

Incoming Senior Advanced Placement Summer Reading Requirements 2026

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 2o56rfym.

Works:

How to Read Literature Like a Professor Thomas Foster
Oedipus Rex Sophocles
Classic Choice Text (chosen from the list in Google Classroom)
Modern Choice Text (chosen from the list in Google Classroom)

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.

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 AI or 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 essay on your personal reading journey.

You will need to complete your reading journey essay 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. Extensions are not granted for your failure to attend to your work.

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 Personal Reflection will be worth 10 points.

Your nine literary analysis 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: Personal Reflection: Your Reading Journey

Due: June 22

****Warning:** Please take your time on this. It is important and worthy—and it is the first piece of it is the first AP level work I will see.

See Google Classroom for details and writing helps.

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

Book #2 (your choice) Due: July 13

Book #3 (your choice) Due: August 3

Book #4 (your choice) Due: August 24 (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 and a works cited entry at the end of the essay.

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 textual references and a works cited entry.

Essay #3: Final Reaction

The style and content of each of these books make them worth reading. For your final reaction, choose one of the chapters from Foster's text and apply it to your chosen text for writing. This means you will have two works in your Works Cited at the end of the essay!

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 using second person is out of the question! Please be careful if you choose to use first person.
6. Use present tense when writing about literature.
7. Ensure that your topic sentences for each paragraph work as claim statements for that paragraph and fully go toward supporting your thesis statement.
8. Ensure you have evidence (quoted) and analysis in your writing. It is not how much you say, but how deep you dig into the text- take the risk!
9. Please also scan for contractions. Our writing at this level should be without them.

AP Literature Writing Reminders

1. Did you use present tense when addressing points that take place in the text itself?
2. Did you avoid 1st and 2nd person personal pronouns (I, me, we, us, our, you, your)?
3. Did I embed so that my text flows smoothly and avoids “no-no” pronouns?
4. Did I ensure that topic sentences are mini-theses for that paragraph?
5. Did I do a spelling/grammar check before turning in?
6. Do I have sufficient evidence (quoted) and analysis to support my argument?

Remember—it is not how much you say, but how deep you dig, how much you are willing to risk in making claims—take the risk!

Essay Scoring Guide

Based on AP Literature 6-Point Assessment Framework | Total: 10 Points

Section I — Completion (4 points)

Awarded automatically when a student submits a full, on-topic essay response. No partial credit. An off-topic, blank, or fundamentally non-responsive submission scores 0 in this section.

| Points | Criteria | Notes |
|--------|--------------|---|
| 4 | Earns credit | Response addresses the prompt with a complete, on-topic essay |
| 0 | No credit | Blank, off-topic, or fundamentally non-responsive submission |

Section II — Claim / Thesis (1 point)

Awarded for a defensible, specific claim. The thesis must go beyond restating the prompt on the #3 essay and must be locatable in the essay (introduction).

| Points | Criteria | Notes |
|--------|--------------|---|
| 1 | Earns credit | Presents a defensible interpretation or argument that goes beyond restating the prompt or summarizing the plot; thesis must be locatable in the essay (intro or conclusion) |
| 0 | No credit | Restates the prompt, summarizes only, or contains no identifiable claim |

Section III — Textual Support (0–5 points)

Evaluates the quality, specificity, and integration of evidence drawn from the text. Evidence must be connected to the claim through explanation or analysis.

| Points | Level | Description |
|--------|------------------------------|--|
| 5 | Sophisticated support | Multiple specific textual references (quotation, paraphrase, or detail) consistently explained and clearly linked to the claim; analysis deepens understanding of the text |
| 4 | Adequate support | Specific textual evidence used and explained; connections to the claim may be uneven or inconsistent in places |

| Points | Level | Description |
|--------|----------------------|--|
| 3 | Partial support | Some relevant evidence present but explanation is limited; textual references may be general, brief, or loosely connected to the claim |
| 2 | Minimal support | Little specific evidence; relies largely on plot summary, paraphrase without analysis, or vague references to the text |
| 1 | Insufficient support | Very little textual evidence; response makes assertions without grounding them in the text |
| 0 | No support | No textual reference of any kind; entirely unsupported or off-topic response |

Score Summary

| Section | Points Possible | Points Earned |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| I — Completion | 4 | |
| II — Claim / Thesis | 1 | |
| III — Textual Support | 0–5 | |
| TOTAL | 10 | |

Scoring notes: A student who completes the essay (4 pts) but presents no claim and no textual support earns a 4/10. A student who completes the essay, presents a clear claim, and provides sophisticated textual support earns a 10/10.

Summer Assignment: AP Literature What Makes Literature Worthy of Our Time and Attention?

