

## Summer Reading AP Literature and Composition

### COURSE OVERVIEW

Unlike AP Language (which focuses on rhetoric and non-fiction), AP Lit is a deep dive into the "human experience" through the lens of great storytelling. This course isn't just about reading "old books." It's about literary detective work. You will learn to look at a poem, play, or novel and figure out not just *what* happened, but *how* the author used specific tools to make you feel or think something.

The Three Pillars of the Course:

1. Deep Analysis: Moving beyond plot summaries to understand symbolism, tone, and structure.
2. Diverse Perspectives: Reading works from different time periods (from the 1600s to last year) and different cultures.
3. Critical Writing: Learning how to craft sophisticated arguments that prove your interpretation of a text is valid.

Let's be real: there is a lot of reading. However, it's usually high-quality reading. You can expect:

- The Reading: A mix of classic "canon" and contemporary voices.
- The Writing: You'll practice three specific types of essays:
  - Poetry Analysis: Breaking down a poem you've never seen before.
  - Prose Analysis: Analyzing a short excerpt from a novel or short story.
  - The Literary Argument: An essay where you choose a book you've read to answer a specific thematic prompt.

You might love AP Lit if:

- You enjoy meaningful discussions and hearing different points of view.
- You want to sharpen your writing skills before heading to college.
- You're curious about history and philosophy, as literature is often a reflection of both.

Beyond the potential for college credit, AP Lit teaches you how to think critically about the world. It builds empathy by letting you live a thousand different lives through books, and it gives you the communication tools to express complex ideas clearly—a skill that is valuable in every single career path.

If the Course Overview looks like a fit for you, then WELCOME to AP Lit! This summer, I am requiring you to read ONE book, and giving you the OPTION of reading other books in preparation for outside reading, which will be required during the school year.

### **Required Reading**

**FIRST**, everyone IS REQUIRED to read this book:

*How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines, Revised Edition* by Thomas C. Foster (2014).

This book reveals a lot of “secrets” about how to uncover “deep meaning” when you read great literature. I expect you to be prepared to take a **QUIZ** over the main ideas when you show up the first day, **so know and understand the main idea from each chapter. You may wish to annotate your text with summaries of each chapter in preparation.**

You may find a new or used copy for a very reasonable price at half.com or amazon.com. I found a used paperback of HTRLLAP for a significantly lower price. You may piggy-back orders with other students to avoid or reduce shipping costs. I may have some copies donated by past students available to you at no charge.

### **Optional Reading**

**SECOND**, you have the **OPTION** to read any book or books from the following lists, the AP Classics list, linked [HERE](#), or the AP Contemporary list, linked [HERE](#).

This reading is **NOT** REQUIRED SUMMER READING, but rather, a chance for you to complete outside reading before the school year begins. Part of this is just to train yourself to be in the habit of reading. **We will complete outside reading assignments during the school year that will count as assessment grades.**

Many of the books on the AP canon list are available for free online because they are classics. I highly recommend that you acquire a copy that you can freely annotate if at all possible.

Have a fantastic summer, curl up with a good book. See you in August! ☺

\*\*\*DO NOT wait until the last minute\*\*\*  
Rushing is a GUARANTEE  
that you will not do your best work.