

Advanced Placement English and Literature
Summer Reading Assignment 2017
Ms. Harrod

Welcome to AP English IV! The summer reading assignment will build on the knowledge and skills you gained in your AP English III class as we continue studying works of recognized literary merit. My hope is that the summer reading will provide a meaningful extension to the college level literature we will be studying during the school year. For the summer assignment, you will be expected to read deliberately and thoroughly, taking time to understand a work's complexity, absorb its meaning, and analyze how that meaning is expressed in literary form. In addition to considering the literary artistry, you should also consider the social and historical values reflected and embodied in these works.

Part I: Summer Assignment

Students will have a choice of *one* of the following books:

1. *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr—last year's Pulitzer Prize winner for literature. Marie-Laure is a blind French girl who flees the Nazi occupation of Paris with her father. Her path collides with Werner, a German orphan who becomes a Nazi soldier with the special assignment of tracking the resistance.
2. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini—the story of two generations set in Afghanistan during the times of war and chaos as seen through the eyes of Laila and Marlam.
3. *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky—Ex-student Raskolnikov struggles with his curiosity about committing a crime, then struggles with the concepts of guilt, punishment, and isolation in this classic Russian novel.
4. *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver—a preacher and his family each experience their mission to Africa in a different way; their expectations and differing temperaments affect their wildly diverse perspectives.
5. *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte—Heathcliff is an orphan; Catherine is his true love. These two young people grow up on the isolated English moors, where society and family obligations keep them apart. Their unresolved passion has lingering effects on subsequent generations.
6. *Candide* by Voltaire—a young man, Candide, lives a sheltered life and is educated by his mentor, Pangloss. Candide experiences great hardships in the world, which changes how he views society.
7. *Cutting For Stone* by Abraham Verghese—Dr. Stone's secret passion produces twin sons, both raised to be doctors in an Ethiopian hospital compound. One is a genius but physically challenged, the other is merely smart. Adventures ensue.

Content Disclaimer

AP English IV is a college level class. Since advanced literature courses deal with all facets of living, there will be content dealing with the various human desires and conditions. Mature, intensive discussion of topics concerning identity, gender, race, society, and class will ensue. Please be aware that there will be transgressive language contained in some of the literature we read. If this makes you uncomfortable, we need to talk about the challenges you might face *before* you enroll in this course. Remember, too, that one of the distinguishing features of AP English IV is civil discourse. Therefore, every student should feel free to ask questions and express opinions in an environment built on trust, safety, and respect. *"It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it."* –Aristotle

Part II: Writing Assignment

Using one of the following prompts from the 2003, 2009, or 2010 AP exam, write a two or three page essay, using the novel you read as your example. These essays must be typed and double-spaced. Please use MLA formatting, including parenthetical citations and a Works Cited page, even if the only work you cite is the novel itself. Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) provides an excellent resource for MLA formatting. **This assignment will be turned in on the second day of class.**

1. 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 novel or play in which a character 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. *Do not merely summarize the plot.*
2. Literary theorist and cultural critic Edward Said has written that "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home; its essential sadness can never be surmounted." Yet, Said has also asserted that exile can become "a potent, even enriching" experience. Write an essay in which you analyze how the character's experience with exile is both alienating and enriching and how this experience illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. *Do not merely summarize the plot.*
3. In a novel by William Styron, a father tells his son that life "is a search for justice." Choose a character from your chosen novel 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. *Do not merely summarize the plot.*

We will continue to refer to last year's assigned text, *How to Read Literature like a Professor*, so it would be wise to review your annotations over the summer. If you have not yet read this book, please buy a copy this summer and annotate it thoroughly. Used copies are available online and at Recycled Books and Records on the square.

Final Warning

I am always baffled by students who enroll in AP English courses, then claim they really don't like to read that much. In this class you cannot "sort of" read the books assigned or fake your way through our discussions. Trust me. I will know. Likewise, procrastinating guarantees that you will not demonstrate your best work. This class demands discipline, time management skills, and a strong work ethic. Sound like college? It is.

Part III: Summer Fun

True AP scholars are engaged in the world, so take time this summer to visit a museum, attend a play, enjoy a concert, or participate in any other event that might broaden your horizon. Travel, if possible. And of course, read everything you can get your hands on.

Please feel free to contact me during the summer (charrod@dentonisd.org) if you have any questions or concerns. I'm looking forward to a year of discussing books with fellow bibliophiles!

—Ms. Harrod