

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE & COMPOSITION
SUMMER READING 2023-24

Dear Incoming Advanced Placement English and Composition student,

Welcome! I am so pleased that you have opted to join us in our study of literature! This course will require a strong commitment to careful, close reading of literature in an effort to deepen your understanding of how writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure for their readers. To analyze and to interpret the material effectively, you must make careful observations of textual detail, establish connections among your observations, and draw from those connections a series of inferences leading to an interpretive conclusion about how a text's form and features contribute to its meaning and its value. (Whew—that's a lot to think about!) To this end, here is your summer reading assignment!

Step 1: Select one novel from the list that follows—you may NOT use a digital copy of the text. You must have a physical, hard copy of the text, with all of your annotation work completed in the text.

Option 1: *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte (ISBN: 979-8612824886)

Description: Published in 1847, Bronte's novel ranks as one of the greatest and most perennially popular works of English fiction. Although the poor but plucky heroine is outwardly of plain appearance, she possesses an indomitable spirit, a sharp wit and great courage. She is forced to battle against the exigencies of a cruel guardian, a harsh employer and a rigid social order. All of which circumscribe her life and position when she becomes governess to the daughter of the mysterious, sardonic and attractive Mr. Rochester. However, there is great kindness and warmth in this epic love story, which is set against the magnificent backdrop of the Yorkshire moors.

Option 2: *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte (ISBN: 978-0141439556)

Description: Published in 1847, Bronte's novel is one of the most famous love stories in the English language. It is also, one of the most potent revenge narratives. Its ingenious narrative structure, vivid evocation of landscape, and the extraordinary power of its depiction of love and hatred have given it a unique place in English literature. The passionate tale of Catherine and Heathcliff makes for a powerful and compelling novel with oddness and power, amorality, and the sadistic violence embodied in the character of Heathcliff.

Option 3: *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens (ISBN: 978-0199219766)

Description: Published in 1861, and regarded as one of Charles Dickens's masterpieces, this is the story of the orphan Pip and his growth to adulthood. Supported by a mysterious anonymous benefactor, Pip travels to London to be educated as a gentleman and make himself worthy of the hand of the beautiful Estella. In the process, Pip is haunted by figures from his past - the escaped convict Magwitch, and the time-withered Miss Havisham- and in time uncovers not just the origins of his great expectations but the mystery of his own heart. A powerful and moving novel suffused with Dickens's memories of the past and its grip on the present, it raises disturbing questions about the extent to which individuals affect each other's lives.

Step 2: As you read your selection, do so **SLOWLY** and thoughtfully (you have the whole summer, after all); strive to fully appreciate and to engage with the text, asking yourself what this author seeks to convey about the following thematic issues/concepts:

- Impact of physical surroundings on psychology
- Identity & Reinvention
- Reality vs. perception
- The role of the past
- The role or impact of social class

As you do so, thoughtfully highlight and annotate **quality representative passages directly relating to each of the specified concepts**, directly in your text—all of your work must be

completed in your text for this assignment. For what this can and should look like, please view [“How to Annotate”](#).

- Make certain to have marked passages throughout the work, *not* just during the first 50 pages or the last chapter. While there is no specified minimum number of passages, as you read you should be annotating ***several*** things per chapter.
- Be mindful of literary elements that contribute to these depictions, such as: characterization, dialogue, imagery, word choice, symbolism, mood, and figurative language.
- Try to see patterns in the manner that each concept is depicted, patterns that point to larger thematic assertions (arguments) that the author may be making about the various issues.

Step 3: Have all of your annotations ready by the 2nd class meeting--you will utilize them and your text as you complete a series of short, in-class, hand-written essays, each focusing on one (1) of the specific subjects (from above). For each piece of writing, you will...

- have full use of the hard copy of your text containing your annotations—all of your annotations must be in your text. You may not use a digital copy of the text, nor may you use another student's copy of the text.
- *make an assertion* about the central thematic argument that the author's depiction of the subject in the text puts forward.
- *integrate 3-5 quotes from your annotations to support your assertion*, explaining/analyzing what the word choices/ details/images in the selected quotes suggest/imply/reveal in relation to the subject and how each helps to reveal the thematic argument.
- receive a rubric for your written response prior to writing in class.

Final Reminders about Expectations: All students are expected to *do their own thinking*; embrace the task and appreciate that learning and growth actually happens when you struggle and overcome those struggles, NOT when you side step or avoid them. Taking shortcuts defeats the purpose of our time together. The use of sources beyond the specified texts (for example, SparkNotes, LitGuides, any AI/Chat, or other online sources that digest the reading and do the thinking for you) will be considered a breach of academic honesty.

I do hope that you genuinely enjoy the text that you select, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts and reactions upon our return in late August. Please don't hesitate to email me at ccicoria@asparis.fr should you have any questions or concerns as you work on the assignment.

