English 12 AP: Literature and Composition

2020 Summer Reading Assignment

Summer Reading for students in 12 AP Lit and Comp is a requirement and will be graded for completion credit upon your arrival to school in the fall. Any students unable to complete the assignment over the summer will have six weeks to complete it once we return to school in the fall.

You are to select one book from the list below and read it. Then select one prompt from the Literary Argument prompts that you feel you could apply well to your book selection and compose a full essay in response to the prompt.

Specific expectations for the essay.

* 1.5 pages minimum (typed/printed in hardcopy form)
* Title/author of work under discussion
* Highlighted / identified thesis statement which addresses the prompt
* At least three specific textual references

Essays will be collected during the first week of school. This will be a completion grade and will serve as an initial diagnostic for the teacher. Do your best; we recognize that many of you are unused to writing with this degree of complexity at this point. You will be required to revise this essay for a more substantial grade later in the marking period, once we have explored some analytical and literary concepts together.

Each teacher has discretion as to how your work will be further utilized in class, but you may safely assume that activities such as seminar discussions, journals, short writing focuses, application of new lenses or concepts, peer editing, introduction to rubrics, or projects are all possibilities.

*Pride and Prejudice* (Jane Austen)

*Love and Shadows* (Isabel Allende)

*Blind Assassin* (Margaret Atwood)

*The Testaments* (Margaret Atwood)

*Go Tell It on the Mountain* (James Baldwin)

*The Sellout* (Paul Beatty)

*Monkey Bridge* (Lan Cao)

*The Hours* (Michael Cunningham)

*The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (Junot Diaz)

*All the Light We Cannot See* (Anthony Doerr)

*Light in August* (William Faulkner)

*Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* (Jamie Ford)

*Brave New World* (Aldous Huxley)

*A Long Way Down* (Nick Hornby)

*High Fidelity* (Nick Hornby)

*A Doll’s House* (Henrik Ibsen)

*The Known World* (Edward P. Jones)

*The Poisonwood Bible* (Barbara Kingsolver)

*Obasan* (Joy Kogawa)

*The Lowland* (Jhumpa Lahiri)

*On Chesil Beach* (Ian McEwan)

*Love in the Time of Cholera* (Gabriel Garcia Marquez)

*The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears* (Dinaw Mengestu)

*No Country for Old Men* (Cormac McCarthy)

*Sold* (Patricia McCormick)

*A Mercy* (Toni Morrison)

*Home* (Toni Morrison)

*Sula* (Toni Morrison)

*Going After Cacciato* (Tim O’Brien)

*The Violent Bear it Away* (Flannery O’Connor)

*Where the Crawdads Sing* (Delia Owens)

*Bel Canto* (Ann Patchett)

*Shipping News* (Annie Proulx)

*Goodbye, Columbus* (Philip Roth)

*Empire Falls* (Richard Russo)

*The Risk Pool* (Richard Russo)

*The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* (Mary Ann Shaffer & Annie Barrows)

*The Color Purple* (Alice Walker)

*The Temple of My Familiar* (Alice Walker)

*The Nickel Boys* (Colson Whitehead)

*The Underground Railroad* (Colson Whitehead)

**Other choice ideas? Just about any Booker, Nobel, or Pulitzer Prize winner will be acceptable, but please email Mr. Burns or Mr. Lutz to get permission (cf. above for emails).**

**Explore these sites for e-book and audio book availability:**

* <https://archive.org/>
* <https://openlibrary.org/>
* from WHS library’s page: Destiny Discover [this is a great resource to see the list and get a sense of the titles, but not such a good source for reading the books) and MacinVIA
* <https://www.audiobooksync.com/> (available through the end of July; once you download the SORA App, the setup code is: audiobooksync)
* Arlington Public Library uses Overdrive and Libby; download the Apps through the App Store on your laptops. If students do not have an Arlington Public Library Card, they can get one online <https://libsys.arlingtonva.us/selfreg>

Given your selected reading (from the choices available) select one of the following ten prompts:

1. In some works of literature, a character who appears briefly, or does not appear at all, is a significant presence. Write an essay in which you show how such a character functions in the work. You may wish to discuss how the character affects action, theme, or the development of other characters. Avoid plot summary.

2. Novels and plays often include scenes of weddings, funerals, parties, and other social occasions. Such scenes may reveal the values of the characters and the society in which they live. Select such a scene from your reading and, in a focused essay, discuss the contribution the scene makes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

3. The eighteenth-century British novelist Laurence Sterne wrote, “No body, but he who has felt it, can conceive what a plaguing thing it is to have a man’s mind torn asunder by two projects of equal strength, both obstinately pulling in a contrary direction at the same time.” Choose a character (not necessarily the protagonist) whose mind is pulled in conflicting directions by two compelling desires, ambitions, obligations, or influences. Then, in a well-organized essay, identify each of the two conflicting forces and explain how this conflict with one character illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole.

4. One definition of madness is “mental delusion or the eccentric behavior arising from it.” But Emily Dickinson wrote Much madness is divinest Sense— To a discerning Eye— Novelists and playwrights have often seen madness with a “discerning Eye.” Select a character whose apparent madness or irrational behavior plays an important role. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain what this delusion or eccentric behavior consists of and how it might be judged reasonable. Explain the significance of the “madness” to the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

5. Novels and plays often depict characters caught between colliding cultures -- national, regional, ethnic, religious, institutional. Such collisions can call a character’s sense of identity into question. Select a character who responds to such a cultural collision. Then write a well-organized essay in which you describe the character’s response and explain its relevance to the work as a whole.

6. In Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* (1899), protagonist Edna Pontellier is said to possess “That outward existence which conforms, the inward life that questions.” Identify a character who outwardly conforms while questioning inwardly. Then write an essay in which you analyze how this tension between outward conformity and inward questioning contributes to the meaning of the work. Avoid mere plot summary.

7. In many works of literature, past events can affect, positively or negatively, the present activities, attitudes, or values of a character. Choose a character who must contend with some aspect of the past, either personal or societal. Then write an essay in which you show how the character’s relationship to the past contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

8. In a novel by William Styron, a father tells his son that life “is a search for justice.” Choose a character who responds in some significant way to justice or injustice. Then write a well- developed essay in which you analyze the character’s understanding of justice, the degree to which the character’s search for justice is successful, and the significance of this search for the work as a whole.

9. A *bildungsroman*, or coming-of-age novel, recounts the psychological or moral development of its protagonist from youth to maturity, when this character recognizes his or her place in the world. Select a single pivotal moment in the psychological or moral development of the protagonist of a bildungsroman. Then write a well-organized essay that analyzes how that single moment shapes the meaning of the work as a whole.

10. Many works of literature feature characters who have been given a literal or figurative gift. Then gift may be an object, or it may be a quality such as uncommon beauty, significant social position, great mental or imaginative faculties, or extraordinary physical powers. Yet this gift is often also a burden or a handicap. Select a character who has been given a gift that is both an advantage and a problem. Then write a well-developed essay analyzing the complex nature of the gift and how the gift contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.