

AP English Literature and Composition Summer Reading 2026

Welcome to AP Lit! Students who wish to take this course are required to complete the following summer reading assignments. Please read this document carefully, as it contains important details about the tasks you will be completing.

Why are we doing this? While I know it's not a preference to have to do schoolwork over the summer, I promise there is an objective and purpose behind it. 😊 Here are a few objectives:

- **Objective #1: To give you a clear idea of what to expect from AP Literature.** This assignment is set up to mimic your quarterly independent reading assignments during the next school year. Each 9 weeks, you will be asked to read a novel of your choice from a list provided to you, complete some tasks while reading, and then take an assessment. It is important that you are prepared for the time commitment this represents. This will be required in addition to the texts we are reading and assignments we are engaged in during class, and you should not expect to have class time to complete anything related to your independent reading assignments.
- **Objective #2: To prepare for the AP Lit exam.** One of the questions on the exam will ask you to write an essay about a novel you have read, analyzing it through a particular lens. Some prompts lend themselves to certain titles more than others, and you will of course not know what prompt you will receive until the day of the exam. With that in mind, the more AP-level titles you have in your back pocket, the better. (This is also one reason why you will be given a quarterly independent reading assignment.)
- **Objective #3: To prepare for college.** Even if you are not planning to take the exam, this course - and by extension, the summer reading assignment - will be beneficial to you in developing your reading stamina and literary analysis skills. College courses require much more homework than you are used to at the high school level; no class time is typically provided for reading or independent work, and students are expected to come to class prepared by having done assigned readings ahead of time. It is highly encouraged to begin honing your time management and critical thinking skills now.

It is my desire and goal to take you further in your learning than you ever thought possible. English provides every student with the skills and tools required to command every facet in the adult world and I will do everything in my power to support you in your journey and discovery.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO? WHERE DO I BEGIN?

Summer Reading Assignment #1: This reading assignment is composed of two parts:

- **1. A dialectical journal:** A major portion of AP Literature & Composition centers around literary analysis. This is to be completed while you read the book. Do not wait until you have finished reading it to make your entries. Your understanding of the text

will be deeper when you complete it as you go. See the assignment attached to this syllabus. This will be your first Classwork/Homework grade of Q1.

- Due: Friday, August 14th (first full day of school)
- Points: 100
- **2. A timed written assessment:** During the first week of school, you will be given an AP exam Q3-style writing prompt where you will be expected to address it based on the novel you read during the summer. This will serve as a baseline for me and will be very important in driving my instruction, so it is important that you take this seriously. To do well on this assignment, you should be prepared to provide specific details about the theme, characters, plot, literary devices/elements, and/or setting of your novel. This will be your first Assessment grade of Q1.
 - Due: The first full week of classes
 - Points: 50

List of texts

Choose a book from the list below. This must be a novel you have not read before. You are responsible for purchasing your own copy of the novel. I will set up the AP Literature class in Teams after 3pm the Friday before finals. This is where, as a class, we will collaborate throughout the school year. **It is also where you will post the title you have chosen for your summer reading. One student per title - first come, first choice. Do not wait!**

1. *Catch-22* - Joseph Heller
2. *East of Eden* - John Steinbeck
3. *Great Expectations* - Charles Dickens
4. *Invisible Man* - Ralph Ellison
5. *Jane Eyre* - Charlotte Bronte
6. *Native Son* - Richard Wright
7. *The Nickel Boys* - Colson Whitehead
8. *1984* - George Orwell
9. *Raisin in the Sun* – Maya Angelou
10. *Othello* - William Shakespeare
11. *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens
12. *Purple Hibiscus* - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
13. *Lord of the Flies* - William Golding
14. *Brave New World* - Aldous Huxley
15. *Anna Karenina* – Leo Tolstoy
16. *Death of a Salesman* - Arthur Miller
17. *Pride & Prejudice* - Jane Austen
18. *The Hummingbird's Daughter* - Luis Alberto Urrea
19. *A Tale of Two Cities* - Charles Dickens
20. *Homegoing* – Gyasi
21. *My Antonia* - Willa Cather
22. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* - James Joyce
23. *The Bluest Eye* - Toni Morrison
24. *The Jungle* - Upton Sinclair
25. *The House of Mirth* - Edith Wharton
26. *Till We Have Faces* - C.S. Lewis
27. *Emma* - Jane Austen
28. *The Namesake* - Jhumpa Lahiri
29. *The Nightwatchman* - Louis Erdrich
30. *White Noise* - Don DeLillo

Summer Reading Assignment #2

The Universe Next Door, 6th ed. By James W. Sire. ISBN-13: 978-0830849383.

