

Incoming Senior Advanced Placement Summer Reading Requirements 2025

Welcome to AP Literature and Composition. We will have a very busy year and it will begin in earnest this summer. This packet will provide you with everything you need to complete your summer reading assignments, including due dates and how to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have. I have copies of the two novels and the play, *Oedipus Rex*. The digital copy of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* is attached in the Google Classroom. Our classroom code is izyrdz4.

Keep in mind why you are reading. You are not reading to produce a paper for your instructor. You are reading for you. AP is much different from any other level of English. You will only get out of it what you put into it. Much work and thought is independent. Assignments are short and long essays, all of which will constitute major grades. By definition, AP is equivalent to a college freshman literature and composition course. You will read the novels or not; you will provide strongly edited essays or not; you will succeed when you do, but the onus is on you.

Works:

<i>How to Read Literature Like a Professor</i>	Thomas Foster
<i>Things Fall Apart</i>	Chinua Achebe
<i>Oedipus Rex</i>	Sophocles
Choice Text (chosen from the list in Google Classroom)	

Summer Reading Requirements

Because summer reading is an integral part of the AP course, and summer can slip by so quickly, there will be ten written assignments completed and turned in over the summer. It goes without saying that any assignment indicating the use of Spark notes or any other online summary site will receive a 0.

Please keep in mind that you are to be completing **three** reactions for each work you read. By the end of the summer, you will have 9 reactions plus your assignment from *How to Read...*. You will write on your choice book in class as your first timed writing.

You will need to read Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* first, but after that, it does not matter in what order you read the texts, but please remember to pace yourself.

Be aware of your summer plans. The above due dates are "no later than" dates. If you want to complete all of your work before August 10 to allow yourself a few weeks of freedom before school starts, that is fine. If you know you are going to be away over one of the due dates, please make sure you think ahead to write it early.

On the Google Classroom, there are directions regarding the submission, content of each summer essay, and some basic reminders about writing, in case you forget as soon as your feet exit YC on the last day of your junior year!

Submitting Summer Work: All work will be submitted on Google Classroom.

Assessment:

Your work on *How to Read Literature...* will be worth 10 points.

Your nine essays will be assessed on an AP essay scale (0-6). I have adapted it significantly for your benefit, but it is good to adjust to the number scale. This is attached in this packet and replicated on Google Classroom as well. Each will be worth 10 points. (You will receive the first 4 points just for turning it in!)

Contact Information:

jeuclide@yorkcatholic.org

During the summer, I usually check my email every other day, if not daily. It may be 1-2 days before you hear back from me. I am also going on vacation, and will not answer emails during that time. If I do not get back to you immediately, don't panic! I promise I will return your email as soon as I can.

Directions Regarding Content:

Assignment 1: How to Read Literature Like a Professor

Due: June 20

****Warning:** You will need to pace yourself with this. It is a great resource, but it is dense with material. It is not something you will want to process in two days.

See Google Classroom for your study guide/assignment and the link to the text. If you are considering a major in English, this may be one you want to purchase. It is an excellent resource.

Assignments 2-4: These will all be the same type of assignment for each of the three assigned texts.

Book #2 (your choice of order from the Works list on page 1) Due: July 11

Book #3 (your choice of order from the Works list on page 1) Due: August 1

Book #4 (your choice of order from the Works list on page 1) Due: August 22 (for each of the three essays)

You will write three essays (max 2 pages each), as defined below, and will attach them to the same Google Classroom assignment.

Essay # 1: Initial Reaction

The initial reaction paper is one of the first impressions of the work. Limit your reaction to the opening chapter or even paragraphs, comment on the style, introduction of a character, type of narration, points of enjoyment, confusion, or comparison. This must be a focused piece of writing.

There are always questions posed by a good, active reader at the beginning of a work. Sometimes we have little or no idea where the story will go; other times we think we could make an accurate prediction of the story line.

