AP Literature and Composition Summer Assignment

The purpose of AP Literature and Composition is to engage you in the careful reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature. Through the close reading of selected texts, the reader deepens his/her understanding of the ways writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure for readers. As you read, consider a work’s structure, style, and themes as well as such smaller-scale elements as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone.

The committee for AP Literature and Composition believes heartily in Henry David Thoreau’s famous quote, “Read the best books first, or you may not have a chance to read them at all.” When he speaks of the “best books,” he means the classics. Beyond the list I give you here that is mandatory, spend your time this summer reading (or perhaps rereading) the classics. I have listed many of the most popular on the back of this paper. It is critical that you know as many classics and modern classics as possible. You must prove yourself to be a well-read person on the AP Exam.

Required Reading:

Assignment: 1) Read and annotate this book. When I say “annotate” I do not mean to the heavy extent you did for AP Language. We will be looking for different things in AP Literature. Instead, make notes in the margins so that when you return to school to talk about the book, you can do so in a cohesive way. Using annotating is a way to digest the book and remember its key points. 2) Read Katherine Mansfield’s short story “The Garden Party” in Chapter 27 of the book. Follow the 5 ground rules that are after the short story. Use the knowledge learned throughout the book to write a 2-3 page paper answering: What the story signifies? and How does it signify it? Do NOT use outside sources for help. Test your own analytical skills here. There is no right or wrong answer as long as you back up your opinion. Have fun with it! ☺ 3) If you have a bad memory, you may find it helpful to make a list of the objects and things they symbolize as you go through the book. This is not required but may prove extremely helpful to you in the course.


Assignment: 1) Read the book. You may annotate if you like but the annotations will not be part of your grade. However, many of you will find it hard to read without annotating now! ☺ 2) Keep a reading log of the novel. You may also do your own research on the internet. The key is to create a log or journal that shows me that you interacted with the text. Remember that the reading experiences in AP Literature are to be both meaningful and pleasurable. Pull the meaning out. Tell me what about the reading gives you pleasure. Be specific. There are 25 chapters in the novel. I expect to see no less that 20 entries in your reading log. 3) In your reading log, include a list of symbols and what they signify. Also include possible themes and motifs. Again, let these come from your brain, not outside sources. It is okay to consult those sources, but you must let your brain do the work. If not, you will only be hurting yourself when it comes time to take your AP Exam.
The following is a list of the most frequently cited works that appear on the AP Literature and Composition Exam. **Those with stars by their names are the novels we will be reading in class** (either together or as part of a literature circle). Get your brain ready for the AP Exam and for the course by reading a few of these this summer if you have time. The required reading for the summer, Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, is the most cited of all the novels that appear on the AP Exam, hence the reason it is required reading for everyone! The following are suggested readings. Enjoy your summer of reading! The more you read, the better AP student you will be.

“*Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.*” ~Joseph Addison  Exercise your brain this summer!

*Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte
Great Expectations by Charles Dickens
Moby Dick by Herman Melville
*Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevski
*Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte
*King Lear* by William Shakespeare
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain
*Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad
The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne
The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald
The Awakening by Kate Chopin
Billy Budd by Herman Melville
Catch-22 by Joseph Heller
Light in August by William Faulkner
Ceremony by Leslie Marmon Silko
Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce
*As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner
Candid by Voltaire
Othello by William Shakespeare
Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison
*Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston
*Antigone* by Sophocles
Bless Me, Ultima by Rudolfo Anaya
Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller
Jude the Obscure by Thomas Hardy
The Jungle by Upton Sinclair
Lord Jim by Joseph Conrad
Native Son by Richard Wright
A Passage to India by E. M. Forster
Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy
Beloved by Toni Morrison
The Color Purple by Alice Walker
The Crucible by Arthur Miller
Cry, The Beloved Country by Alan Paton

A Doll’s House by Henrik Ibsen
An Enemy of the People by Henrik Ibsen
Ethan Frome by Edith Wharton
The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams
Hedda Gabler by Henrik Ibsen
Obasan by Joy Kogawa
Portrait of a Lady by Henry James
*A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry
Rosencrantz and Gildenstern Are Dead by Tom Stoppard
The Sun Also Rises by Ernest Hemingway
The Tempest by William Shakespeare
*Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett
*Gulliver’s Travels* by Jonathan Swift
*Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert
The Mayor of Casterbridge by Thomas Hardy
The Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare
Moll Flanders by Daniel DeFoe
Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf
Murder in the Cathedral by T.S. Eliot
The Sound and the Fury by William Faulkner
*A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams
Sula by Toni Morrison
*Tess of the D’Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy
The Turn of the Screw by Henry James
*Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* by Edward Albee
Our Town by Thornton Wilder
*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen
Lord of the Flies by William Golding
*1984* by George Orwell
*Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley