. M. Forster	<i>A Room with a View</i>
Gyasi, Yaa	<i>Homegoing</i>
Hardy, Thomas	<i>Far from the Madding Crowd</i>
Huxley, Aldous	<i>Brave New World</i>
Morrison, Toni	<i>Sula</i>
Murakami, Haruki	<i>Kafka on the Shore</i>
McEwan, Ian	<i>Atonement</i>
Orwell, George	<i>1984</i>
Rhys, Jean	<i>Wide, Sargasso Sea</i>
Roy, Arundhati	<i>The God of Small Things</i>
Silko, Leslie Marmon	<i>Ceremony</i>
Tolstoy, Leo	<i>Anna Karenina</i>

Be advised: In its pursuit of depicting the human condition, literature may contain provocative and emotionally challenging material such as verbal abuse, physical and sexual assault, and racist, ableist, antisemitic, and misogynist views. I encourage you to read book summaries and reviews before you begin reading!

Study Template: Literary Works

Title:

Author's full name:

Nationality:

Era/ century:

Genre:

Setting(s):

Key characters. List characters and identify any parallels, contrasts, foils, protagonist, antagonist:

Key conflicts (as a way of briefly explaining plot):

Distinctive structural elements. This could be how the beginning situation sets up the narrative; what the crisis/climax is; if there are shifts in pacing or point of view, changes in setting, ironic situations or revelations, flashbacks or foreshadowing; how the ending resolves the plot (or leaves aspects unresolved):

6 standout scenes. Specify the scene and connect it to at least one literary element—symbols, images, metaphor, foils, parallels, etc.

6-8 quotable quotes. Keep these brief and memorable, and include page numbers:

Motifs (repeated ideas/images):

Themes—These are full-sentence messages. (Do not write a topic like “alienation in the modern world.” What is the author’s message about alienation and the modern world?).