

## Dear future AP Literature student,

I am so excited to get to embark with you on this adventure called AP Lit!

Summer reading for AP Lit will entail reading 1 book and writing an essay of 2-3 pages typed and double spaced in response to the book you choose. This summer assignment will serve a twin purpose:

- it will be a demonstration of your current writing ability indicative of writing goals you will start the year with
- it will be the first in the repertoire of texts that will, in May, serve you on the AP exam.

## The Book

You will choose a book from [this list](#) of AP titles; to be blunt, you may not choose to read any of the novels and plays we will study in class this year for obvious reasons. You will find the list of class works on the next page. **In addition**—and I know this is probably self-evident, but—**you may not select any books that you have read in previous classes.**

First a little explanation, the third essay on the AP exam is called the **open question**, a prompt that asks you to address a theme or concept using a novel or play of literary merit. Each open question presents a list of suggested works (novels and plays) that would work well with that prompt. Here is an example: the 2017 open question prompt.

### 2017 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QU

#### Question 3

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

Select a novel, play, or epic poem that features a character whose origins are unusual or mysterious. Write an essay in which you analyze how these origins shape the character and that character's relationships, and how these origins contribute to the meaning of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or one of comparable literary merit. Do not merely summarize.

<i>Beloved</i>	<i>Middlemarch</i>
<i>Brave New World</i>	<i>No Country for Old Men</i>
<i>Dracula</i>	<i>The Odyssey</i>
<i>The English Patient</i>	<i>Oedipus Rex</i>
<i>Frankenstein</i>	<i>Orlando</i>
<i>Great Expectations</i>	<i>Oryx and Crake</i>
<i>Grendel</i>	<i>The Playboy of the Western World</i>
<i>The Illiad</i>	<i>A Prayer for Owen Meany</i>
<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>
<i>Jane Eyre</i>	<i>Tom Jones</i>
<i>Light in August</i>	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Waiting for Godot</i>
<i>The Mayor of Casterbridge</i>	<i>Wuthering Heights</i>
<i>The Metamorphosis</i>	

As you look at [this list](#) of AP titles, you will see the year the book appeared (as an option) on the text list for the open question. You will notice that some books appear on the AP test open question far more often than others. On page 11 of this list, you will find another view of the list: this one ranks novels and plays from those that have appeared most often—and are thus most likely to appear on this year's AP open question—to those that have appeared least often.

Feel free to choose a book for its length, its interest, or its utility on the AP Exam open question—choosing an AP title with a high probability of appearing on the open question. Remember also that you may choose any major work from the list **minus** those we will study in class.

List of texts we may study in AP Lit (don't worry--we won't get to them all):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Homegoing</i>, Gyasi</li><li>• <i>Things They Carried</i>, O'Brien</li><li>• <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>, Wilde</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Hamlet</i>, Shakespeare</li><li>• <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>, Austen</li><li>• <i>The Color Purple</i>, Walker</li></ul>
---	---

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Invisible Man</i>, Ellison</li></ul> |  |
|---|--|

## The Essay

You will choose an essay from [this list](#) that corresponds with the novel you chose. Let's revisit [this list](#) of AP titles. Basically, you will cross-reference the two lists, selecting a prompt that corresponds with your novel.

Take these two novels on the AP titles list, for example: *Absalom, Absalom* by William Faulkner (76, 00, 10, 12) and *Adam Bede* by George Eliot (06). Recall that the numbers in parentheses indicate which years that novel or play appeared on the open question. So, *Absalom, Absalom* appeared on the open question in 1976, 2000, 2010, and 2012. *Adam Bede* appeared only in 2006. Let's say you choose *Absalom, Absalom* as your summer reading text: you'd, therefore, choose either the 1976, the 2000, the 2010, or the 2012 open question on [this list](#). Were you to choose *Adam Bede*, you'd only be able to choose the 2006 open question.

A note on the meaning of the work as a whole: the open question asks the reader to comment on some aspect of the text and then to connect that to "the meaning of the works as a whole." The meaning of the work that the prompt refers to is THEME.

## The Format

You will turn in your typed and printed essay in the first week of class.

Include a specific claim, use specific evidence (quotes), tie evidence back to claim. In your conclusion, tie your claim to a universal theme statement (theme of the work as a whole).

- A universal theme statement is a wise truth that could apply to all people, not just to the characters in the book.
- Here is a [video tutorial](#) that breaks down how to come up with a theme statement.

At the top of your essay, include your chosen prompt. Please do double space, include an MLA heading, include page numbers for each quote you include.

Please do edit, proofread, and revise before submitting your essay.

## And finally . . .

Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions as they arise: I'll be most reachable this summer at [kelly.bateson@gmail.com](mailto:kelly.bateson@gmail.com).