

AP ENGLISH SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT (2020-2021)

Dear AP English Students,

The summer reading assignment is designed to prepare you for the level of critical reading and the depth of conversation required in AP English. We will begin the year with a series of canonical works which explore representations of gender, sexuality, and identity. As a critical frame for our analysis of these texts, we will use feminist theory/gender studies, one of several critical approaches that you will study in AP English. The women's study theory selections vary in focus and cultural context; however, they all provide a series of critical terms and concepts to use as tools for examining both literature and life. As you complete the summer reading, please prepare Parts I, II, and III below to submit before school begins. During the first week of classes, you will also be asked to complete an in-class essay based on the novel you selected from the choice list.

Challenging literature commands your full intellectual attention. Therefore, begin your reading early in the summer so that you have plenty of time to enjoy and carefully contemplate the complexities and nuances of the literature.

I look forward to learning with you! Mrs. Miller

AP English Required Summer Reading: Novels

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë

Jane Eyre (originally published as *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*) is a novel by English writer Charlotte Brontë. It was published on 16 October 1847, by Smith, Elder & Co. of London, England, under the pen name "Currer Bell." Primarily of the bildungsroman genre, *Jane Eyre* follows the emotions and experiences of its titular character, including her growth to adulthood, and her love for Mr. Rochester, the Byronic master of fictitious Thornfield Hall. In its internalisation of the action—the focus is on the gradual unfolding of Jane's moral and spiritual sensibility, and all the events are coloured by a heightened intensity that was previously the domain of poetry—*Jane Eyre* revolutionised the art of fiction. Charlotte Brontë has been called the 'first historian of the private consciousness' and the literary ancestor of writers like Joyce and Proust. The novel contains elements of social criticism, with a strong sense of morality at its core, but is nonetheless a novel many consider ahead of its time given the individualistic character of Jane and the novel's exploration of classism, sexuality, religion, and proto-feminism.

The Awakening by Kate Chopin

This novella is the story of Edna Pontellier, a wife and the mother of two sons, living in the Creole south in the late 19th century. Edna feels trapped in a marriage where she is unable to express her emotions and has no discernible identity, and she opens herself up to certain new experiences which awaken her soul. Liberated, she sends her children away and is determined to live a more independent and self-determined life. *The Awakening* is a landmark modernist work which illustrates

the confines of late 19th century America for women and the beginning of an era of changing social attitudes towards their role in society.

***Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston**

One of the most important works of twentieth-century American literature, Zora Neale Hurston's beloved 1937 classic, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, is an enduring Southern love story sparkling with wit, beauty, and heartfelt wisdom. Told in the captivating voice of a woman who refuses to live in sorrow, bitterness, fear, or foolish romantic dreams, it is the story of fair-skinned, fiercely independent Janie Crawford, and her evolving selfhood through three marriages and a life marked by poverty, trials, and purpose. A true literary wonder, Hurston's masterwork remains as relevant and affecting today as when it was first published—perhaps the most widely read and highly regarded novel in the entire canon of African American literature.

Plus a choice novel from the following list (Pick ONE):

Americanah by Chimimanda Ngozi Adiche

Alias Grace by Margaret Atwood

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Wuthering Heights by Charlotte Bronte

The Stranger by Albert Camus

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr

Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoevsky

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner

The Sun Also Rises by Ernest Hemingway

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey

Pachinko by Min Jin Lee

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

The Road by Cormac McCarthy

Atonement by Ian McEwan

Sula by Toni Morrison

The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy

White Teeth by Zadie Smith

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

The Color Purple by Alice Walker

Orlando by Virginia Woolf

Sing, Unburied Sing by Jesmyn Ward

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde

Also required:

Selected Poems: Please closely read and annotate the following poems and be prepared to discuss them in class: (available on Schoology)

“I Sit and Sew” by Alice Dunbar-Nelson; “Women” by Louise Bogan; “The Mirror” by Sylvia Plath; “Her Kind” by Anne Sexton; “Barbie Doll” by Marge Piercy; “Who Said it Was Simple” by Audre Lorde; “It’s a Woman’s World” by Eavan Boland; “Caged Bird” by Maya Angelou
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jKfBov8Tfw8MQz-Zzg-AGXzqvw_Clc0RISp_oNAxGc/edit#

Selected Literary Criticism: Read and annotate EACH of the following texts:

First Wave Feminism: (Full Packet, as well as individual links, available on Schoology)

Wollstonecraft, Mary. [*A Vindication of the Rights of Women*](#). (1792). (Only the Introduction!).

Woolf, Virginia. [*Excerpt from A Room of One’s Own*](#) (1929).

Second Wave Feminism:

De Beauvoir, Simone. [*“Introduction: Woman as Other,” The Second Sex*](#) (1949).

Friedan, Betty. [*“The Problem that Has No Name,” The Feminine Mystique*](#) (1963).

Third Wave Feminism:

Crispin, Jessa “Women Do Not Have to Be Feminists” from *Why I Am Not a Feminist* (2017).

Orenstein, Peggy. [*“The Miseducation of the American Boy” The Atlantic*](#), Jan/Feb 2020.

Slaughter, Anne Marie. [*“Why Women Still Can’t Have It All.” The Atlantic*](#). July/August 2012.

Intersectional Feminism:

Gay, Roxane. Excerpt from *Bad Feminist*. (2014)

Lorde, Audre. [*“Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference” Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*](#) (1984).

AP ENGLISH SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT

Part I: Reading Journals

For the **three novels** (Bronte, Chopin, Hurston), please respond to the following prompts. Write **one fully developed paragraph per bullet for each novel**, referring to specifics from the text. Always push beyond plot- I’m looking for evidence of your deep analysis!

- Identify the point-of-view from which the text is written, and discuss the effect of any significant shifts in the narrative voice.
- Identify one significant element of setting and explore how it is developed symbolically. What does it represent? How does it relate to character development and/or theme in the novel?

- Explore characterization in the novel. Either write about how the protagonist grows or changes (a round character) or the role a minor (flat) character serves in the text. You choose which character to focus on.

I suggest you consult “Understanding Point of View,” “Understanding Setting” and “Understanding Character” to guide your journals. These handouts are available in the summer reading section of my Schoology page.

Part II: Applications of Critical Theory

After you read the selections of feminist literary criticism, write a short reflection of approx. 2 pages (double spaced), responding to ONE of the following prompts.

CHOOSE 1:

1. **Personal reflection on feminism.** You must answer the first two questions. (The other questions are options for you to consider.) You must incorporate specific evidence from at least two of the critical articles/essays to support your response. Be sure to meaningfully interact with these quotes. Including personal observations and experiences is also ideal. Feel free to use first person.

- How do *you* define feminism? (Don’t just use a dictionary definition)
- Are you a feminist? Why or why not?
- How has feminism changed throughout the years?
- What different challenges do women face today? (especially concerning global feminism)
- Do you have any personal experiences with the label/identity of feminist?
- How does feminism relate to men?

2. **Literary reflection on feminism.** How/in what ways does feminist critical theory enhance your understanding of the summer reading novels? Make direct applications of the critical articles to the reading (for example: the ending of *Jane Eyre*; Edna’s choices; Janie’s self-actualization) Make sure to write about at least two of the books and include quotes with analysis.

The summer reading assignment will be assessed for **organization, development, depth of insight, and clarity of expression.** These are summative assignments that will not be eligible for revision. **All written work must be submitted to Mrs. Miller via GoogleDocs no later than Wednesday, August 26th.**

Happy reading! See you in September!