How a "story" is being presented is another area for comment. The narrative style (first person, third person limited, third person omniscient; major or minor character) will completely affect what a reader "sees" and understands. If the narrative is told in the first person, the events will be told at a "slant," and bias will exist. How accurately we think the tale is revealed to us is cause for thought.

In an "initial reaction" piece, you may wish to pose several questions. These are unanswerable at this point, but as readers, we should always be wondering or guessing at potential outcomes.

Another area for reaction is to the characters themselves. Initial likes and dislikes are usually formed very quickly. What do you like/dislike, admire etc. initially about the character?

Comparison is yet another idea for initial reaction. Perhaps the opening pages remind you of another novel; perhaps the character reminds you of another in literature or even your own life for that matter. As Freshmen, many of you read *Great Expectations* by Dickens, and you note an immediate comparison of writing style.

Remember, even though this is a personal, literary reaction, it must include some textual references.

Essay #2: Midpoint Reaction

The midpoint reaction is always comparative. Even though you did not turn in an initial reaction to this work, you always should be reading by comparison to your first reactions to character, narrative style, effects of setting, ideas presented. By mid-point in any work, we have the basis for comparison to initial reaction. Do we still like/dislike, admire/despise one of the characters? Has the focus of the novel shifted? Are we still meeting new characters? Has what seemed like an inconsequential earlier event suddenly taken on more importance? Do the chapters all seem to begin the same way?

These are only ideas... you may launch into whatever literary direction that seems feasible given the text. Please remember that you must include some textual references.

Essay #3: Final Reaction

The style and content of each of these books makes them worth reading. For your final reaction, focus on why this work should be read. What did you learn? What appealed to you about its style, its time period? Whatever you do, do not make this something generic that could be posted on Amazon or Spark. Choose the most striking lines, the most vivid scenes, the most interesting characters... and then expound. You will obviously introduce the work with a brief overview and then discuss the focal point of your critique.

Writing Reminders:

1. While your reactions are personal, they are professionally and literarily personal. You may certainly dislike characters, writing style, time period, but you are to explain why in literary terms. This is no place for whining!
2. Each paper must have a specific purpose. Your job is not to retell the plot. Your focus can be setting, a particular character's personality and how it affects his or her actions, or cultural clashes. If you are confused, note the confusion and what causes it. You may also think in comparison to other works read with similar themes or characters.
3. Remember not to judge a particular time or culture. You may note that you are relieved to not live at that specific period of time or suffer its restrictions, but be very careful on this point. Your job is that of observer. You may not agree with the harsh restrictions of the time or place, but do not comment that they are "stupid" or discuss Christian Catholic theology. It is not the place.
4. Be careful not to be sloppy. Clear purpose, strong sentences, and word choice, as well as clean mechanics are expected. (If you are interested in a basic revision checklist, please see me.)
5. Despite the title of personal reaction, be careful when using first person. Sometimes that leads to sloppy writing. It goes without saying that second person is out of the question!
6. Please also scan for contractions. Our writing at this level should be without them.

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Summer Work 2025
How to Read Literature Like a Professor (Foster)
Study Guide

In Doyle's "The Red-Headed League," Holmes and Watson both observe Jabez Wilson carefully; yet, their different interpretations of the same details reveal the difference between a "good reader" and a "bad reader." Watson can only describe what he sees; Holmes has the knowledge to interpret what he sees, to draw conclusions, and to solve the mystery.

Understanding literature need no longer be a mystery—Foster's book will help transform you from a naïve, sometimes confused Watson to an insightful, literary Holmes. Professors and other informed readers see symbols, archetypes, and patterns because those things are there—if you have learned to look for them. As Foster says, you learn to recognize the literary conventions the "same way you get to Carnegie Hall. Practice" (xiv).

