

AP Literature Summer Reading Response--Journal Writing Guide

Rising twelfth grade English students are expected to write their reflections and reactions in journal form while reading their summer selections. You will be reading 3 books: one I choose, one you choose from the list below, and one you choose completely on your own (this book should have some literary standard appropriate to your grade level). The journal assignments, one for each of the required books, will be due during the first weeks of school. Each journal writing assignment will be counted as a grade. Thorough, thoughtful, and reflective responses to the following prompts are to be provided in the journal. Typed work is expected. In order to earn the highest grade, students should complete all of the following requirements carefully and completely:

1. Identify the book's title, author's name, and copyright date. Italicize the title. This should be cited in MLA format.
2. In paragraphs, give a brief summary of the plot, including the beginning, the middle, and the end (250-300 words).
3. Explain the significance of the title. Authors rarely choose a title randomly. Dig for metaphorical meaning. The title may be symbolic or it may be representative of some specific incident in the book. In any case, consider carefully the significance of the title and explain your thinking.
4. Make a list of the main characters and list five adjectives to describe each one. Describe your first impressions of the protagonist. Describe your first impressions of the antagonist (Research these terms if you don't remember what they mean). Cite (that is, quote word for word using quotation marks) at least three text examples that support your response.
5. Are the protagonist and antagonist dynamic or static, round or flat characters? (Again, research these terms if necessary.) Describe how these characters change or remain the same throughout the story. Tell what happens to make the character change or explain why and how he/she remains static. For example, does the character have to make a choice, is there a conflict or problem that needs resolution, does the character have to be courageous, etc..., or does something specific in his/her life change? If you are reading a non-fiction book, apply this question the author or who the book is about.
6. Cite and note the page number of a special passage from the book that you think is important or worth rereading. (Maybe it explains something about the character, or perhaps it describes a very special event, or perhaps it holds a certain resonance or connection with you, the reader.) You must explain why you chose this passage. Dig deep for a connection here.
7. Sketch a scene from the book. Stick figures are fine, but work to impress your teacher on this one! Feel free to add detail and color your scene. **Hard work pays! Extra credit will be awarded to deserving illustrators.
8. To highlight the significance of this book, write a 5-8 sentences response to each of the following:
 - What life lessons have you learned (or have been reinforced) from reading this book?
 - Analyze the book on its literary merit. Academically speaking, what can a student of literature learn about style, figurative language, literary devices, plot, character, setting, flashback, flash-forward, etc... from this book?
 - What did you dislike the most about this book? Explain using details and examples from the selection.

AP Literature Reading Summer Reading List

The book I have chosen for you is Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*, which is the story of a gifted young architect, his violent battle against conventional standards, and his explosive love affair with a beautiful woman who struggles to defeat him. I have these and will make them available to you.

Title: *Pride and Prejudice*

Author: Austen, Jane

Description: A novel about a spirited young woman in early nineteenth-century England who must cope with the courtship of a snobbish gentleman as well as the romantic entanglements of her four sisters.

Title: *Lord of the Flies*

Author: Golding, William

Description: A classic tale about a group of English schoolboys who are plane-wrecked on a deserted island is just as chilling and relevant today as when it was first published in 1954. At first, the stranded boys cooperate, attempting to gather food, make shelters, and maintain signal fires. Overseeing their efforts are Ralph, "the boy with fair hair," and Piggy, Ralph's chubby, wisdom-dispensing sidekick whose thick spectacles come in handy for lighting fires. Although Ralph tries to impose order and delegate responsibility, there are many in their number who would rather swim, play, or hunt the island's wild pig population. Soon Ralph's rules are being ignored or challenged outright. His fiercest antagonist is Jack, the redheaded leader of the pig hunters, who manages to lure away many of the boys to join his band of painted savages.

Title: *Catch 22*

Author: Heller, Joseph

Description: 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.

Title: *A Farewell to Arms*

Author: Hemingway, Ernest

Description: In 1918 Ernest Hemingway went to war, to the 'war to end all wars'. He volunteered for ambulance service in Italy, was wounded and twice decorated. Out of his experience came *A Farewell to Arms*. Hemingway's description of war is unforgettable. He recreates the fear, the comradeship, the courage of his young American volunteer, and the men and women he meets in Italy, with total conviction. But *A Farewell to Arms* is not only a novel of war. In it Hemingway has also created a love story of immense drama and uncompromising passion.

Title: *The Sun Also Rises*

Author: Hemingway, Ernest

Description: The quintessential novel of the Lost Generation, *The Sun Also Rises* is one of Ernest Hemingway's masterpieces and a classic example of his spare but powerful writing style. 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. It is an age of moral bankruptcy, spiritual dissolution, unrealized love, and vanishing illusions. First published in 1926, *The Sun Also Rises* helped to establish Hemingway as one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century.

