

# Upper School AP Literature & Composition Summer Reading

2022–2023

## Welcome to AP Literature & Composition!

*The faculty at Heathwood Hall is convinced of the power of reading. We know regular reading is the best way to improve vocabulary and reading comprehension. We also know the strong correlation between regular reading and good writing. Recently, we have seen other exciting benefits of reading, especially fiction. In “Your Brain on Fiction,” published in the New York Times March 18, 2012, Annie Murphy Hall examines the interesting and unexpected effects that reading has on our brains. Neuroscientists have found that reading fiction “stimulates the brain and even changes how we act in life.” Research shows, “Individuals who frequently read fiction seem to be better able to understand other people, empathize with them, and see the world from their perspective.”*

All students must (1.) read **TWO** books and (2.) take notes on both (see below).

The first book **must be** . . .

*All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr

Your second book **must be your choice of one of the following:**

**Take some time to research the titles** to find a book that will interest you! These books may contain questionable language or content. **Please email me or read reviews online** before choosing a book if you are concerned or if you would like to discuss the options! You and your parents could also check CommonSense Media ([commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org)) for reviews and guidelines.

*The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton

*The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison

*Cold Mountain* by Charles Frazier

*The Color Purple* by Alice Walker

*A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles

*The Nickle Boys* by Colson Whitehead

*The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway

**PLEASE NOTE: The use of SparkNotes or other reading substitutes is strictly forbidden and will be treated as an honor violation.**

Read Actively! Annotate your books! Or use sticky notes and write comments on them!

Also, while reading or after finishing each novel, take notes—typing them or writing in a journal.

**Your notes should include the following ten sections:**

- (1.) title of book, full name of author, and date of first publication
- (2.) characters (your thoughts about them, details you want to remember about them, etc.; if there are contrasting characters, make notes about that);
- (3.) setting(s) (not only the time and place[s] but also the values associated with the setting(s);
- (4.) structure (how the parts or sections of the novel are arranged and the ways in which that might affect the book);
- (5.) point of view (who narrates the novel and why might that matter?);
- (6.) figurative language (comparisons, symbols, images, etc. that emphasize or enhance setting, meaning, tone, mood or atmosphere or that contribute to characterization);
- (7.) topics (what ideas does this novel explore—loss, love, coming of age, social hierarchy, family ties and divisions, etc.);
- (8.) passages (at least 5) that you especially like or think are important;
- (9.) questions you have about the book;
- (10.) your personal response to the novel overall or to any characters or settings.

Organize your notes neatly, according to these ten sections, and label each section.

These notes are primarily for you. Because AP Lit students need to remember summer reading all year, though, make your notes as detailed as you believe you will need for them to be. I will take them up on the second or third day of class in August, and they will earn a completion grade. While I trust that you will take notes that will be helpful to you next April or May, particularly skimpy notes will not earn a high grade. You will need more complete notes to help you remember the novels after months have passed. Summer reading will also serve as a springboard for discussion and writing assignments at the beginning of the year.

**Again, you may not use any reading supplements or substitutes for this assignment, even to copy and paste a list of characters.** Doing so would be an honor code violation, but it would also rob you of the opportunity to learn names and details and to think for yourself.

**Have a wonderful summer.**

**I look forward to getting to know you next year!**

**Dr. Plowden: [splowden@heathwood.org](mailto:splowden@heathwood.org)**