

# 12th AP English Literature and Composition Summer Reading

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Welcome to Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition. For the duration of this course, we aim to prepare ourselves for the upcoming AP Lit and Composition Exam by performing several in-depth analyses on a wide variety of complex works from around the globe. To begin your literary journey, you are to read the following selections and complete the assigned analytical essays for each prior to the first day of the semester. In addition to reading and writing about the works themselves, you are free to (and encouraged to) consult reputable supplemental resources to help you in comprehension and analysis. These resources, however, are NOT to be used as a replacement for reading the text; any instance of such action will result in zero credit. **This should go without question, but you should be sure to give proper credit to any such source if you draw information from them for your essays, supplying internal citations and a Works Cited page.**

### Assignment 1

Text Selections:

*Train Dreams* by Denis Johnson

*Stoner* by John Williams

Prompt:

This paper will be an argumentative essay that deals in some way with both *Train Dreams* and *Stoner*. Whatever topic you choose to discuss, you should construct an argument that is debatable and not obvious. It should take a position with which someone could reasonably disagree-this is the first and most essential characteristic of a strong argument. An argument is neither a fact nor a mere opinion; it is a carefully constructed attempt to persuade a reader using evidence from the text to back up the claims. Your argument should be stated clearly in the thesis. You should also consider possible counter arguments to your position and respond to them in the course of the paper.

To help guide the development of your essay you may wish to consider the following ideas: your argument may focus on the similarities or differences in the conclusions of each work and/or focus on the similarities or differences in how each novel works toward its conclusion. Again, this is an argument specific to your interpretation of each literary work and must be logically developed through the use of pertinent textual evidence and topical commentary within your essay.

### Assignment 2

Text Selections (choice):

<i>Metamorphosis</i> by Franz Kafka	<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> by Oscar Wilde
<i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i> by Ken Kesey	<i>The Invisible Man</i> by Ralph Ellison
<i>Cat's Cradle</i> by Kurt Vonnegut	<i>The Awakening</i> by Kate Chopin
<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> by Margaret Atwood	<i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> by Charles Dickens
<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> by J.D. Salinger	<i>Gulliver's Travels</i> by Jonathan Swift
<i>In Dubious Battle</i> by John Steinbeck	<i>It Can't Happen Here</i> by Sinclair Lewis

Prompt:

Author and poet Ezra Pound once said, "Literature does not exist in a vacuum. Writers as such have a definite social function exactly proportional to their ability as writers. This is their main use." Indeed, writers and philosophers throughout history have either underscored the revolutionary spirit of their times with their works or have been the primer that ignited the charge in society. For this assignment, you are expected to

choose one of the titles above and write an analytical essay that examines how the work in question comments on or criticizes the time period in which it was written. Before choosing a work, be sure to do a little preliminary research, not only about the time period, but also the work itself; several of these titles deal with “weighty” issues and may not agree with everyone’s literary palate.

## **Grading**

As stated above, all assignments are expected to be completed and ready to turn in on the first full day of school. Each essay should adhere to the following specifications:

- Each essay is to be a minimum of 1000 words in length. (Yes, I will count.)
- Each paper should be typed, double-spaced in size 12 Times New Roman.
- Each paper should include supporting passages from the work(s) in question. No essay can be considered complete without such supporting passages. (See also my comment above about supplemental resources.)
- Each essay will be graded on a scale of 1-9 according to the AP Literature and Composition Free Response Rubric (see attached).

Once again, Spark Notes and other online literary criticism websites are wonderful resources to aid in the understanding of a text, but anyone caught using materials like these as a **replacement** for any of the readings will receive a zero and possible further disciplinary action. If there are any questions or if you wish to have alternate reading assignments, please feel free to email Mr. Tiller at [patrick.tiller@knoxschools.org](mailto:patrick.tiller@knoxschools.org). I will try my best to respond to your email within 48 hours, assuming that I am not out of town. If so, I will respond as soon as I am available.