These short writing assignments will let you practice your literary analysis and they will help me to get to know your literary tastes. Whenever I ask for an example from literature, you may use short stories, novels, plays, or film. **Please note that your responses should be paragraphs—not pages.**

Even though this is analytical writing, you may use "I" if you deem it important to do so; however, remember that most uses of "I" are just padding. For example, "I think the wolf is the most important character in 'Little Red Riding Hood.'" Is padded. As you compose each written response, rephrase the prompt as part of your answer. In other words, I should be able to tell which questions you are answering without going back to the prompts.

Concerning mechanics, pay special attention to pronouns. Make antecedents clear. Say Foster first, not "he." Remember to capitalize and punctuate titles properly for each genre.

Writing Assignments:

Introduction:

This addresses how memory, symbol, and pattern affect the reading of literature. How does the recognition of patterns make it easier to read complicated literature? Discuss a time when your appreciation of a literary work was enhanced by your understanding symbol or pattern.

Chapter 1: Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not)

List the five aspects of the quest and then apply them to something you have read or viewed in the same format used on pp. 3-5.

Chapter 2: Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion

Choose a meal from a literary work and apply the ideas of Chapter 2 to this literary depiction.

Chapter 3: Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires

What are the essentials of a vampire story? Apply this to a literary work you have read or viewed.

Chapter 4: Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?

Define intertextuality. Discuss three examples that have helped you in reading specific works.

Chapter 5: When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare...

Discuss a work that you are familiar with that alludes to or reflects Shakespeare. Show how the author uses this connection thematically. Read pp. 39-40 carefully. Foster shows how Fugard reflects Shakespeare through plot and theme. In your discussion, focus on theme.

Chapter 6: ... or the Bible

Read "Araby" (search James Joyce, "Araby," text on Google). Discuss Biblical allusions that Foster does NOT mention. Look at the example of the "two great jars." Be creative and imaginative in these connections.

Chapter 7: Handeldee and Greteldum

Think of a work of literature that reflects a fairy tale. Discuss the parallels. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation?

Chapter 8: It's Greek to Me

Write a free verse poem derived or inspired by characters or situations from Greek mythology. (No reusing from past work!)

Chapter 9: It's More Than Just Rain or Snow

Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work, not in terms of plot.

Chapter 10: Never Stand Next to the Hero

Think about a minor, flat character from a work you have read and discuss his/her “utility” in terms of characterization, theme, plot, etc.

Interlude—Does He Mean That?

No assignment, but responsible for reading the Interlude.

Chapter 11: ... More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence

Present examples of the two kinds of violence found in literature. Show how the effects are different.

Chapter 12: Is That a Symbol

Use the process described on page 106 and investigate the symbolism of the fence in “Araby.” (Mangan’s sister stands behind it.)

Chapter 13: It's All Political

Assume that Foster is right and “it is all political.” Use his criterion to show that one of the major works assigned to you during your high school career is political.

Chapter 14: Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too

Apply the criterion on p. 126 to a major character in a significant literary work. Try to choose a character that will have many matches. This is a particularly apt tool for analyzing film—*Star Wars*, *Cool Hand Luke*, *Excalibur*, *Malcolm X*, *Braveheart*.

Chapter 15: Flights of Fancy

Select a literary work in which flight signifies escape or freedom. Explain in detail.

Chapter 16: It's All About Sex...

Chapter 17: ... Except Sex

Ok—the sex chapters. The key idea from this chapter is that “scenes in which sex is coded rather than explicit can work at multiple levels and sometimes be more intense than literal depictions” (141). In other words, sex is often *suggested* with much more art and effort than it is *described*, and if the author is doing his job, it reflects and creates theme or character. Choose a novel, movie in which sex is *suggested*, but not described, and discuss how the relationship is suggested and how this implication affects the theme or develops characterization.

Chapter 18: If She Comes Up, It's Baptism

Think of a “baptism scene” from a significant literary work. How was the character different after the experience? Discuss.

Chapter 19: Geography Matters

Discuss at least four different aspects of a specific literary work that Foster would classify under “geography.”

