

## 2024-2025 AP Literature & Composition Summer Reading Assignment

"The role of a writer is not to say what we can all say, but what we are unable to say."

-- Anais Nin

To borrow from a teacher I admire, Susan Barber, here are my thoughts on summer work. I want it to be meaningful, enjoyable, and reasonable. Overloading you with tedious assignments just to "set the tone" for the class will not benefit you and isn't my style. The goals for summer work in AP lit are to read interesting contemporary fictional works of literary merit, continue thinking deeply about and evaluating texts, and get to know you. I think this work is the right balance for those goals. All work is due on the first day of school. Point values for each task are listed below. Points will be combined and count as the first text grade of the year.

Your summer assignment is a chance for you to read a variety of texts, explore ideas, and write in response to what you are reading and thinking. The assignment has three parts and all work is due on the first day of school. I have linked to all the texts that are available online, but in some cases, you may need to go to your local library to get a copy of a novel. In many cases, I have included extra links if you are fascinated by what you read and are interested in exploring more. As Voltaire said, "Think for yourself and let others enjoy the privilege of doing so too." Enjoy the privilege of reading great texts. Enjoy the writing process. In short, have a great summer!

Here's what you should do before the first day of school:

### Part 1: Organizing

- ☐ Join the 2024-25 AP LIT Google Classroom:

**Text --** [How to take efficient and neat notes](#) and [How I take notes \(neat and effective\)](#)

- ☐ After watching StudyTee's notes system, I want you to think about how you can benefit from this organization method that will be used this summer and throughout the year. ([See example HERE.](#))

**Assignment --** Get a notebook of your choice with the style of paper that you prefer (lined, graph, blank, bullet point, etc.). We will use this notebook to create notes for major works that we study, so find one that you really like.

**Why it is important --** The process of learning something often starts out feeling disorganized and unwieldy; the most important aspects are not always salient. Consolidation helps organize and solidify learning. This notebook will serve as a means to consolidate what you have learned throughout the year, allowing you to retrieve the significant progress we make. Make it your own. Decorate it if you like or keep it clean and clear.

### Part II -- Seeing

**Text --** [The Nerdwriter Analyzes Edward Hopper's "Nighthawks"](#)

Evan Puschak has his own [YouTube channel \(NerdWriter\)](#) in which he offers video essays. I admire these essays that range from art, to film, to politics, to literature. He is thoughtful, well-researched, and has a keen sense of timing and audience awareness. In this video essay, he analyzes one of the iconic 20th-century American paintings, "Nighthawks." Pay attention to not only what he sees, but also notice the biographical and historical context he weaves into his analysis. I admire how he uses both images and words to teach you about the painting.

**Assignment --** For your first set of StudyTee notes, I want you to write two pages. Choose a work of art that has meaning to you. It can be a work of literature. It can be a painting. It can be a song. It can be any creative endeavor that has some fascinating artistry. I want you to analyze that work of art on a similar level to Evan

Puschak (the Nerdwriter). If you look at his show notes on the YouTube page for the “Nighthawks” video essay, he has done a fair amount of research. I want you to do the same. In your notes, find an organized way to explain its artistic merit and value. Don’t just provide a summary of what it is, analyze how it operates and why it is important.

**Why it is important** -- I want you to use your notes to enrich your personal language, background knowledge, and vocabulary. For that to happen, these notes should be so much more sophisticated than a summary. They should reveal the complexity of the work of art. You have to articulate not only what it means to you, but you should also have a broader appreciation for the artist, the cultural and

## Part III -- Reading

**Text 1 -- [Leo Babauta's Why I Read \(+ a Dozen Book Recommendations\)](#)**

**Assignment** -- Write a page of notes about your relationship with reading. Share an honest assessment of the role that it plays in your life. Think about how you would conceptualize and categorize reading’s impact on you. I value honesty over flattery. If reading is not your thing, say it. If you love it, then let me know. I don’t care so much which side you take. More important than what you choose is the truth of your reflection. I want to read about why you feel the way that you do. I want to get to know you as a reader.

**Why it is important** -- This is the first step in me getting to know you as a reader. What’s more important than that?