Before we dive into our study of literature this year, I want you to sit with a question — not rush to answer it.

What makes literature worthy of our time and attention?

Don't reach for the first answer that comes to mind. Don't write what you think an AP teacher wants to hear. Instead, I want you to arrive at your answer honestly, through the story of your own life as a reader.

Here's how to think about it:

Every reader brings a whole world to the page. Your family structure, where you grew up, your faith (or the absence of it), your economic background, your schooling, your culture, the teams and clubs and communities you belong to — all of these have quietly shaped what you notice in a story, what moves you, what confuses you, and what you resist. Before you can think clearly about literature, you need to think clearly about *yourself as a reader*.

Your task:

Write an extensive personal essay that traces your journey with reading and literature. This is not a book report or a list of titles you've read. It is a genuine reflection on your relationship with the written word — where it began, how it has shifted, what it has meant to you, and what it has failed to mean to you.

As you write, consider questions like these (you don't need to answer all of them — let them prompt your thinking):

- What is your earliest memory involving a book, a story, or being read to?
- Was reading a presence or an absence in your home growing up?
- Has a piece of writing ever changed the way you saw something — or someone?
- Have you ever felt *seen* by a book? Have you ever felt completely *excluded* by one?
- What has school done to your relationship with reading — helped it, hurt it, complicated it?
- Are there stories from your community, your family, or your faith tradition that shaped you before you ever picked up a "literary" text?
- What do you read when no one is assigning it — and what does that tell you?

Let all of that lead you, ultimately, to your answer: **What makes literature worthy of your time and attention?**

A few things to keep in mind:

- **Be honest over impressive.** A student who tells me they stopped enjoying reading in 7th grade and explains why will teach me far more than one who performs enthusiasm they don't feel.
- **Be specific.** Name the books, the moments, the people. Specificity is what turns reflection into writing.
- **Take up space.** This should be *extensive* — think several pages. You are building an argument from lived evidence, and that takes room.

The goal of this assignment is simple: arrive at the first day of class already thinking like a literary critic — one who knows that where you stand shapes what you see.

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Summer Work 2026
How to Read Literature Like a Professor (Foster)
Study Guide

In Doyle's "The Red-Headed League," Homes 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.

Please note that all materials should be generated from your mind, and your mind alone. Any references that seem to be from AI or a Google search will be discounted.

Writing Assignments:

Note that you have already completed part of this text as part of your 11th-grade non-fiction reading.

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 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!)

Interlude—Does He Mean That?

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 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 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 25, 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?

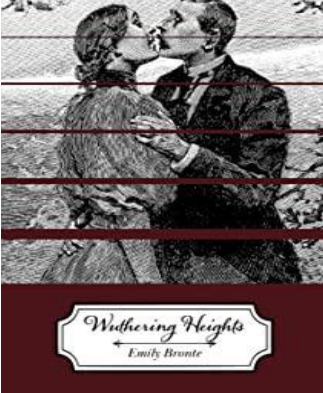
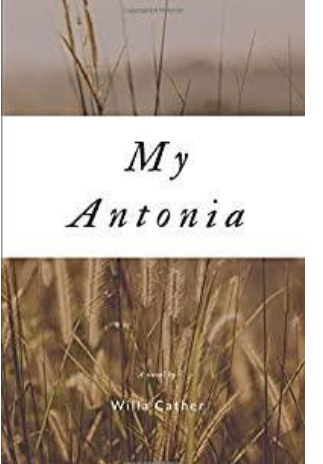
Postlude: Who's In Charge Here?

