

AP English Literature  
Summer Reading 2019  
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Welcome to AP English Literature IV!

AP Literature is for people who love (or want to love) fiction, drama, and poetry. This course simulates a collegiate world literature course and can often be used for English Composition II or World Literature I, depending on your university's requirements. While the course will prepare you for the AP Literature examination, more importantly, it will prepare you for the rigors of college-level reading and writing--skills which are required in all academic disciplines, not just English.

### **SUMMER ASSIGNMENT**

Your summer assignment is two-fold. **First, I am asking you to read one novel by a late 20th-21st-century author of your choice**—basically someone who is *still* alive! Because AP literature must cover 16th-century literature to the present, I do not want you to attempt these convoluted and esoteric works (aka “dead white guy lit”) without my help. **However, do take ample notes on your modern choice novel because you will have a theme park/museum design project as your final summer reading assessment. (See Part 1).**

Additionally, much of our first semester is spent on your college admissions profile: your application, your essay, your ACT scores, and your scholarships. To streamline this process, I am asking that you write your college essay rough draft over the summer so we can revise it in class. Remember, this essay is the most important piece you will ever write because *this* is what shows college admissions who you *really* are—not your test scores or grades. We will edit and revise multiple drafts of this essay before we finally send it to universities. (See Part 2).

**So that's it—1 modern, award-winning classic of your choosing and 1 narrative essay rough draft.**

Have a fantastic summer and please email me if you have questions. I can't wait to meet you on August 1st!

### **PART 1: SUMMER READING CHOICE NOVEL**

**For your summer reading, you may read ANY work of FICTION that has won a Mann-Booker Prize, a National Book Award, an American Library Award, the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, or the Nobel Prize for Literature.** Please avoid “best sellers” and all popular fiction titles unless they are also award winning. This means no John Grisham novels, Stephen King, James Patterson, JK Rowling, or even JRR Tolkien.

You may not read Young Adult Literature (YA) Winners such as Caldecott or Newbery Winners because those are written below your reading level and are not testable on the AP Literature exam. You can easily do a Google search for award-winning fiction. However, if you have a question about any book, please email me at [cjoyce@dcbe.org](mailto:cjoyce@dcbe.org). Also, If your parents disapprove of a book for any reason, please make another selection.

**SUMMER READING SUGGESTED LIST**  
(A suggestion only. You may choose your own award-winner)

**NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FOR FICTION**

-*Cold Mountain* by Charles Frazier

Based on local history and family stories passed down by the author's great-great-grandfather, *Cold Mountain* is the tale of a wounded soldier, Inman, who walks away from the ravages of the war and back home to his prewar sweetheart, Ada. Inman's odyssey through the devastated landscape of the soon-to-be-defeated South interweaves with Ada's struggle to revive her father's farm, with the help of an intrepid young drifter named Ruby. As their long-separated lives begin to converge at the close of the war, Inman and Ada confront the vastly transformed world they've been delivered (Amazon Prime Review).

-*Waiting* by Ha Jin

Ha Jin portrays the life of Lin Kong, a dedicated doctor torn by his love for two women: one who belongs to the New China of the Cultural Revolution, the other to the ancient traditions of his family's village. Ha Jin profoundly understands the conflict between the individual and society, between the timeless universality of the human heart and constantly shifting politics of the moment. With wisdom, restraint, and empathy for all his characters, he vividly reveals the complexities and subtleties of a world and a people we desperately need to know."--Judges' Citation, National Book Award

-*Sing, Unburied, Sing* by Jesmyn Ward

Jojo and his toddler sister, Kayla, live with their grandparents, Mam and Pop, and the occasional presence of their drug-addicted mother, Leonie, on a farm on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. Leonie is simultaneously tormented and comforted by visions of her dead brother, which only come to her when she's high; Mam is dying of cancer; and quiet, steady Pop tries to run the household and teach Jojo how to be a man. When the white father of Leonie's children is released from prison, she packs her kids and a friend into her car and sets out across the state for Parchman farm, the Mississippi State Penitentiary, on a journey rife with danger and promise.

**MANN-BOKER PRIZE**

-*The Blind Assassin* by Margaret Atwood

Family secrets, sibling rivalry, political chicanery and social unrest, promises and betrayals, "loss and regret and memory and yearning" are the themes of Atwood's brilliant new novel, whose subtitle might read: The Fall of the House of Chase. Justly praised for her ability to suggest the complexity of individual lives against the backdrop of Canadian history, Atwood here plays out a spellbinding family saga intimately affected by WWI, the Depression and Communist witch-hunts, but the final tragedy is equally the result of human frailty, greed and passion (Publishers Weekly).

-*Life of Pi* by Yann Martel

A Canadian fantasy adventure novel by Yann Martel published in 2001. The protagonist is Piscine Molitor "Pi" Patel, an Indian boy from Pondicherry who explores issues of spirituality and practicality from an early age.

**PULITZER PRIZE FOR FICTION**

-*Less* by Andrew Shawn Greer (Oprah's Book List)

A struggling novelist travels the world to avoid an awkward wedding in this hilarious Pulitzer Prize-winning novel full of "arresting lyricism and beauty" (New York Times Book Review).

*-The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz

Oscar is a sweet but disastrously overweight ghetto nerd who—from the New Jersey home he shares with his old world mother and rebellious sister—dreams of becoming the Dominican J.R.R. Tolkien and, most of all, finding love. But Oscar may never get what he wants. Blame the fukú—a curse that has haunted Oscar's family for generations, following them on their epic journey from Santo Domingo to the USA. Encapsulating Dominican-American history, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* opens our eyes to an astonishing vision of the contemporary American experience and explores the endless human capacity to persevere—and risk it all—in the name of love.

*-The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt

Theo Decker, a 13-year-old New Yorker, miraculously survives an accident that kills his mother. Abandoned by his father, Theo is taken in by the family of a wealthy friend. Bewildered by his strange new home on Park Avenue, disturbed by schoolmates who don't know how to talk to him, and tormented above all by his longing for his mother, he clings to the one thing that reminds him of her: a small, mysteriously captivating painting that ultimately draws Theo into the underworld of art.

#### **AMERICAN LIBRARY AWARD**

*-The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd

In the summer of 1964, just after Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law, fourteen-year-old motherless Lily Owens breaks her black caretaker, Rosaleen, out of jail after a failed attempt to register to vote and they run off, finding a home with the beekeeping Calendar Sisters of Tiburon, S. Carolina

*-The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini

The unforgettable, heartbreakng story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, caught in the tragic sweep of history, *The Kite Runner* transports readers to Afghanistan at a tense and crucial moment of change and destruction. A powerful story of friendship, it is also about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption; and an exploration of the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, their lies.

#### **PART 2**

#### **2019-2020 Common Application Essay Prompts**

Select 1 of the following prompts and write a personal narrative essay of 250-650 words. You may hand write this in black ink or type it (Standard MLA formatting applies).

Please have the word count at the top of the page. You may use personal pronouns. Please avoid passive voice here. See [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) for more information.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
  
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?