

AP Literature and Composition Summer Reading List 2023

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Section I (due the first day of class) – Students must choose one of the following “Classic” novels. You can find them at the library or you can access free books online:

- [*Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison](#) - This is set in the United States (both the South and Harlem) in the late 1920s/early 1930s. A nameless narrator deals with racism and personal identity. Note: This is the most frequently cited text on the AP Literature test. Also, make sure you are reading the correct novel, as there is another with the same title.
- [*Emma* by Jane Austen](#) - This is set in England in early nineteenth century. A wealthy girl is determined not to marry, but she plays matchmaker for others in her community. Note: The movie *Clueless* is based on this classic novel.
- [*A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens](#) - This is set in both London and Paris before and during the French Revolution. It is historical fiction and addresses multiple themes of justice, class, and sacrifice (and public executions). Note: The novel inspired a Batman movie; it also has one of the most well-known opening lines of any book.
- [*Dracula* by Bram Stoker](#) - This is set in the late nineteenth century in Transylvania (Romania) and England. A classic gothic novel, the story centers on a young English lawyer who becomes imprisoned by a vampire. Note: This novel is an example of an epistolary - it is told through letters and journals.
- [*The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood](#) - This is set in the future in what is currently the United States. Birth rates have plummeted and a religious, patriarchal government takes over the country, forcing fertile women into surrogacy. Note: There is a popular Hulu show based on this dystopian novel, but there are significant differences from the book. It is still an interesting comparison.
- [*The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald](#) - This is set in NYC during the spring and summer of 1922. The story revolves around the American Dream and the attainability of that dream based on social class. Note: This is the most-read novel in eleventh grade classrooms - if you read this in an eleventh grade class, you may not select it for summer reading.

After reading, write a personal response paper in which you discuss a theme from the work and relate that theme to life in the 21st Century. Begin the paper with a paragraph that briefly summarizes the plot and includes the title, the author's name, and the date the novel was first published. You should have a thesis statement at the end of your introductory paragraph. This personal response is to be 2 pages, typed, double spaced. Include within the body of the paper a **minimum of six quotes** that support that theme; cite the page number in parentheses after the quote. Submit in Google Classroom.

Section II (due the first day of class) – Select one of the following twenty-first century works for a **handwritten** dialectical journal of at least **fifteen** entries. Before selecting your choice, I encourage you to look for interviews or podcasts with these authors. They are all living and still writing. This will not only help you pick a voice you like, but it will also help you understand themes of the novel you read.

- *A Thousand Splendid Suns* - Khaled Hosseini. Set in Afghanistan, this tells a story of subjugated women over the course of four decades.
- *The Yellow Birds* – Kevin Powers. This story is set in Iraq, Virginia, and Fort Dix, and tells a story of a soldier in the War on Terror.
- *Purple Hibiscus* – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. This coming-of-age story is about a young girl and her family in Nigeria around the 1980s.
- *All the Light We Cannot See* – Anthony Doerr. Set before, during, and after WW II, this tells the stories of a young blind French girl and a German orphan boy forced to be a Nazi.
- *There, There* – Tommy Orange. Set in contemporary Oakland, this explores the lives of Native Americans living in cities.

You will be using your journal for an in-class essay about injustice. Work to find and analyze quotes that will help you be successful on that writing assignment. Choose passages that seem significant, powerful, thought provoking, or puzzling. Texts often challenge the reader's attitudes, positions on current issues, and personal/family values. Social injustice is a concept that relates to the unfairness or injustice of a society and/or members of the society in the divisions of rewards, burdens, and other incidental inequalities. What examples of social injustice and/or social justice did you discover in the novel that you read? Pay attention to this

Look for: effective or creative use of stylistic or literary devices, structural shifts, examples of patterns, passages that illustrate a particular character or setting. Your responses should be more analytical than explanatory. I will have examples posted on the class Google Classroom.

Section III (Due the first day of class) - Poetry – read the poems below based on the novel you selected.

- *A Thousand Splendid Suns*: read Margaret Atwood’s “[Marrying the Hangman](#),” Maya Angelou’s “[Caged Bird](#)” and Alta’s “[Miscarriage](#).”
- *The Yellow Birds*: read Randall Jarrell’s “[Losses](#)” and “[The Death of the Turret Ball Gunner](#),” and Kevin Powers’s “[Letter Composed During a Lull in the Fighting](#)”
- *Purple Hibiscus*: read “[You Laughed and Laughed and Laughed](#)” by Gabriel Okara, Sylvia Plath’s “[Daddy](#),” and Chinua Achebe’s “[Answer](#)”
- *All the Light We Cannot See*: read John Ciardi’s “[On a Photograph of a German Soldier Dead in Poland](#),” Rudyard Kipling’s “[If-](#),” and William Wordsworth’s “[To My Sister](#)”
- *There, There* – Tommy Orange: read Joy Harjo’s “[New Orleans](#),” Sherman Alexie’s “[How to Write the Great American Indian Novel](#),” and Louise Erdrich’s “[Captivity](#)”

After reading the poems, [complete the document attached](#). You can do this by hand or on the computer. It is important that you use your own reactions. I do not want you reading online analysis for this assignment. I know that you have not had much poetry analysis in high school. This is just for you to read and think about what these poems are saying.

In addition to the summer reading work, you must log onto Google Classroom at some point during the summer – before the first day of school. This is a class site that will allow you to ask questions, discuss works, and keep up-to-date on assignments and changes in the class. It also has an assortment of AP resources. Some of your assignments throughout the year will involve utilizing this site. Here is your [rubric for the summer reading assignment](#).

The focus of AP Literature is to develop excellence in analyzing and interpreting literature. This cannot be achieved by relying on online guides, such as Spark Notes, rather than reading the literature. Often the most challenging reading provides the greatest reward. You should work to cultivate your appreciation of novels, plays, poetry, and creative non-fiction and look for opportunities outside of summer reading to read works of literary merit. Have a great summer, and I look forward to meeting all of you in the classroom next year.