Be sure to purchase the 6th edition. Do not wait to order this book; order as soon as you can. The book has been substantially updated (2020) to include worldviews that were not listed in earlier editions. This assignment is in preparation for your research paper that we will begin the **second** week of school. Answer the following questions as you read this book. Write the question before each answer. You may write or type them. While we will not address the questions in class, you will receive a completion grade for them, and they will be to your benefit as you write the research paper giving you a great start.

1. Briefly define the term “worldview.”
2. What 7 questions does a worldview address?
3. Write a paragraph defining Christian Theism.
4. Write a paragraph defining Deism.
5. Define basic Naturalism.
6. How is Naturalism related to Secular Humanism?
7. Why is Naturalism an appealing philosophy to mankind?
8. Briefly define Nihilism.
9. Name some authors whose works are associated with Nihilism.
10. Write a paragraph defining Atheistic Existentialism.
11. How do Christian Theism and Theistic Existentialism differ?
- 12 Write a paragraph defining Eastern Pantheistic Monism.
- 13 Explain why it is very difficult for missionaries to communicate with people from the East.
14. Write a paragraph defining New Age worldview.
- 15 How is New Age similar to animism?
16. Write a paragraph defining Postmodernism.
17. Write a paragraph defining Islam. Include how Islam differs from Christianity.
18. You will write a research paper on one of the worldviews in the book (other than Islam or Christianity). Which worldview are you thinking about researching?

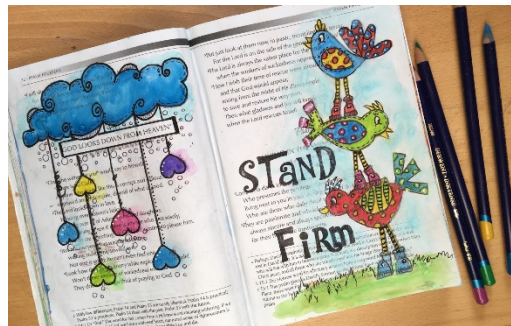
AP English Literature Summer Assignment: 2026-2027

Dialectical Journals

The term “Dialectic” means “the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer.” Think of your dialectical journal as a series of conversations with the texts you read. The process is meant to help you develop a better understanding of the texts as you read them. Use your journal to incorporate your personal responses to the texts, your ideas about the themes, and your evaluations of the texts’ rhetoric. You will find that it is a useful way to process what you are reading, prepare yourself for group discussions, and analyze the way the authors present their ideas and arguments.

PROCEDURE:

- Select a nonfiction title from the approved summer reading list (summer reading syllabus)
- As you read, choose passages that stand out to you and record them in the left-hand column of the chart (ALWAYS include page numbers, paragraphs might also be helpful).
- In the right column, write your response to the text (ideas/insights, questions, reflections, and comments on each passage).
 - You must label your responses using the following codes:
 - **(Q) Question** – ask about something in the passage that is unclear
 - **(C) Connect** – make a connection to your life, the world, or another text
 - **(P) Predict** – anticipate what will occur based on what’s in the passage
 - **(CL) Clarify** – answer earlier questions or confirm/disaffirm a prediction.
 - **(R) Reflect** – think deeply about what the passage means in a broad sense – not just to the characters in the story/author of the article. What conclusions can you draw about the world, about human nature, or just the way things work?
 - **(E) Evaluate** - make a judgment about what the author is trying to say
 - **(A) Analyze** – explain how the author is using rhetoric and language to make points and persuade the audience.
- Your dialectical journal should have at least 40 well-developed entries and cover the entire book. You must use each of the responses above a minimum of four times in your journal.
- Dialectical journals must be typed. A **template** of the form can be found at the end of this syllabus.
- Bring your journal to class on the first full day of school. You will need it as we begin our year discussing & analyzing this book for rhetorical purposes.



