

AP Lit Summer Assignment 2018

(Due Wednesday 8.22.18)

“The role of a writer is not to say what we can all say, but what we are unable to say.”

-- Anais Nin

Introduction

Your summer assignment is a chance for you to read a variety of texts, explore ideas, and write in response to what you are reading and thinking. The assignment has four parts and all work is due the first week of school. You do not need to print out your work, all you need to do is send me a URL to your website via the Google Classroom. To enroll in the summer AP Lit Google classroom, please use the class code [ijq8lhx](#). If you wish to have peers interact with your writing this summer, you may share it publicly on the classroom.

I have linked to all the texts that are available online, but in some cases you may need to go to your local library to get a copy of a book of poems or a novel. In many cases, I have included extra links if you are fascinated by what you read and are interested in exploring more.

As Voltaire said, “Think for yourself and let others enjoy the privilege of doing so too.” Enjoy the privilege of reading great texts. Enjoy the writing process. In short, have a great summer!

Part I -- Writing

Text -- [Maria Popova's \(of Brain Pickings\) Tips on Reading, Writing and Blogging](#)

After listening to Maria Popova’s interview on the Tim Ferriss podcast, I want you to head over to www.edublogs.org and create a free blog. This is going to be your space, so design it to your liking. [Here is a helpful video that will teach you how to set up and customize your blog.](#)

Assignment -- Maria Popova spoke elegantly about the power of books and the role that writing has in a well-lived life. For your first blog post, choose one idea she expresses in this interview and develop a thorough explanation as to why you found that idea powerful, meaningful, or one with which you wish to disagree. Include the quote and establish its connection (or disconnection) to you.

Why it is important -- You will use this blog throughout summer to complete various assignments. We will also use this platform throughout the year to record responses to what we are reading. Some of the writing will be informal and exploratory. Other times it will be creative and far reaching. It will also be times when you will be called upon to persevere and arrive at something thorough and highly polished.

Part II -- Seeing

Text -- [The Nerdwriter Analyzes Edward Hopper's "Nighthawks"](#)

Evan Puschak has his own [YouTube channel \(NerdWriter\)](#) in which he offers video essays. I admire these essays that range from art, to film, to politics, to literature. He is thoughtful, well-researched, and has a keen sense of timing and audience awareness. In this video essay he analyzes one of the iconic 20th century American paintings, “Nighthawks.” Pay attention to not only what he sees, but also notice the biographical and historical context he weaves into his analysis. I admire how he uses both images and words to teach you about the painting.

Assignment --For your second blog post, I want you to choose a work of art that has had meaning to you. It can be a painting. It can be a song. It can be a photograph. It can be any creative endeavor that you can justify for its artistry. I want you to analyze that work of art on a similar level to Evan Puschak (the Nerdwriter). If you look at his show notes on the YouTube page for the “Nighthawks” video essay, he has done a fair amount of research. I want you to do the same. Tell me what you value in the work. Tell me why it has [artistic merit](#). But also, excavate relevant information about the artist and place the work in its historical or cultural context.

Why it is important -- I want you to enrich your personal language, background knowledge, and vocabulary through writing as a means of communicating. This blog post asks you to see the complexity of a work of art. You have to articulate not only what it means to you, you must also have a reader appreciation for the artist, as well as the cultural and historical context in which it was created and how that work has transcended time to speak to you today.

Part III -- Reading

Text 1 -- [Leo Babauta's Why I Read \(+ a Dozen Book Recommendations\)](#)

Assignment -- Write a blog post about your relationship with reading. Share an honest assessment of the role that it plays in your life. I value honesty over flattery. If reading is not your thing, say it. If you love it, then let me know. I don't care so much which side you take. More important than what you choose is the truth of your reflection. I want to read about why you feel the way that you do. I want to get to know you as a reader.

Why it is important -- This is the first step in me getting to know you as a reader. What's more important than that?

Text 2 -- [Beloved Poet Thom Gunn's Reading List of 10 Essential Books to Enchant Teenagers with Poetry](#)

Assignment -- Choose any poetry collection mentioned in the article on *Brain Pickings* and find three poems that resonate with you. I want you to see the [complexity](#) in each of the poems. Write a [poetic analysis](#) for each of the three poems on your blog. Look for parts that are interrelated. Find the individual aspects of the poem unite to create a whole. [Here](#) is a good example of a complex analysis of a popular middle school poem. A more sophisticated analysis of an e.e. Cummings poem can be found [here](#).

Why it is important -- Thoughtful readers write to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately by selecting apt and specific evidence, organizing that evidence into broader ideas, and conveying the impact of its meaning.

Part IV – Required Reading Actions

Action 1—You have four required summer texts to read this year. They are intended to be read as literary pairings, but the order in which you read them is not important. Avoid the temptation to use SparkNotes or other similar short cuts—your knowledge of many diverse and varied texts is what will help you earn a passing score on the AP exam in May. When you cheat on the reading, you ultimately cheat yourself.

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

The Awakening by Kate Chopin

The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien

Slaughterhouse Five by Kurt Vonnegut

Action 2—For each text, you are required to write **TWO** blog entries. One should be a response to the text as a whole, the other should function as a double entry journal with at least **THREE** quotes highlighted (you select quotes from the text and respond to them specifically using at least **THREE** different ideas for reaction as listed below). We are not imposing a minimum word count requirement/paragraph requirement. Rather, we ask that you fully respond and put your best foot forward. For many of you, this will be our first impression of you as a student. Consider that you never get a second chance at a first impression, and write accordingly.

