

11th Grade American Literature Summer Assignment (2020-2021 School Year)

Your Summer Reading Assignment is due on Friday, 20 August 2021.

Welcome to American Literature! This summer assignment is meant to keep your reading and writing skills fresh. You should choose *carefully*—select books that will be interesting and enjoyable for you.

Any assignments that do not follow directions exactly will not be accepted. **This assignment is due Friday, August 20, 2021 to your American Literature Teacher. This will count as your first formative grade and be used as a diagnostic for your analysis ability.**

Directions: For your summer assignment, please choose **one** of the following books to read. You can choose if your book is fiction **OR** non-fiction.

Fiction Choices

Catch 22 by Joseph Heller

The satirical story of a WWII soldier who thinks everyone is trying to kill him and hatches plot after plot to keep from having to fly planes again.

The Nickel Boys by Colson Whitehead

Colson Whitehead dramatizes another strand of American history through the story of two boys sentenced to a hellish reform school in Jim Crow-era Florida.

On the Road by Jack Kerouac

Based on the travels of Kerouac and his friends across the United States. It is considered a defining work of the postwar Beat and Counterculture generations, with its protagonists living life against a backdrop of jazz, poetry, and drug use.

The Good Earth by Pearl S. Buck

The story of a family in turn-of-the-century China.

A Visit from the Goon Squad by Jennifer Egan

*Here Jennifer Egan brilliantly reveals their pasts, along with the inner lives of a host of other characters whose paths intersect with theirs. With music pulsing on every page, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is a startling, exhilarating novel of self-destruction and redemption.*

The Book of Unknown Americans. Christina

Henriquez. After their daughter Maribel suffers a near-fatal accident, the Riveras leave México and come to America. But upon settling at Redwood Apartments, a two-story cinderblock complex just off a highway in Delaware, they discover that Maribel's recovery--the piece of the American Dream on which they've pinned all their hopes--will not be easy.

Interior Chinatown by Charles Yu

Playful but heartfelt, a send-up of Hollywood tropes and Asian stereotypes—Interior Chinatown is Charles Yu's most moving, daring, and masterful novel yet.

The Awakening by Kate Chopin *Set in New Orleans and on the Louisiana Gulf coast at the end of the 19th century, the plot centers on Edna Pontellier and her struggle between her increasingly unorthodox views on femininity and motherhood with the prevailing social attitudes of the turn-of-the-century American South.*

Non-Fiction Choices

Outliers / Blink / The Tipping Point by Malcolm Gladwell

Fascinating statistical studies of everyday phenomena.

The Omnivore's Dilemma: A History of Four Meals

by Michael Pollan The author explores the ethical, environmental, and political factors that dictate the unhealthy, earth-offending diet of modern Americans.

The Emperor of all Maladies Siddhartha Mukherjee

The history of cancer.

"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" by Dr. Beverly Tatum.

Essays on education, race, and socialization by Professor Tatum, former president of Spellman College.

Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America.

Gustavo Arrellano.

Written by Denver-based columnist Gustavo Arrellano, this novel traces the spread of world's best cuisine (Mexican) into white mainstream America, and the cultural implications of tacos and burritos.

The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson

In this beautifully written masterwork, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author chronicles one of the great untold stories of American history: the decades-long migration of black citizens who fled the South for northern and western cities, in search of a better life.

The Glass Universe: How the Ladies of the Harvard Observatory Took the Measure of the Stars by Dava Sobel

Mid Nineteenth-century Harvard College observatory employs women to be "calculators" or "human computers" to track and measure stars. Engrossing story of early American female scientists who shaped our study of astronomy.

Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis by J. D. Vance

A memoir about the Appalachian values of his upbringing and their relation to the social problems of his hometown.

Assignment Task: For your book, you must complete what we call **10 Plot Thoughts** in American Lit for your entire book. This is a process and skill that we will expand upon throughout our year as we study the fantastic literature that the United States of America has to offer.

Plot Thoughts/Two-Sided Notes/Didactic Journal

As you read the text, please take detailed notes as you read. Then, on a piece of paper, draw a line down the left-hand side of the page. **On the left, write a portion of the text or a quote** from the book with the correct page number. **On the right, analyze that piece of text!** (please see guidelines on the following page).

- You must take at least **10 detailed notes**.
- There is not any particular required “thought” sentence length. Use as many sentences as you need to fully examine and explore the textual example.
- Follow these guidelines for taking notes:
 - Your “thought”/analysis should be a discussion of the significance of the plot selection: what the textual example tells us about slavery in America, freedom, or equality, the example’s significance in the context of the work or of the meaning of the work so far, **and most importantly, a connection to Douglass’s purpose overall -- is he persuading his Northern, White audience to abandon ideas of slavery and join abolitionism? Consider the rhetorical situation as a whole** (the relationship between the speaker and his audience, within the context of the day)
 - Analyze word connotations. Make connections. Draw conclusions.
 - Make a comment or observation (This could be your opinion about the speaker, what is being shared, a situation, etc. Or, it could be an observation about the author’s style, literary devices used, etc.)
 - Quote an outside source that relates to the text and explain the relationship.
 - Note how the book was cited in the examples below, and imitate that in your notes: “Quote” (Author Page #).

Example: The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass by Frederick Douglass

Quote	Connection
“Great streams are not easily turned from channels, worn deep in the course of ages. They may sometimes rise in quiet and stately majesty, and inundate the land, refreshing and fertilizing the earth with their mysterious properties.” (Douglass 2)	Douglass employs a river metaphor - referring to the immense time it takes for an old river to carve out its “channels” and canyons over time. They are stuck in their ways, “worn deep” and “not easily turned”. They can rise, in “stately majesty” and fertilize the earth, or come with a “fury.” In the end, the “flow back to the same”. This metaphor allows his audience to see how America is unique.

*If you would like to read a different book not from the lists, you must get Mr. B’s approval!

For more questions, please e-mail Michael Bienkowski (michael.bienkowski@scienceandtech.org) Expect a response in 1-3 business days)