Chapter 20: ... So Does Season

Find a poem that mentions a specific season. Then discuss how the poet uses the season in a meaningful, traditional, or unusual way. (Submit a copy of the poem with your analysis.)

Interlude: One Story

Write your own definition for archetype. Then identify an archetypal story and apply it to a literary work with which you are familiar.

Chapter 21: Marked for Greatness

Figure out Harry Potter's scar. If you are not familiar with Harry Potter, select another character with a physical imperfection and analyze its implications for characterization.

Chapter 22: He's Blind for a Reason, You Know

Chapter 23: It's Never Just Heart Disease... And Rarely Just Illness

Recall two characters who die of disease in a literary work. Consider how these deaths reflect the "principles governing the use of disease in literature" (222).

Chapter 24: Don't Read with Your Eyes

After reading chapter 24, choose a scene or episode from a novel, play, or epic written before the 20th century. Contrast how it could be viewed by a reader from the 21st century with how it might be viewed by a contemporary reader. Focus on specific assumptions that the author makes, assumptions that would not make it in this century.

Chapter 25: It's My Symbol and I'll Cry If I Want To

The bold statements in this chapter need to be engraved in your brain.

Chapter 26: Is He Serious? And Other Ironies

Select an ironic literary work and explain the multi-vocal nature of the irony in the work.

Chapter 27: A Test Case

Read "The Garden Party" by Katherine Mansfield, the short story starting on p. 262. Complete the exercises on pp. 282-283, following the directions exactly. Then, compare your writing with the three examples. How did you do? What does the essay that follows comparing Laura with Persephone add to your appreciation of Mansfield's story?

Postlude: Who's In Charge Here?

Envoi:

Choose a motif not discussed in this text (as the horse reference) and note its appearance in three or four different works. What does this idea seem to signify?

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Novel Choice List

Novel Options:

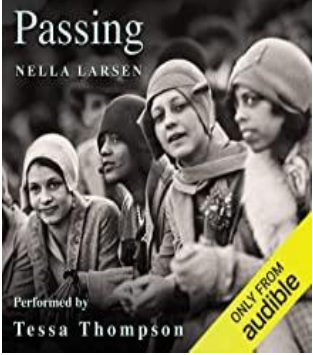
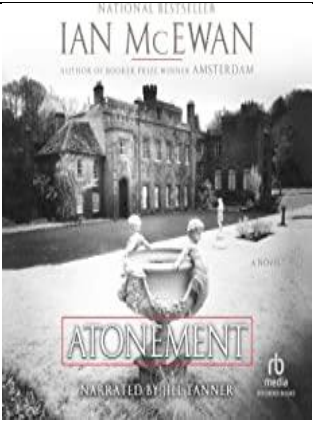

Wuthering Heights Emily Bronte		<p>Wuthering Heights is a wild, passionate story of the intense and almost demonic love between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, a foundling adopted by Catherine's father. After Mr Earnshaw's death, Heathcliff is bullied and humiliated by Catherine's brother Hindley and wrongly believing that his love for Catherine is not reciprocated, leaves Wuthering Heights, only to return years later as a wealthy and polished man. He proceeds to exact a terrible revenge for his former miseries. The action of the story is chaotic and unremittingly violent, but the accomplished handling of a complex structure, the evocative descriptions of the lonely moorland setting and the poetic grandeur of vision combine to make this unique novel a masterpiece of English literature.</p>
My Antonia Willa Cather		<p>Set in the Midwest of the United States, the novel tells the story of an immigrant girl as she adjusts to life in a new country. Following Antonia's life from childhood through adulthood, the novel skillfully depicts the struggles and joys of a life of hard work and perseverance. <i>My Antonia</i> is an inspirational story of courage, resilience, and the power of the human spirit.</p>

