

The Summer “Assignment” for Advanced Placement Literature & Composition

Because the more you read, the better English student you will be,

the summer assignment is to read as many AP Lit books as possible!

Because my desire for you is that you enjoy what you read, get absorbed in it and love it, this summer reading is not required but will be rewarded with extra credit points.

Why read? (taken from the Prep Scholar Blog entitled “AP Literature Reading List: 127 Great Books for Your Prep” and from common sense!)

- You read to increase your familiarity with different eras and genres of literature;
- to improve your close-reading skills, and
- to do well on the free-response question on the AP Lit test which allows you to use a book of your choice.
- Each play or novel offers a world of ideas, of experience that increases your understanding of history and people, that grows your ability to analyze and think, and that develops you as a well-educated scholar.

What I need from you: As you read, jot down a few notes here and there so you can discuss the book with me.

- ❖ Write down who does what. So, the characters and main events. This will help you in September and in May (test).
- ❖ Jot down some of your thoughts as the book goes and some of your thoughts at the ending.
 - What do you think is a theme of the work as a whole? is a good question to ponder at the end.
 - Why did the author do things the way he/she did? is another good question. (Think whole plot or scenes.)
 - What do I notice about characters—coming of age, or identity, or gender, or psychology?

You and I will discuss each work that you read (perhaps in a small group, if multiple people read the same book).

The extra credit: For every play or novel* that you read and discuss with me, you will get one percentage point added to your end-of-the-semester grade. You may choose to add your points to either semester (or divide them up). You must have at least a B- for me to add extra credit points to your grade.

*(*To get technical, each 250-300 pages will count as one book. So Crime and Punishment—which I recommend HIGHLY!—would count as two, whereas Death of a Salesman—which I also recommend—would count as one half of a book. I hate to get technical because I want you to joyfully read and read and read, but I don't want you to avoid long books just because they are long or to read only short works just because they are short.)*

Here are two websites you may use to select titles from (Yes, the plays/novels need to be AP-level):

- ❖ AP Literature Reading List: 127 Great Books for Your Prep @ <http://blog.prepscholar.com/ap-literature-reading-list>
- ❖ Ms. Effie's AP Book List @ <http://mseffie.com/AP/APtitles.html>
- ❖ I will actually accept re-reads of these titles: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Oedipus and/or Antigone*, *The Odyssey*, *The Crucible*, and *The Jungle*. These are powerful books, and I would expect you to have a fresh perspective as a more mature student. ☺

Keep in mind that you don't want to read these works because we will read/study them next year:

- *Hamlet*, William Shakespeare
- *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad
- *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley
- *Beloved*, Toni Morrison
- *A Doll's House*, Henrik Ibsen

My wish for you this summer: lots of family and friend time, lots of fun and rest and time to read. ☺

Email Mrs. Sparks with any questions: spareli@sdmfschools.org

Mrs. Elizabeth Sparks, MFHS English Teacher, National Board Certified Teacher