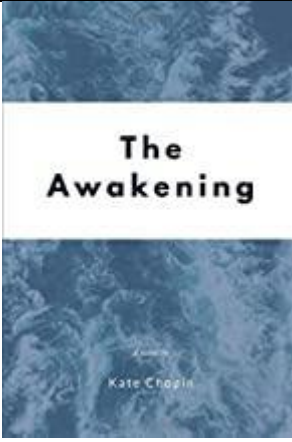

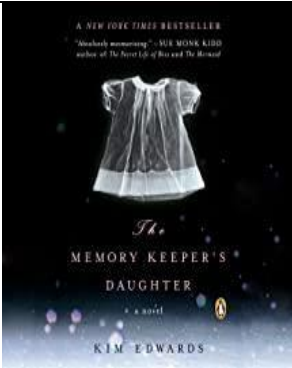
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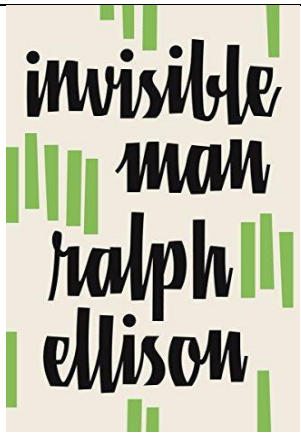
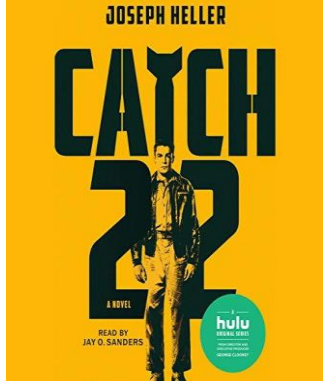
Choose a motif not discussed in this text (as the horse reference) and note its appearance in three or four different works. What does this idea seem to signify?

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 Novel Choice List

Novel Options: Please be careful to note whether the work is classic or modern in the left column. You will need one from each category.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Classic Novel</p> <p><i>Wuthering Heights</i></p> <p>Emily Bronte</p> |  | <p><i>Wuthering Heights</i> 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 <i>Wuthering Heights</i>, 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> |
| <p>Classic Novel</p> <p><i>My Antonia</i></p> <p>Willa Cather</p> |  | <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> |

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| <p>Classic Novel</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>Classic Novel</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>Modern Novel</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> |

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|---|--|--|
| <p>Modern Novel</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 Black 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>Modern Novel</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> |

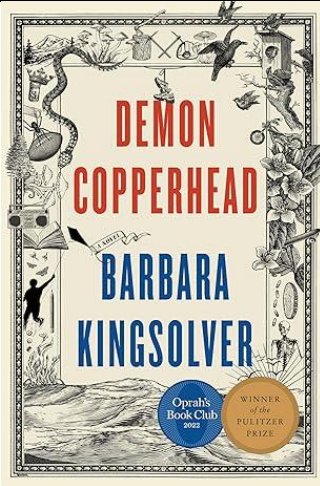
| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Classic Novel</p> <p><i>The Sun Also Rises</i></p> <p>Ernest Hemingway</p> |  | <p>A poignant look at the disillusionment and angst of the post-World War I generation, the novel introduces two of Hemingway’s most unforgettable characters: Jake Barnes and Lady Brett Ashley. The 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>Modern Novel</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> |

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| <p>Modern Novel</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>Modern Novel</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> |

**Modern
Novel**

***Demon
Copperhead***

**Barbara
Kingsolver**



Set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, *Demon Copperhead* is the story of a boy born to a teenaged single mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his dead father's good looks and copper-colored hair, a caustic wit, and a fierce talent for survival. Relayed in his own unsparing voice, Demon braves the modern perils of foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, disastrous loves, and crushing losses. Through all of it, he reckons with his own invisibility in a popular culture where even the superheroes have abandoned rural people in favor of cities.

Many generations ago, Charles Dickens wrote *David Copperfield* from his experience as a survivor of institutional poverty and its damages to children in his society. Those problems have yet to be solved in ours. Dickens is not a prerequisite for readers of this novel, but he provided its inspiration. In transposing a Victorian epic novel to the contemporary American South, Barbara Kingsolver enlists Dickens' anger and compassion, and above all, his faith in the transformative powers of a good story. *Demon Copperhead* speaks for a new generation of lost boys, and all those born into beautiful, cursed places they can't imagine leaving behind.

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| <p>Modern Novel</p> <p><i>Passing</i></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>Modern Novel</p> <p><i>Atonement</i></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>Modern Novel</p> <p><i>The God of Small Things</i></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 unrest.</p> |

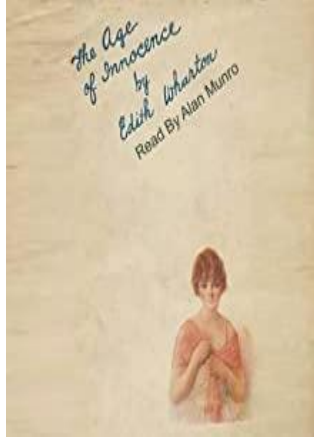
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| <p>Modern Novel</p> <p><i>The Catcher in the Rye</i></p> <p>J. D. Salinger</p> |  | <p>The hero-narrator of <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> is an ancient child of sixteen, a native New Yorker named Holden Caulfield. Through circumstances that tend 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>Classic Play</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> |

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| <p>Classic Novel</p> <p><i>Frankenstein</i></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>Classic Novel</p> <p><i>Dracula</i></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>Modern Novel</p> <p><i>The Bonesetter's Daughter</i></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> |

Classic Novel

The Age of Innocence

Edith Wharton



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.