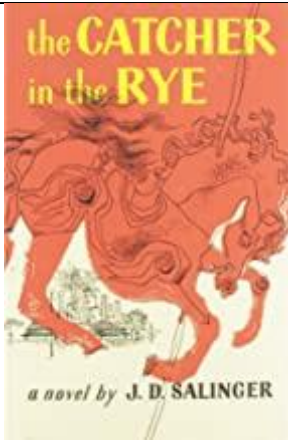
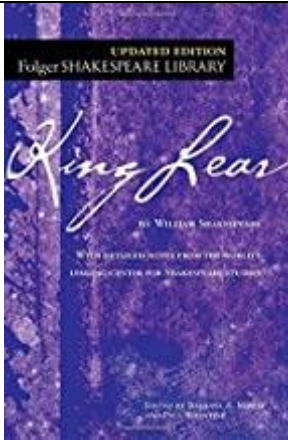
<p><i>The Awakening</i></p> <p>Kate Chopin</p>		<p>It tells the story of Edna Pontellier, a woman who seeks to find her own identity in a society that restricts her to a traditional role. The novel explores themes of motherhood, gender roles, and social conventions, offering a powerful critique of the oppressive nature of patriarchy. Chopin's writing style is often lauded for its vivid imagery and poetic language.</p>
<p><i>Great Expectations</i></p> <p>Charles Dickens</p>		<p><i>Great Expectations</i>, written by Charles Dickens and first published in 1861, is a classic novel that follows the life of an orphaned boy named Pip. Through a series of unexpected events, Pip embarks upon a journey of self-discovery and maturity. Along the way, he meets a variety of colorful characters and learns valuable life lessons. <i>Great Expectations</i> is an uplifting story of hope, perseverance, and the power of redemption.</p>
<p><i>The Memory Keeper's Daughter</i></p> <p>Kim Edwards</p>		<p>Kim Edwards' stunning novel begins on a winter night in 1964 in Lexington, Kentucky, when a blizzard forces Dr. David Henry to deliver his own twins. His son, born first, is perfectly healthy, but the doctor immediately recognizes that his daughter has Down syndrome. Rationalizing it as a need to protect Norah, his wife, he makes a split-second decision that will alter all of their lives forever. He asks his nurse, Caroline, to take the baby away to an institution and never to reveal the secret. Instead, she disappears into another city to raise the child herself.</p>


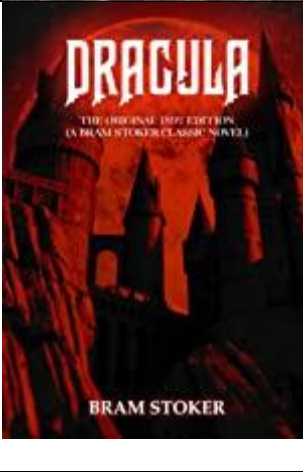

<p><i>The Invisible Man</i></p> <p>Ralph Ellison</p>		<p>In this deeply compelling novel and epic milestone of American literature, a nameless narrator tells his story from the basement lair of the Invisible Man he imagines himself to be. He describes growing up in a Black community in the South, attending a Negro college from which he is expelled, moving to New York and becoming the chief spokesman of the Harlem branch of "the Brotherhood," before retreating amid violence and confusion.</p>
<p><i>Catch-22</i></p> <p>Joseph Heller</p>		<p>Set in Italy during World War II, this is the story of the incomparable, malingering bombardier Yossarian, a hero who is furious because thousands of people he has never met are trying to kill him. But his real problem is not the enemy—it is his own army, which keeps increasing the number of missions the men must fly to complete their service. Yet if Yossarian makes any attempt to excuse himself from the perilous missions he's assigned, he'll be in violation of Catch-22, a hilariously sinister bureaucratic rule: A man is considered insane if he willingly continues to fly dangerous combat missions, but if he makes a formal request to be removed from duty, he is proven sane and therefore ineligible to be relieved.</p>


