

AP Lit & Comp Summer Reading 2025
Ms. Jennifer Ditrich
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Over the summer you should:

1. Read 2 paired books from the list below.
2. Complete a Major Works Data Sheet for each of the novels.
3. Complete a minimum of 20 annotations for each book on Symbols/Images/Motifs/Memorable Quotes. Do not just list the topic, but explain the significance as well. These should be spread throughout the books and not just the first few chapters.

Please purchase the following materials for my class:

1. A set of different colored highlighters.
2. Two packages of post-it notes 3x3 size.

You are expected to read and reflect on these novels independently. Do not use secondary sources to provide you with analysis or interpretation (e.g. SparkNotes, CliffsNotes, etc.). All work you submit in this course must be your own original work. Do not resort to using AI for your assignments. You will complete a Major Works Data Sheet (MWDS) for each of the two books. The template for this assignment is included below. You will use the MWDS to write your essays for the novels when school begins.

BOOK PAIRINGS

The purpose of the book pairings is to give you an opportunity to see how different authors approach similar themes. If you choose to read *Brave New World*, you must then read *Never Let Me Go*. If you read *Of Mice & Men*, you must also read *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* etc. Please read the description of each novel on Amazon or on Goodreads. Some of the material has mature content. **You will need to purchase your own physical copy of the novels-digital and audiobook versions are not acceptable.**

1. *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley & *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro
2. *Of Mice & Men* by John Steinbeck & *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin
3. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey & *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead
4. *Mexican Gothic* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia & *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* by Shirley Jackson

NOTE ON THE SUMMER READING

The summer reading assignment is essential to AP Literature and Composition. You may NOT choose to skip completing the Major Works Data Sheets. This is the summer reading assignment and therefore it must be completed by the first day of class.

NOTE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Every assignment you do in school is meant to measure your knowledge of something or your ability to do something. The grade you receive on the assignment should reflect that knowledge or ability, but an assignment cannot truly measure your knowledge or ability if you have not done your own work. The summer reading assignment should be the product solely of your thoughts, effort, and ideas. Although there will doubtless be collaborative

assignments throughout the school year, this is not one of them. Do your own work. You may not in any way work with someone else on this assignment. **If your Major Works Data Sheets show any evidence of your having copied from a website, a classmate, using ai, or any other source, you will receive a zero on both the assignment and the essays and will not be able to do them again.**

Guidelines for Major Works Data Sheets

- **Point of View:** Refers to who is telling a story, and who is narrating it. Can be told in three main ways: first person, second person, and third person. It is the angle of considering things and often has an impact on how the story, and what story, is told. Your job is to first identify the point(s) of view, but more importantly, to consider the implications. <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/point-of-view/>
- **Literary Genre:** Consult the internet to see where this work falls on the literary timeline. Many literary time periods overlap, so you must consider what the work is about and how it is written before you try to peg it into a particular literary period. What are the characteristics of the literary period and what is your rationale for placing the work in that period? <https://mc.libguides.com/eng/literaryperiods>
- **Biographical Information about the author:** Look for important details from the author's life – not trivia. What influenced his/her writing? Bulleted items are fine.
- **Characteristics of the Genre:** A work may belong to more than one genre. Provide definitions for the genres to which the work belongs. (You may copy definitions from handbooks of literary terms, online sources, etc. – I'm not going to worry about plagiarism here. This does not have to be in your own words.) <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/rl/litrlgenres.asp>
- **Plot Summary:** This DOES have to be in your own words. Attach pages as needed. You will need this in the spring to help you review for the exam. Include as much significant detail as possible.
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- **Memorable Quotes:** As you are reading the work, underline, highlight, scribble in the margin, and use sticky notes to mark interesting spots. On the MWDS, list at least five important quotations from the work. (If there are more that you think are significant, please include them.) Look for brief quotations that provide a key to understanding the characterization or the theme of the work. Do NOT pull quotes from some online study guide.
- **Significance of Quote:** Significance is rarely related to plot summary or obvious details about a character. ("This quote shows that the character was sweet or had red hair or that the girl was going to get the guy in the end.") Better comments tie the quotation to the theme of the novel. Look for some symbolism or universal truth that the author was trying to illustrate.
- **Author's Style:** Please do NOT copy this from another source. Develop your own ability to analyze style. Is the author descriptive and ornate? Formal and academic? Informal – even colloquial? Terse? Style can include not only HOW the writer writes, but WHAT the writer tends to choose as subject matter. Select three or more style traits that characterize the work. **Examples that illustrate style:** For each style trait you listed, give an example. Quote it literally, include the page number of the excerpt, and provide a brief explanation as to how this example exhibits the trait.
<https://literaryterms.net/style/>
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- **Characters:** Role in the story includes simple character descriptions, including their relationships with others. Arthur Dimmesdale was the minister who fathered Hester Prynne's child. His significance is that he was a central character who struggled with hidden guilt and sin. Adjectives to describe him might include: sensitive, tortured, hypocritical, and guilty. You are required to include at least five, but I encourage you to not only include all major characters, but minor ones.