Ideas for Reactions to Literature

1. Personal reaction and application- This option refers to your feelings about the passage and possible applications or comparisons to situations you have encountered.
2. Interpretation- This exercise involves your interpretation of the meaning of the particular passage and the revelations this interpretation may bring forth.
3. Conflict analysis- This topic is very straightforward. Analyze the major conflict revealed in a particular passage. The conflict may involve character, plot, theme, etc.
4. Thematic analysis- Again this is a very straightforward topic. Simply analyze the thematic elements in the chosen passage
5. Characterization- Examine the characters *and* their development in the selected passage.
6. Literary analysis- This topic involves holistic analyses of a passage for its literary elements such as style, meaning, etc., and how they work to produce a meaningful response in the reader.
7. Vocabulary exploration- Involves research into any diction unknown to you or any vocabulary you may find appealing or interesting.

Sample Double Entry Journal:

Quote: “I woke up out of the ether with an utterly abandoned feeling, and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. ‘All right,’ I said, ‘I’m glad it’s a girl. And I hope she’ll be a fool—that’s the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.’”

This quote, spoken by Daisy Buchanan in chapter one, on page 17 of Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* is a key passage for the character. In a moment that should be full of maternal sentimentality, reminiscing about the birth of a child, she instead ties the event to the disappointment of being a woman and the difficulty of navigating life within the confines of the rigid gender roles which dominated the era of the novel. Daisy is all too aware of her husband’s philandering ways, and despite her anguish, there is little she can actually do to stop his bad behavior. As a woman, she is fully reliant on Tom’s wealth and power. She has no skills to make it through life on her own, much less support a child. She has no choice but to endure Tom’s behavior, which breeds resentment and continual embarrassment. She wishes for her infant daughter to be a fool, because ignorance is bliss, as the clichéd statement goes. Beyond the intimate knowledge of her husband’s infidelity, she is also making a blithe statement about the happiness of women who are less intelligent than her while doing nothing to suggest that she would like to see that change for her own child. She is simply reinforcing a gender code that was established long ago, proving my initial thought that Daisy is a VERY weak female character and generally speaking, is very unlikeable. (Characterization)

AP Reading List

We suggest reading at least a few of the books, authors and poets listed below during the summer *in addition* to the required reading

Recommended Poets

Matthew Arnold
W. H. Auden
Elizabeth Bishop
Gwendolyn Brooks
e e cummings
T. S. Eliot
Lawrence Ferlinghetti
Robert Francis
Robert Graves
Donald Hall

Seamus Heaney
Galway Kinnell
Maxine Kumin
Pablo Neruda
Sharon Olds
Wilfred Owen
Linda Pastan
May Swenson
Edna St. Vincent Millay
Dylan Thomas

Recommended Authors

Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*
Aeschylus: *Oresteia*
Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility*
James Baldwin: *Go Tell It on the Mountain*
Charlotte Bronte: *Jane Eyre*
Emily Bronte: *Wuthering Heights*
Albert Camus: *The Stranger*
Willa Cather: *My Antonia, One of Ours, Death Comes to the Archbishop*
Anton Chekhov: *The Cherry Orchard*
Sandra Cisneros: *The House on Mango Street*
Joseph Conrad: *Heart of Darkness, Lord Jim, The Secret Sharer*
Stephen Crane: *The Red Badge of Courage*
Don DeLillo: *White Noise*
Charles Dickens: *Great Expectations, A Tale of Two Cities, David Copperfield*
Fyodor Dostoyevsky: *Crime and Punishment*
Theodore Dreiser: *An American Tragedy, Sister Carrie*
George Eliot: *Silas Marner, Middlemarch, Mill on the Floss*
Ralph Ellison: *Invisible Man*
Euripides: *Medea*
William Faulkner: *As I Lay Dying, The Sound and the Fury*
Henry Fielding: *Tom Jones*
F. Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*
Gustav Flaubert: *Madame Bovary*
E. M. Forster: *A Passage to India*
Thomas Hardy: *Jude the Obscure, Tess of the D'Urbervilles*
Nathaniel Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter*
Joseph Heller: *Catch-22*
Ernest Hemingway: *The Sun Also Rises*
Homer: *The Odyssey*
Zora Neale Hurston: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
Aldous Huxley: *Brave New World*
Henrik Ibsen: *A Doll's House, Ghosts, Hedda Gabler*
Kazuo Ishiguro: *The Remains of the Day*
Henry James: *The Turn of the Screw, The American*
James Joyce: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
Franz Kafka: *Metamorphosis, The Trial*
Ken Kesey: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
Maxine Hong Kingston: *The Woman Warrior*
D. H. Lawrence: *Sons and Lovers*
Gabriel Garcia Marquez: *One Hundred Years of Solitude*
Herman Melville: *Moby Dick, Billy Budd*
Arthur Miller: *Death of a Salesman, The Crucible*
Toni Morrison: *Song of Solomon*
V. S. Naipaul: *A Bend in the River*
Eugene O'Neill: *Desire Under the Elms, Long Day's Journey into Night*
George Orwell: *1984*

Tim O'Brien: *In the Lake of the Woods*
Alan Paton: *Cry, the Beloved Country*
Jean Rhys: *Wide Sargasso Sea*
Jean Paul Sartre: *No Exit, Nausea*
William Shakespeare: *King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, Twelfth Night*
George Bernard Shaw: *Major Barbara, Man and Superman, Pygmalion*
Sophocles: *Antigone, Oedipus Rex*
John Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath, Of Mice and Men, Cannery Row*
Tom Stoppard: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*
Jonathan Swift: *Gulliver's Travels*
Amy Tan: *The Kitchen God's Wife*
Leo Tolstoy: *Anna Karenina*
Mark Twain: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
Voltaire: *Candide*
Alice Walker: *The Color Purple*
Edith Wharton: *Ethan Frome, The House of Mirth*
Oscar Wilde: *The Importance of Being Earnest*
Virginia Woolf: *To the Lighthouse*
Richard Wright: *Native Son*