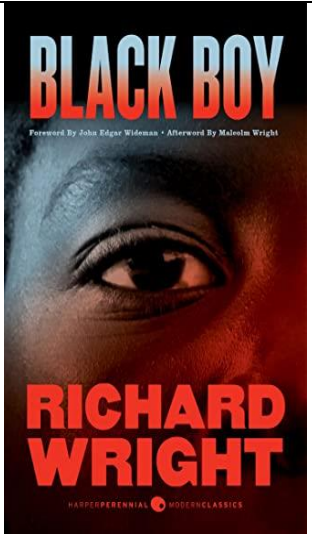
<p><i>The Sun Also Rises</i></p> <p>Ernest Hemingway</p>		<p>A poignant look at the disillusionment and angst of the post-World War I generation, the novel introduces two of Hemingway's most unforgettable characters: Jake Barnes and Lady Brett Ashley. The story follows the flamboyant Brett and the hapless Jake as they journey from the wild nightlife of 1920s Paris to the brutal bullfighting rings of Spain with a motley group of expatriates. In his first great literary masterpiece, Hemingway portrays an age of moral bankruptcy, spiritual dissolution, unrealized love, and vanishing illusions.</p>
<p><i>The Kite Runner</i></p> <p>Khaled Hosseini</p>		<p><i>The Kite Runner</i> is the unforgettable and beautifully told story of the friendship between two boys growing up in Kabul. Raised in the same household and sharing the same wet nurse, Amir and Hassan grow up in different worlds: Amir is the son of a prominent and wealthy man, while Hassan, the son of Amir's father's servant, is a Hazara—a shunned ethnic minority. Their intertwined lives, and their fates, reflect the eventual tragedy of the world around them. When Amir and his father flee the country for a new life in California, Amir thinks that he has escaped his past, and yet he cannot leave the memory of Hassan behind him.</p>

<p><i>A Thousand Splendid Suns</i></p> <p>Khaled Hosseini</p>		<p>Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate. As they endure the ever-escalating dangers around them—in their home as well as in the streets of Kabul—they come to form a bond that makes them both sisters and mother-daughter to each other, and that will ultimately alter the course not just of their own lives but of the next generation. With heart-wrenching power and suspense, Hosseini shows how a woman's love for her family can move her to shocking and heroic acts of self-sacrifice, and that in the end it is love, or even the memory of love, that is often the key to survival.</p>
<p><i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i></p> <p>Zora Neal Hurston</p>		<p><i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>, an American classic, is the luminous and haunting novel about Janie Crawford, a Southern Black woman in the 1930s, whose journey from a free-spirited girl to a woman of independence and substance has inspired writers and readers for close to 70 years. This poetic, graceful love story, rooted in Black folk traditions and steeped in mythic realism, celebrates boldly and brilliantly African American culture and heritage. In a powerful, mesmerizing narrative, it pays quiet tribute to a Black woman who, though constricted by the times, still demanded to be heard.</p>

<p>Passing</p> <p>Nella Larsen</p>		<p>Light-skinned Black woman Irene Redfield encounters an old childhood friend, Clare, who is now "passing" as a White woman. Clare is married to a racist White man, who doesn't know she has African American blood. In spite of the danger of being found out by her husband and society at large, she finds herself helplessly drawn to Irene's world.</p>
<p>Atonement</p> <p>Ian McEwan</p>		<p>In <i>Atonement</i>, three children lose their innocence, as the sweltering summer heat bears down on the hottest day in 1935, and their lives are changed forever. Cecilia Tallis is of England's privileged class; Robbie Turner is the housekeeper's son. In their moment of intimate surrender, they are interrupted by Cecilia's hyper-imaginative and scheming 13-year-old sister, Briony. And as chaos consumes the family, Briony commits a crime, the guilt of which she shall carry throughout her life.</p>
<p>The God of Small Things</p> <p>Arundhati Roy</p>		<p>Compared favorably to the works of Faulkner and Dickens, Arundhati Roy's modern classic is equal parts powerful family saga, forbidden love story, and piercing political drama. The seven-year-old twins Estha and Rahel see their world shaken irrevocably by the arrival of their beautiful young cousin, Sophie. It is an event that will lead to an illicit liaison and tragedies accidental and intentional, exposing "big things [that] lurk unsaid" in a country drifting dangerously toward</p>

