

English 11AP Summer Reading Assignment 2026
Department of English
Great Neck North High School

As per College Board, “The AP Language and Composition course is designed to help students become skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts and to become skilled writers who can compose for a variety of purposes. By their writing and reading in this course, students should become aware of the interaction among writer’s purposes, audience expectations, and subject, as well as the way generic conventions and the resources of language contribute to effective writing.” This summer, you will develop these skills by completing reading and writing assignments that transcend the boundaries of genre and time period.

For this assignment, you will read Nathaniel Hawthorne’s 1850 novel *The Scarlet Letter* and selections from John Green’s 2021 collection of essays *The Anthropocene Reviewed* in order to study how individuals contend with private desires and larger systems of memory, social expectations, and public judgements.

Please purchase the [Dover Thrift Edition](#) of *The Scarlet Letter* (ISBN: 0486280489). While you may prefer to read a digital edition, a print copy is preferred for this assignment. Should you choose a digital copy, the experience will be less successful once we begin studying the novel in the fall.

The following selections from *The Anthropocene Reviewed* will be available on the Great Neck North English Department website:

- “Humanity’s Temporal Range”
- “The Internet”
- “Auld Lang Syne”
- “Googling Strangers”

TASK: In an essay of 4-6 pages (MLA style), identify and analyze **how** and **why** Nathaniel Hawthorne portrays the relationship between personal identity and public judgement, using John Green’s work to enhance your argument.¹

Your essay should: be guided by a thesis that clearly addresses the task above; analyze specific rhetorical choices and narrative techniques that Hawthorne uses in order to comment on the relationship between private identity and public judgement; meaningfully and productively incorporate evidence from both writers; and provide clear commentary that advances your argument.

This assignment gives you the opportunity to create a meaningful first impression that is based on integrity, timeliness, and effort. Do not treat the impact of that first impression lightly. It poses an additional and unnecessary challenge for you if you have to overcome a negative first impression. And remember, falling a little short in terms of content is way easier to fix than falling short in terms of integrity. Thus, while you may be tempted to use online explanatory materials, including but not limited to AI, you should note that that is not an appropriate way to do this assignment. If you feel you must resort to these shortcuts, please reconsider whether this college-level course is the class for you.

This assignment is due via hardcopy (in class on the first day of school) AND via Google Classroom/[turnitin.com](#) by 8:00am on 1 September 2026.

¹ **Note:** you do *not* need to cite from all four essays from *The Anthropocene Reviewed*; however, your essay should demonstrate a clear understanding of how Green’s essays help readers to better understand the argument you are making about Nathaniel Hawthorne.