Sample Dialectical Journal entries: Beyond the Yellow Highlighter 😊

Quotation From the Text You will need at least 25+ entries	Page / Para #	Response
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<p>1. "...this had always been the case: mostly not very good teachers, mostly quite boring classes, but one or two life preservers to keep me afloat."</p>	<p>5/2</p>	<p>(C) Like Sam, I find this pattern in my own life having those couple gems who keep my sanity in check. It is those couple classes and teachers that allow me to still find joy in school, despite seeing it as a burden most of the time, which I find quite devastating. Ever since I was young, I have always enjoyed learning new things and expanding my knowledge on even the most random of concepts, but as I have gone through the years of school, I have slowly noticed myself hating it more and more and simply doing it for the grade.</p>
<p>2. I loved the farm...I loved sliding open the big red doors...I loved walking deep into the back fields...I loved...I loved...I loved the mornings..."</p>	<p>5/4, 6/1</p>	<p>(A) By incorporating anaphora as he repeatedly begins consecutive sentences with the phrase, "I loved...", Sam shows his small joys in life away from his high school environment. These parts of the day that make life good play a sharp contrast compared to the mediocre hours spent at school that he later describes. Along with his contrast comes an emphasis on the need for a reformed school system that has been seen to suck the life out of even the most dedicated student, further supporting his entire idea that he presents of creating his own student-run school.</p>
<p>3. "...most parents and teachers readily agree that by the time our kids are somewhere around twenty years old...we want them to be independent. Yet, strangely, as Sam noticed during his junior year, we want them to acquire all of those skills without giving them much more practice at any of it while they are in school."</p>	<p>8/4</p>	<p>(Q) If parents and teachers "readily agree" that they want students to be independent, but realize that the current school system is not effectively allowing that completely succeed in that, why haven't things already been changed?</p>
<p>4. "What I saw around me, what made me so mad, was that most of my friends were struggling...They didn't care about anything they were learning...Most of what we were learning was boring. Or even if the subjects matter itself was interesting, the way we learned it turned it into something lifeless and dull."</p>	<p>11/2</p>	<p>(E) Schools have turned the most capable students into the least motivated simply with methods of teaching that ineffectively excite the youth about learning. Teachers turn going to school and delving into knew material as a burden that seems to be never ending. This continually weak system is what creates "senioritis" and the dreading of a further education that has become so important for success in future life. Without doing something to attempt to bring learning to a more positive light universally, high school and future careers of students could be put at stake.</p>

<p>5. “Expertise, it seemed to me, was like anything else. It required practice. Yet we were being flung into the game of life without so much as a scrimmage.”</p>	<p>30/2</p>	<p>(R) Unrealistic expectation put on people concerning all different aspects of life not only pertaining to education and career mastery, but also things like and athleticism, are what lead to many people’s breaking point. It is commonly known that even with raw talent, practice is essential for success and expecting one to excel without such just creates unhealthy mental conditions that seem to consume so many nowadays.</p>
<p>6. “...Angela Duckworth, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, published an exciting new study showing that self-discipline, rather than intelligence, was the predictor of success in high school...that effort was more valuable than intrinsic ability.”</p>	<p>31/4</p>	<p>(P) Because independence is most likely going to be a very key part of Sam’s student run school, it will be essential for students to have this determination and grit to succeed in the new program. Without these things, it would be very difficult to partake in projects and other schoolwork with an outside force pushing one to get things done eliminated. Education will be completely in the student’s hands, and the student’s fault if it falls to pieces. Therefore, without the right appreciation and motivation the success for that particular individual will fall short.</p>
<p>7. “Because the students would be in charge, they would be engaged, they’d discover real responsibility, and they’d be empowered by their newfound ownership of their school... they would discover and practice mastery. They would also get to work on something that truly excites them...”</p>	<p>45/1</p>	<p>(CL) I was right to predict earlier that independence and control over one’s own education would be a primary part in the creation of Sam’s student run school. In previous chapters, he stressed so greatly that one of the most significant reasons so many students seem to be unmotivated and discouraged is because of their feeling of no control in their education. Sam realized that it is very difficult to want to try to be successful and passionate about something you are being forced, by law, to take part in. Now he can reform this part of the American school system with a school of his own. Additionally, he addressed how widely understood it is that gaining skills that will later help with successfully living independently is essential for future life. Because schools failed to provide the education of such skills, the author strived to create a school that allows his graduates to know what it takes to be independent.</p>