**Text 2 -- [The Kite Runner](#) by Khaled Hosseini (an AMAZING read -- you will love it!)**

**Assignment** --

- ☐ **Read and annotate** to help you create notes and prepare for class discussion. Use the big ideas listed below and this [rubric](#) to guide your annotations. What passages speak to you and why?
- ☐ Create at least **4 pages of StudyTee-style notes about your book**. How you organize those four pages is up to you. I know that this is vague and undefined but look at it another way. I am empowering you to do what you feel is right. You have the freedom to do what you want. You can create whatever you want. All I’m asking you to do is create four interesting pages of notes about your reading experience. When there are little to no rules, the possibilities are endless. It is up to you to make it awesome! (One side of the paper counts as one page. I recommend taking notes on one side of a piece of paper only to prevent your pen/marker from bleeding through the page; you will want to be able to read, add to, and refer back to these notes when studying for the exam in the spring.)
- ☐ However, for those of you who would like a little direction when creating your notes, it may help to keep in mind the following AP Lit **Big Ideas: Character, Setting, Structure, Narration, Figurative Language, and controlling idea or Theme**. These big ideas could serve as broad categories for your notes or just help guide your reading. Notes pages should include quoted (and cited) passages and/or quoted keywords and phrases. You should also notice connections to other texts, the world, and events throughout the text itself. What patterns or shifts do you notice? You may also choose to focus on how and why any of the following literary elements were used in the story: character foils, allusions, symbols/motifs/recurring details, imagery, foreshadowing, narrator’s tone, diction/syntax, etc. Consider how these literary elements create meaning in the broader categories. Notes should include color and images to enhance meaning. Be creative!

**Why it is important** -- A mature thinker chooses and develops his or her own criteria in order to evaluate the quality of texts. I respect your ability to make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, and personal experiences and when you have control over how you do that, you often exceed my expectations. You will be discussing and writing about *The Kite Runner* in the first weeks of school. *There is no doubt this will be one of your favorite books!*

### Text 3: *How to Read Literature Like an English Professor* (HTRLLEP)

- ☐ Read the introduction from the adult version. [Intro to HTRLLEP](#)
- ☐ Read *How to Read Literature Like an English Professor for Kids*. [HTRLLEP for KIDS](#)
- ☐ After reading the novel in its entirety, You will create notes in your StudyTee notebook to create a cheat sheet of sorts. Document each of the 19 chapters/categories with a summary, key words, phrases and an example. You must have headers for each category, but no images are required. I am thinking 5 or 6 categories per page.
- ☐ I highly recommend that you don't wait until the last minute. Pace yourself and make it a point to do a few chapters a week, this way you aren't scrambling to read and document 19 chapters in one sitting!

*\*\*Start reading HTRLLEP first and The Kite Runner afterwards. The first will help you approach The Kite Runner through the perspective of different lenses. Don't finish The Kite Runner too early on in the summer because we will be doing a deep dive into it during the first few weeks of school.*

### Text 4 – [Poetry Foundation Poem of the Day](#)

**Assignment** -- Poetry Foundation features a poem each day from a diverse list of present and past poems. Choose two poems from any dates over the summer and create notes for each. The notes should focus on an [analysis](#) of each poem. Look for parts that are interrelated. Find the individual aspects of the poem that give it meaning. [Here](#) is a good example of a complex analysis of a popular middle school poem. A more sophisticated analysis of an e.e. Cummings poem can be found [here](#).

**Why it is important** -- Thoughtful readers write to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately by selecting apt and specific evidence, organizing the evidence into broader ideas, and conveying the impact of its meaning.

### Part 5: Sharing

#### Assignment -- Write a Letter to Me

- ☐ Read [this letter](#) from me to you then write a letter to me that you will hand in on the first day of school. The directions for this letter are in my letter.

**Why it is important** - Getting to know one another is the most important step in building a strong and vibrant community of readers, writers, and thinkers.

If you need to get in touch with me over the summer, feel free to email me at [msoliman@pointpleasant.k12.nj.us](mailto:msoliman@pointpleasant.k12.nj.us) and I'll be happy to answer any questions. Have a great summer, and I'll see you on the first day of your SENIOR year!

All the best!  
Mrs. Soliman

#### Summer tasks include:

- Get a notebook/sketchbook [10 points](#)
- Watch StudyTee Notes

- Art Notes (2 pages) 20 points
- Read Leo Babauta's "Why I Read"
- Relationship With Reading Notes (1 page) 10 points
- Read and annotate *The Kite Runner* 30 points
- *The Kite Runner* Notes (4 pages) 60 points
- Read *How to Read Literature Like an English Professor* (Intro & For Kids)
- *How to Read Literature Like an English Professor* Notes (19 chapters/categories) 40 points
- Poetry Analysis 20 points
- Introduction Letter 10 points

**Total Points = 200 points = 2 test grades**