



# AP English Literature Summer Reading Assignment

Welcome to AP English Literature! I am looking forward to exploring some interesting reads along with you next year. One of the things which will benefit you on next year's AP exam is having a wide range of reading in your background along with an understanding of the common symbols and patterns that authors use to create meaning in their works. In order to prepare you for the types of writing, discussion and analysis which we will have next year, please complete the following project before returning to school next year. The assignment should be completed before the first week of school. Please be familiar enough with the material that you are comfortable discussing and writing about it. Get ready for an awesome year!

Have a Great Summer,  
Mr. Sherman

## The Assignment:

1. Purchase, read, and annotate *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas Foster. As you take notes, you will want to focus on the meanings of each device as well as its origins. The better your notes are, the easier it will be to review the focus of each chapter when using it during the school year.
2. Next, select a novel "of merit" which has been published in the last 10-15 years. Consider the AP's standards and goals (listed below) for reading which is "both wide and deep." You will want to stay away from books which are considered "teen reads" or "brain candy." Be able to justify your choice of novel. This should be a book which both stimulates your thinking and models skillful writing.
3. Read and annotate the novel for the themes as well as the symbols and devices you learned about in *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*.
4. Complete a MWDS over the novel which you chose.

**Choosing a book:** According to the AP college board's standards, the AP English literature "course should include intensive study of representative works from various genres and periods, concentrating on works of recognized literary merit. The works chosen should invite and gratify rereading."

"Reading in an AP course should be both wide and deep. This reading necessarily builds upon the reading done in previous English courses. These courses should include the in-depth reading of texts drawn from multiple genres, periods, and cultures. In their AP course, students should also read works from several genres and periods -- from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century -- but, more importantly, they should get to know a few works well. They should read deliberately and thoroughly, taking time to understand a work's complexity, to absorb its richness of meaning, and to analyze how that meaning is embodied in literary form. In addition to considering a work's literary artistry, students should consider the social and historical values it reflects and embodies. Careful attention to both textual detail and historical context should provide a foundation for interpretation, whatever critical perspectives are brought to bear on the literary works studied."

**If you want to peruse the covers with a brief synopsis, I suggest doing a "google" search of these prizes. Google "\_\_\_\_\_ award winners from the past 10 years." (Booker Prize, Nobel Laureates in Fiction, Giller Prize, PEN/Faulkner Award, Pulitzer Prize.)**

Some works to consider are: [Disgrace](#) by J.M. Coetzee, [Interpreter of Maladies](#) by Jhumpa Lahiri, Tom Perrotta's [Election](#), [The Poisonwood Bible](#) by Barbara Kingsolver's, [The God of Small Things](#) by Arundhati Roy, [The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay](#) by Michael Chabon, [Ella Minnow Pea](#) by Mark Dunn, Jonathan Safran Foer's [Everything Is Illuminated](#), [Life of Pi](#) by Yann Martel, [Vernon God Little](#) by D.B.C. Pierre, [War Trash](#) by Ha Jin, Lorraine Adams's [Harbor](#), Tom Perrotta's [Little Children](#), [Gilead](#) by Marilynne Robinson, Sean Wilentz's [Oh the Glory of It All](#), [The Road](#) by Cormac McCarthy, [What Is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng](#) by Dave Eggers, [The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao](#) by Junot Diaz, Andre Dubus III's [The Garden of Last Days](#), [The Story of Forgetting: A Novel](#) by Stefan Merrill Block, [Tree of Smoke](#) by Denis Johnson, [The Echo Maker](#) by Richard Powers, [Three Junes](#) by Julia Glass

# Major Works Data Sheet

## Defining Traits:

- Connected EVERYTHING to theme.
- **One page**, typed (you may use my template or create your own)
- **Embed your quotes** as this is an opportunity to practice evidence and commentary for the AP test.
- **ABSOLUTELY DO NOT** cut and paste from the internet or copy another student's work. This is **PLAGIARISM** and will result in a zero for your major grade.

## Contents and Point Values:

- 1. Book Title, Author, Date Published:** Identify the significance of the title to the theme of the book. Provide a quote that connects to the title's importance or could support your interpretation of the title's meaning. (20 points)
- 2. Plot Synopsis:** In a bulleted list, outline the major stages of the plot. Remember the plot diagram: setting/exposition, conflicts, climax, resolution and character changes. Also, include any important or notable information about the author and/or the structure of the book. (10 pts)
- 3. Setting/Time Period:** Identify the setting of the novel (time, place) and its significance to the meaning of the work as a whole. Address the time period in which the novel was written and the literary movement it belongs to if relevant. Include the main features of the time period and HOW these features can be seen in the work. (10 points)
- 4. Theme (20 points)**
  - Make a bulleted list of 1-2 thematic topics addressed in the novel (i.e. love, war, friendship, isolation, betrayal....) Explain the author's message about each of these topics.
  - Give 1-2 important thematic quotes for each theme. Identify the speaker of the quote, give a brief context for the statement, and then explain how it reveals a theme.
- 5. Characters:** List 2-3 key characters in order of importance (consider protagonist and antagonist) Use a bulleted list to cover each of the following key elements. (20 points)
  - Character traits (personality flaws, belongings, appearance, internal and external conflicts) Changes (Identify the change or development in the character and how this is related to the purpose of the work. If there is no change, explain the author's purpose.) Symbolism/Names (Discuss any important motifs or symbols related to the character and/or their role in the text. If the name is significant explain the meaning.)
  - For each character give 1-2 significant quotes and explain what it reveals about the character. Be sure to relate the character's traits, conflict, change, or archetype to the theme.
- 6. Symbol/Archetype (from Foster) (20 points)**
  - Identify 2-3 symbols, devices or archetypes from the book as well as their meaning.
  - Give 1-2 important quotes for each element that you identify. Give the speaker of the quote, a brief context for the statement, and then explain how it connects to a character or a theme of the novel.

# Book Title by Author (Date Published)

1) **Title Explanation** (with quote)

2) **Plot Synopsis** (no quote)

3) **Setting or Time Period** (literary movement)

**4) Themes (2-3 quotes)**

**5) Characters (2-3 quotes)**

**6) Symbols (2-3 quotes)**