CHOOSING PASSAGES FROM THE TEXT:

Look for quotes that seem significant, powerful, thought provoking or puzzling. For example, you might record:

- Effective &/or creative use of stylistic or rhetorical devices
- Passages that remind you of your own life or something you have seen before
- Structural shifts or change of rhetorical mode
- A passage that makes you realize something you had not seen before
- Examples of patterns: recurring images, ideas, words.
- Passages with confusing language or unfamiliar vocabulary
- Information you find surprising or confusing
- Passages you strongly agree or disagree with

RESPONDING TO THE TEXT:

You can *respond* to the text in a variety of ways. The most important thing to remember is that your observations should be ***specific and detailed***. You can write as much as you want for each entry. While you may begin with initial annotations, entries themselves must be typed.

Basic Responses

- Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text
- Give your personal reactions to the passage
- Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author
- Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences
- Write about how it makes you think or feel
- Agree or disagree with the author

Sample Sentence Starters:

I really don't understand this because...
I really dislike/like this idea because...
I think the author is trying to say that...
This passage reminds me of a time in my life when...
This part doesn't make sense because...
The author is trying to

Higher Level Responses – expected of an AP student.

- Analyze the text for use of rhetorical devices (tone, structure, style, imagery)
- Make connections between different ideas or events in the text
- Make connections to a different text (or film, song, etc.)
- Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author
- Consider an event or description from the perspective of a different individual
- Analyze a passage and its relationship to the book or world as a whole

Rubric for Dialectical Journal

Critical Reader (detailed, elaborate responses)**90-100:**

- Extra effort is evident.
- You include more than the minimal number of entries (40+ entries)
- Your quotes are relevant, important, thought provoking, and representative of the big ideas of the text.
- You can “read between the lines” of the text (inference).
- You consider meaning of the text in a universal sense.
- You create new meaning through connections with your own experiences or other texts.
- You carry on a dialogue with the writer. You question, agree, disagree, appreciate, and object.
- Sentences are grammatically correct with correct spelling and punctuation.

Connected Reader (detailed responses)**80-89:**

- A solid effort is evident.
- You include an adequate number of legible entries. (at least 30 entries)
- Your quotes are relevant and connect to the big ideas of the text.
- Entries exhibit insight and thoughtful analysis.
- You construct a thoughtful interpretation of the text.
- You show some ability to make meaning of what you read.
- You create some new meaning through connections with your own experiences and the text.
- You explain the general significance.
- You raise interesting questions.
- You explain why you agree or disagree with the text.

Thoughtful Reader (somewhat detailed responses)**75-79:**

- You include an insufficient number of entries (at least 20 entries)
- Sentences are mostly correct with a few careless spelling and grammatical errors.
- You selected quotes that may be interesting to you, but that don't necessarily connect to the big ideas of the text.
- Entries exhibit insight and thoughtful analysis at times.
- You make connections but explain with little detail.
- You rarely make new meaning from the reading.
- You ask simple questions of the text.
- You may agree or disagree, but don't support your views.

Literal Reader (simple, factual responses)**70-74:**

- You include few entries (at least 10 entries)
- Entries exhibit limited insight or none at all.
- You accept the text literally.
- You are reluctant to create meaning from the text.
- You make few connections which lack detail.
- You are sometimes confused by unclear or difficult sections of the text.

Limited Reader (perfunctory responses)—**below 70:**

- You include very few entries. (less than 10)
- Very little effort is evident.
- You find the text confusing but make no attempt to figure it out.
- You create little or no meaning from the text.
- You make an occasional connection to the text, and the ideas lack development.
- Sentences contain numerous grammatical and spelling errors.

Dialectical Journal

- (Q) Question:** – ask about something in the passage that is unclear
(C) Connect: – make a connection to your life, the world, or another text
(P) Predict: – anticipate what will occur based on what's in the passage
(CL) Clarify: – answer earlier questions or confirm/disaffirm a prediction
(R) Reflect: – think deeply about what the passage means in a broad sense – not just to the author of the article. What conclusions can you draw about the world, about human nature, or just the way things work?
(E) Evaluate: – make a judgment about what the author is trying to say:
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