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- **Setting:** You must include time AND place. Be as specific as you can. You may not know the exact year(s) for the work, but you should be able to make a rough estimate. Mid-nineteenth century? Around 1850? 11th century? What cities or regions are used in the work? Remember setting also includes political, social, economic, and/or religious aspects of the environment as well. Consider various aspects of the setting and write down details about aspects that seem significant to a deeper understanding of the work. <https://literaryterms.net/setting/>
 - **Significance of the Opening Scene:** Opening scenes usually provide important hints about the theme of a work. They may create a tone or foreshadow future events. Best answers will clearly connect something in the opening chapter (or scene of a play) to the theme of the work. The answer is NOT, “This is where the author introduces the characters and gets the story going.”
 - **Significance of the Closing Scene:** Same rules apply to the closing scene. The answer will NOT be, “This is where things basically wound up and everything worked out. If Character A had not done Action B, then Result C would not have occurred.” Instead, consider the implications of the story’s end.
 - **Symbols/Images/Motifs:** Consider what recurs throughout the work and how it varies. For instance, are there instances of water? Is it always a liquid or do we see it as snow or fog? Is it in a lake, flowing from a tap? What kinds of meaning can we discern from the form the symbol/image/motif takes as well as the symbol/image/motif itself? <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/symbolism/>
 - **Possible Themes:** Let’s use fully stated themes, not general topics. Technically, “love” or “love vs. hate” is a theme. What was the author saying about love? Again using *The Scarlet Letter* as an example, “Guilt” is technically a correct description of a major theme of that novel. However, “unresolved guilt is a destructive force with the power to destroy body and soul” is a more useful way to talk about the theme. A student who can write this sentence is closer to being ready to write an AP Lit essay. Put a lot of thought into this. By next May, you will need to be able to read an essay prompt, select an appropriate novel, and identify an important theme in a matter of just minutes. A good theme will invite argument. Not everyone would necessarily agree that your statement is true or even that it was something the author was trying to suggest. Your statement should be an idea that you think you could support with details from the novel or play – something that would allow for discussion. List as many themes as you can; fill the space if possible. <https://literarydevices.net/a-huge-list-of-common-themes/>

Major Works Data Sheet #1: Do not cut/paste from a website, which is a form of plagiarism. You need a completed MWDS for each book. Complete as a Google or Word document that you will be able to upload to turnitin.com on the first day of class.

Book/play title:	Biographical information about the author:
Author:	
Date of Publication:	
Point of View:	
Literary Genre: Historical information about the period of publication or setting of the novel:	

	Characteristics of the genre:
Plot Summary: Do not cut/paste from a website, which is a form of plagiarism.	

<i>Memorable Quotes</i> at least 5 – more is better	
Quotation (include page#)	Significance

<i>Author's Style:</i> 3 or more quotes that illustrate their style traits & provide a brief explanation.	

Characters-at least 5			
Character Name	Role in the story	Significance	Adjectives

Setting	Significance of the opening scene
Symbols or Motifs (at least three)	Significance of the ending/closing scene

Possible Themes – Topics of Discussion (elaborate) minimum of 3	

Major Works Data Sheet #2: Do not cut/paste from a website, which is a form of plagiarism. You need a completed MWDS for each book. Save these as a Google or Word document that you will be able to upload to turnitin.com on the first day of class.

Book/play Title:	Biographical information about the author:
Author:	
Date of Publication:	
Point of View:	

Literary Genre: Historical information about the period of publication or setting of the novel:		
		Characteristics of the genre:
Plot Summary: Do not cut/paste from a website, which is a form of plagiarism.		
Memorable Quotes at least 5 – more is better		
Quotation (include page#)	Significance	

<p><i>Author's Style:</i> 3 or more quotes that illustrate their style traits & provide a brief explanation.</p>	

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Possible Themes – Topics of Discussion (elaborate) minimum of 3

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