

Welcome to AP Literature & Composition!

Greetings and welcome to AP English Literature! This is a fun, yet challenging course designed to strengthen your writing skills and broaden your abilities in analyzing works of fiction. My expectations are high and the work is rigorous, but the personal and intellectual growth you will experience is worth the effort. In preparation for our study in the fall, you do have some work to complete over the summer. Please see below for more information. **All readings and assignments should be completed and submitted by Tuesday, September 3rd, the first day of school.**

Assignment 1: Poetry Analysis (SUBMIT: Written Reflection Required)

Much of our studies will revolve around poetry. We will study poetry in full units and also on a weekly basis. In preparation for this, I would like you to complete an assignment that tells me your interpretation of “great poetry.” Select a poem that you consider to be worthy of study and instruction in AP English Literature. Then, write a 250+ word response explaining what makes this a “great” poem. I will not put any parameters on you; I simply want to know what you think makes a poem worthy of your time. Avoid online assistance in completing this assignment. There is no “wrong answer!”

To aid you in your search, I recommend checking out the following resources:

- Poetryfoundation.orgLinks to an external site.
- Poets.orgLinks to an external site.
- ButtonPoetry.comLinks to an external site.
- The New YorkerLinks to an external site.
- Or, head to your local bookstore or library and check out some titles on the poetry shelves!

Assignment 2: Choice Read of Literary Merit (SUBMIT: Written Reflection Required)

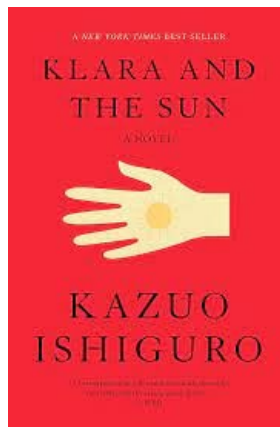
Throughout the year, we will read multiple novels and plays in preparation for the AP Lit exam. Select a title from the provided list to acquire and read over the summer. College Board frequently labels books or plays as titles with “literary merit,” although they never define that label. Choose a novel or play to read this summer that, in your opinion, has literary merit. Then, upon completion, write a 250+ word reflection explaining what that phrase means to you, and why this novel or play has literary merit.

This is an excellent opportunity to read a “classic” work that you have always wanted to read but were never able to as part of a previous course. Please do not re-read something or choose something below your reading level. If you would like to read a book that is not featured on this list, email me and ask!

REVIEW: [List of Recommended Books](#) [Download List of Recommended Books](#)

****A word of caution:** do not wait until the last minute to choose a book! It’s okay if you pick up a book, start reading it, and decide it’s not for you, but don’t wait until August to figure that out. Start early so you can choose another book if you need to and don’t have to rush.

Assignment 3: Thematic Whole Class Read (Reading Required, Annotations Optional - NO SUBMISSION)



In preparation for our first week of written analysis, you are responsible for acquiring and reading the novel [Klara and the Sun](#) by Kazuo Ishiguro.[Links to an external site.](#)

As you read, pay special attention to the narrator's perspective. Who is telling this story, and how does her unique lens affect the audience's understanding of the plot, characters, and themes?

To help you in this, I encourage you to annotate while you read. Most serious readers take notes of some kind when they are carefully considering a text, but many readers are too casual about their note-taking. You will easily improve the depth of your reading and extend your understanding over a long text if you practice "talking back" to the texts you read by highlighting key phrases and taking notes in the margins.

I have provided [an example of annotations](#). [Download an example of annotations from my copy of *Fahrenheit 451*](#) so you can see what "talking to the text" looks like. You can see that I haven't gone crazy with highlighting or underlining—if every line is marked up, you'll have a hard time making sense of your notes. Instead, I've noted key phrases and emphasized sections that seem to relate to themes or greater meanings.

There will be an in-class, timed essay on *Klara and the Sun* on **Friday, September 6th**, our first full day back in school. You will be allowed to use your book for this essay.

Additional tips for success:

1. Your written reflections for assignments 1 (poetry) and 2 (choice read) should be submitted as one document and uploaded to this assignment. Each reflection is worth 25 points and is due on **Tuesday, September 3rd**. Your written assessment for *Klara and the Sun* will take place in class on **Friday, September 6th**.
2. The use of online resources such as SparkNotes, Shmoop, and any AI tools (like ChatGPT, but not limited to ChatGPT) is completely prohibited. The use of unauthorized online aids will result in a zero on this assignment with no chance to resubmit and a documented academic integrity violation.
3. If you are not a habitual reader, this may seem like a daunting amount of work. The assignments that you are responsible for completing this summer (and throughout the year) are not the type that you can "cram" or complete at the last minute. I suggest taking time to read for 15-20 minutes each day, but come up with a schedule that works for you. You have two and a half months to really THINK about, absorb, and RESPOND to the texts. **Do not wait until the last minute!**

The final piece of advice I want to give you heading into this class is about the bigger picture. AP Lit is different from your previous English classes in that I am not expecting you to merely memorize and recall facts about plot and characters. In short, it's not just about the books. Yes, we will refine our reading and writing skills, but I am primarily asking you to critically think about and respond to the literature we read. Offer up your own opinions and your own interpretations in ways that only YOU can do. Oftentimes, when faced with a piece of literature, we become paralyzed because we're worried about having the "right" interpretation. I am telling you now: throw that black and white thinking out the window as soon as you can. When you do, this course will open itself up to you and you will not only grow as an intellectual, but as a person. I love AP Lit because, at its core, it allows us to discover our own humanity through the words and ideas of others. It's a big task, but it's one that I know you can do if you are willing to rise to the challenge.

So, as AP Lit is a class about life and all its complexities, my final task for you this summer is to go out and LIVE! Do something you've never done before! Be in the present moment. As we will discuss in class, the best way to connect with literature is to have plenty of diverse life experiences. Why not start now? Go to the theater, go hiking, cook a new recipe, go on a picnic, visit a museum, ditch your phone for the day, or just spend some time in a brand-new place. You don't have to spend much (or any) money, but whatever you do, take note of how that experience changes your perception of the world. Bonus points if you write about it!

If you have questions about any of these assignments, feel free to send me an email. I don't check my email often during the summer but I do check it, and I will get back to you as soon as I can.

I'm looking forward to meeting you and embarking on this journey together.

Enjoy your summer, stay safe... and don't forget to read!

Cheering you on,

Mrs. Lee-Wells

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