

COVID-19 Assignment for A.P. Literature Students

Hello all you awesome AP students! Please choose one of the following and do the analysis handout that goes with this. Although this is designed for those students who are taking the test, I really think all of you should do this in the spirit of learning and making yourself a better person. Below is a very short list of books and plays which often pop up on the AP Lit exam (either the essays or the multiple choice questions). I have included a brief synopsis, but feel free to look these up online. Although reading the literature is the whole point, I am not against you using the tools at hand (the internet). Also, I would obviously choose works which you haven't read before. All assignments are due when we return, which currently for you is April 1st. I cannot, and will not, use this against you if you choose not to do it. **The best I can do is to offer extra credit, and support online via emails.** Any questions or requests to discuss the literature will have to be online right now, but I will be available during our time off. Have fun and stay healthy!

- Mr. Hart

(*) - Those with an asterisk can be found in your textbook if you have it. A lot of the others can be found for free online

COVID-19 Reading List for A.P. Literature

Bronte, Emily

Wuthering Heights

- *Wuthering Heights* is one of the most widely regarded pieces on the AP® English Literature reading list. *WH* is a good example of Gothic Romanticism that deals heavily with questions of emotion and violence. It's particularly accessible and discusses class and gender comfortably from the perspective of a woman. This is one of the most frequently cited literary works on the AP Literature exam. It has been included in some form or fashion on 20 different years' tests since 1971. This was the book we were going to start on Friday...

Conrad, Joseph

Heart of Darkness

- *Heart of Darkness* is lauded on many of the AP® English Literature prep message boards as a go-to literary work for the free response section with good reason. It's a relatively short novella and an interesting read involving mystery, psychology, and adventure. *Heart of Darkness* is particularly useful in questions about the modern world in that it was somewhat prophetically written. It deals with the question of imperialist greed particularly pointedly. Above all else, *Heart of Darkness* effectively explores and answers questions about morality and how the ambiguity of right and wrong can justify actions. Keep this in mind.

Twain, Mark

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

- *Huck Finn* is probably one of the best-known titles on this list among American students and with good reason. It's rich and complex, yet decipherable by students. If, perhaps, you're asked about the era of Slavery or Reconstruction, *Huck Finn* should really come to mind. It relentlessly discusses slavery and racism and the hypocrisy of civilized society. Consider the Mississippi River a symbol for remaining in the middle of the road on issues of race and use that to inform your reading of *Huck Finn*.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott

The Great Gatsby

- Probably one of the best-known Lost Generation literary works, *The Great Gatsby* has become iconic in high school English Literature education. F. Scott Fitzgerald's work has come to represent the Jazz Age in America. If you were asked about early-20th century American society, *The Great Gatsby* would be a kind of touchstone work to analyze.

Sophocles

Oedipus Rex (Oedipus the King) (play)*

- *Oedipus Rex (The King)* demonstrates a unique take on the Greek Tragedy. Rather than utilizing the sealed fate-type of arrangement that would have made sense to the audience of the time, Sophocles made Oedipus' faults contribute to his downfall. We were going to read this one in class as well...

Shelley, Mary

Frankenstein

- *Frankenstein* represents, arguably, the first science fiction story but does so while remaining true to Shelley's Gothic and Romantic roots. A circumstantial theme within *Frankenstein* that could be need-to-know information for you is that the entire novel is a study in how power can corrupt. The power of knowledge allows Victor to animate "The Beast." The power of his hatred for his creation pushes him toward his own death. The story in itself is a study in power and its dangers.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel

The Scarlet Letter

- Another novel that has found itself often on the AP lit test, SL covers issues of morality, purity vs. sin, conformity, and the price one pays to be a part of a society. But along with that are themes of love, redemption, and female resilience.

Walker, Alice

The Color Purple

- *The Color Purple* is an epistolary novel set in rural Georgia in the 1930s. It deals with racism and sexism, along with women's rights. The power of language also plays an important role in *The Color Purple*. Walker writes Celie's letters in a way that reflects her progression in emotional and psychological development. This development through language reinforces the idea that access to language, the ability to express one's self, is integral in the development of a sense of self.

Miller, Arthur

Death of a Salesman (play)*

- The tragic story of Willy Loman, this play (found in your textbook) deals with issues such as the American Dream, abandonment, and betrayal. It also discusses what it means to love and be loved, and also what it means to be successful in life.

Hemingway, Ernest

The Sun Also Rises

- Like an iceberg, there is a lot going on here under the surface. A fictionalized account of American "expatriates" in Europe, Hemingway's sparse style hides the aimlessness of a whole generation of Americans post-World War I. Like *Gatsby*, it is a look at the hedonism of society in the 1920's, with side themes of male insecurity and female empowerment. This book, among others like *The Great Gatsby*, gave rise to the term "Lost Generation".

Shakespeare, William

Othello, Merchant of Venice, Macbeth, The Tempest

- Any Shakespeare play would do, but these pop up on the test the most. The nice thing is that I believe you can find most if not all of these for free online. Don't do *King Lear*, unless we are out longer than April 1st. I plan on doing that play when we return.

If we are out longer than April 1st, consider doing two of these. You may also include "King Lear" by Shakespeare.