		unrest.
<p><i>The Catcher in the Rye</i></p> <p>J. D. Salinger</p>		<p>Through circumstances that tend to preclude adult, secondhand description, he leaves his prep school in Pennsylvania and goes underground in New York City for three days. The boy himself is at once too simple and too complex for us to make any final comment about him or his story. Perhaps the safest thing we can say about Holden is that he was born in the world not just strongly attracted to beauty but, almost, hopelessly impaled on it.</p>
<p><i>King Lear</i></p> <p>William Shakespeare</p>	 <p>Do not attempt to read this text unless Shakespeare is a comfortable read for you.</p>	<p>Shakespeare's <i>King Lear</i> challenges us with the magnitude, intensity, and sheer duration of the pain that it represents. Its figures harden their hearts, engage in violence, or try to alleviate the suffering of others. Lear himself rages until his sanity cracks. The play tells us about families struggling between greed and cruelty, on the one hand, and support and consolation, on the other. Emotions are extreme, magnified to gigantic proportions. We also see old age portrayed in all its vulnerability, pride, and, perhaps, wisdom—one reason this most devastating of Shakespeare's tragedies is also perhaps his most moving.</p>

<p>Frankenstein</p> <p>Mary Shelley</p>		<p><i>Frankenstein or, The Modern Prometheus</i> tells the story of Victor Frankenstein, a young scientist who creates a sapient creature in an unorthodox scientific experiment.</p>
<p>Dracula</p> <p>Bram Stoker</p>		<p><i>Dracula</i> is an 1897 Gothic horror novel by Irish author Bram Stoker. Famous for introducing the character of the vampire Count Dracula, the novel tells the story of Dracula's attempt to move from Transylvania to England so he may find new blood and spread undead curse, and the battle between Dracula and a small group of men and women led by Professor Abraham Van Helsing.</p>
<p>The Bonesetter's Daughter</p> <p>Amy Tan</p>		<p>Ruth Young and her widowed mother, LuLing, have always had a tumultuous relationship. Now, before she succumbs to forgetfulness, LuLing gives Ruth some of her writings, which reveal a side of LuLing that Ruth has never known. In a remote mountain village where ghosts and tradition rule, LuLing grows up in the care of her mute precious Auntie as the family endures a curse laid upon a relative known as the bonesetter. When headstrong LuLing rejects the marriage proposal of the coffinmaker, a shocking series of events are set in motion—all of which lead back to Ruth and LuLing in modern San Francisco.</p>

<p><i>The Age of Innocence</i></p> <p>Edith Wharton</p>		<p>Newland Archer, gentleman lawyer and heir to one of New York City's best families, is happily anticipating a highly desirable marriage to the sheltered and beautiful May Welland. Yet he finds reason to doubt his choice of bride after the appearance of Countess Ellen Olenska, May's exotic, beautiful 30-year-old cousin who has been living in Europe. This novel won the first-ever Pulitzer awarded to a woman.</p>
<p><i>Black Boy</i></p> <p>Richard Wright</p>		<p>Enduring poverty, hunger, fear, abuse, and hatred while growing up in the woods of Mississippi, Wright lied, stole, and raged at those around him—whites indifferent, pitying, or cruel and Blacks resentful of anyone trying to rise above their circumstances. Desperate for a different way of life, he headed north, eventually arriving in Chicago, where he forged a new path and began his career as a writer. At the end of <i>Black Boy</i>, Wright sits poised with pencil in hand, determined to “hurl words into this darkness and wait for an echo.”</p>