

AP Literature and Composition

Summer Reading Assignment

2024-2025

Welcome to AP Literature and Composition!

Why read literature? According to author and educator David M. Wright, literature “exercises the imagination, transports us out of our current context and into other ages and places, enables us to see the world through the eyes of others, plays a fundamental role in shaping society, fosters contemplation and reflection, helps us to know ourselves and to understand man.”¹

Below are three FRQ-3 options from previous AP Literature and Composition exams. When we return to school, you may be required to respond to one using your summer reading selection. Preview them for an understanding of what is expected of you in May 2025.

Choose **one** novel to read over the summer. The novel may be one of the ones listed with each FRQ or may be a novel of your choice of similar literary merit. ***You should not select a novel that has previously been taught in your English classes.*** Remember, the purpose of this summer reading assignment is to expose you to new literature that you could possibly use on the AP Literature and Composition exam and to read for enjoyment.

Read and annotate the physical novel*. You can write in the novel or use post-it notes, but you must have the physical copy upon your return to school in August. Annotations must be handwritten.

YOU ARE NOT RESPONDING TO THE FRQ PROMPTS. They are included to give you an idea of what to expect on the exam.

Annotation Requirements: ANNOTATING simply means marking the page as you read with comments or notes. The principal reason you should annotate your books is to aid in understanding. When important passages occur, mark them so that they can be easily located when it comes time to write or respond to the text. Marking key ideas will enable you to discuss the reading with more support, evidence, and proof than if you rely on memory.

How to Annotate Your Texts

¹ David M. Wright. “Why Read Literature?” Memoria Press. 2019.

- **Highlight** or **underline** important passages, words, or descriptions (items that seem unique and deliberate).
- Connect ideas with **lines or arrows**
- **Bracket []** literary elements (symbolism, theme, foreshadowing, etc.), figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification, etc.), diction (effective or unusual word choice), syntax (order of words, phrases, or sentences; punctuation).
- **Highlight** or **underline** new characters when they are introduced.
- **Keep a list of characters** with descriptions and page numbers where found inside the front cover of the book.
- Write **notes in the margins** (your reaction to what happens, predictions, characterizations, questions you might have, etc.).
- Write a **brief summary at the end of each chapter**. Include the most important plot points. These can consist of bulleted points.

Note: Be as thorough as possible, but **avoid** highlighting or underlining **too much**. Use highlighting and underlining sparingly; highlighting and underlining everything tends to make notes useless, but systematic underlining of key phrases and ideas helps them to stand out when you want to find them.

*If you are having difficulty obtaining a physical copy of your novel of choice, please email one of the following teachers for assistance:

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**See next pages

Question 3

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

A symbol is an object, action, or event that represents something or that creates a range of associations beyond itself. In literary works a symbol can express an idea, clarify meaning, or enlarge literal meaning.

Select a novel or play and, focusing on one symbol, write an essay analyzing how that symbol functions in the work and what it reveals about the characters or themes of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

You may choose a work from the list below or another novel or play of comparable literary merit.

As I Lay Dying
The Awakening
Beloved
Bleak House
Cat's Eye
The Cherry Orchard
The Color Purple
Crime and Punishment
The Crossing
The Crucible
A Doll House
Equus
A Farewell to Arms
Fences
The Glass Menagerie
The Golden Bowl
The Grapes of Wrath
The Hairy Ape
Heart of Darkness
Invisible Man
Jude the Obscure

The Kite Runner
Lady Windermere's Fan
Macbeth
Madame Bovary
The Memory Keeper's Daughter
Moby-Dick
The Namesake
Nineteen Eighty-four
Our Town
The Plague
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
A Prayer for Owen Meany
A Raisin in the Sun
Reservation Blues
Snow
A Streetcar Named Desire
Things Fall Apart
Waiting for Godot
Wise Blood
The Women of Brewster Place

Question 3

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

In many works of literature, a physical journey—the literal movement from one place to another—plays a central role. Choose a novel, play, or epic poem in which a physical journey is an important element and discuss how the journey adds to the meaning of the work as a whole. You may write your essay on one of the following works or on another of comparable quality. Avoid mere plot summary.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
The Aeneid
All the Pretty Horses
As I Lay Dying
Candide
The Canterbury Tales
Cold Mountain
The Divine Comedy
Dutchman
Going After Cacciato
Gulliver's Travels

Heart of Darkness
The Importance of Being Earnest
Light in August
Middle Passage
Moby-Dick
Mother Courage
Obasan
The Odyssey
Peer Gynt
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead
Song of Solomon

Question 3

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

Often in literature a character's success in achieving goals depends on keeping a secret and divulging it only at the right moment, if at all.

Choose a novel or play of literary merit that requires a character to keep a secret. In a well-organized essay, briefly explain the necessity for secrecy and how the character's choice to reveal or keep the secret affects the plot and contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

You may select a work from the list below, or you may choose another work of recognized literary merit suitable to the topic. Do NOT write about a short story, poem or film.

Beloved
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof
Crime and Punishment
Death of a Salesman
A Doll House
Ghosts
Great Expectations
The Great Gatsby
Heart of Darkness
The Importance of Being Earnest

Jane Eyre
Light in August
Macbeth
The Mayor of Casterbridge
The Piano Lesson
The Playboy of the Western World
Romeo and Juliet
The Scarlet Letter
Song of Solomon