Title: *The Kite Runner*

Author: Hosseini, Khaled

Description: Amir, haunted by his betrayal of Hassan, the son of his father's servant and a childhood friend, returns to Kabul as an adult after he learns Hassan has been killed, in an attempt to redeem himself by rescuing Hassan's son from a life of slavery to a Taliban official.

Title: Their Eyes Were Watching God

Author: Hurston, Zora Neal

Description: 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.

Title: Brave New World

Author: Huxley, Aldous

Description: Huxley's vision of the future in his astonishing 1931 novel Brave New World -- a world of tomorrow in which capitalist civilization has been reconstituted through the most efficient scientific and psychological engineering, where the people are genetically designed to be passive, consistently useful to the ruling class.

Title: The World According to Garp

Author: Irving, John

Description: The World According to Garp is a comic and compassionate coming-of-age novel that established John Irving as one of the most imaginative writers of his generation. A worldwide bestseller since its publication in 1978, Irving's classic is filled with stories inside stories about the life and times of T. S. Garp, novelist and bastard son of Jenny Fields - a feminist leader ahead of her time. Beyond that, The World According to Garp virtually defies synopsis.

Title: The Poisonwood Bible

Author: Kingsolver, Barbara

Description: Margaret Atwood takes the art of storytelling to new heights in a dazzling new novel that unfolds layer by astonishing layer and concludes in a brilliant and wonderfully satisfying twist. The novel opens with these simple, resonant words: "Ten days after the war ended, my sister drove a car off the bridge." They are spoken by Iris, whose terse account of her sister Laura's death in 1945 is followed by an inquest report proclaiming the death accidental. But just as the reader expects to settle into Laura's story, Atwood introduces a novel-within-a-novel. The novel has many threads and a series of events that follow one another at a breathtaking pace. As everything comes together, readers will discover that the story Atwood is telling is not only what it seems to be--but, in fact, much more.

Title: The Road (This is on my "To Read" List this summer)

Author: McCarthy, Cormac

Description: NATIONAL BESTSELLER/PULITZER PRIZE WINNER National Book Critic's Circle Award Finalist. A New York Times Notable Book One of the Best Books of the Year The Boston Globe, The Christian Science Monitor, The Denver Post, The Kansas City Star, Los Angeles Times, New York, People, Rocky Mountain News, Time, The Village Voice, The Washington Post The searing, post-apocalyptic novel destined to become Cormac McCarthy's masterpiece. A father and his son walk alone through burned America. Nothing moves in the ravaged landscape save the ash on the wind. It is cold enough to crack stones, and when the snow falls it is gray. The sky is dark. Their destination is the coast, although they don't know what, if anything, awaits them there. They have nothing; just a pistol to defend themselves against the lawless bands that stalk the road, the clothes they are wearing, a cart of scavenged food—and each other. The Road is the profoundly moving story of a journey. It boldly imagines a future in which no hope remains, but in which the father and his son, "each the other's world entire," are sustained by love. Awesome in the totality of its vision, it is an unflinching meditation on the worst and the best that we are capable of: ultimate destructiveness, desperate tenacity, and the tenderness that keeps two people alive in the face of total devastation.

Winner of the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction

Title: Moby Dick

Author: Melville, Herman

Description: A masterpiece of storytelling and symbolic realism, this thrilling adventure and epic saga pits Ahab, a brooding sea captain, against the great white whale that crippled him. More than just the tale of a hair-raising voyage, Melville's riveting story passionately probes man's soul. A literary classic first published in 1851, Moby-Dick represents the ultimate human struggle.

Title: The Things They Carried

Author: O'Brien, Tim

Description: A classic work of American literature that has not stopped changing minds and lives since it burst onto the literary scene, The Things They Carried is a ground-breaking meditation on war, memory, imagination, and the redemptive power of storytelling.

Title: 1984

Author: Orwell, George

Description: Written in 1948, 1984 was George Orwell's chilling prophecy about the future. And while 1984 has come and gone, Orwell's narrative is timelier than ever. 1984 presents a startling and haunting vision of the world, so powerful that it is completely convincing from start to finish. No one can deny the power of this novel, its hold on the imaginations of multiple generations of readers, or the resiliency of its admonitions—a legacy that seems only to grow with the passage of time.

Examines different aspects of Orwell's anti-utopian classic, with a biographical sketch of the author and critical essays on this work.

Title: Atlas Shrugged

Author: Rand, Ayn

Description: Ayn Rand's epochal novel, first published in 1957, has been a bestseller for more than four decades as well as an intellectual landmark. It is the story of a man who said that he would stop the motor of the world—and did. Was he a destroyer or the greatest of liberators? Why did he have to fight his battle, not against his enemies but against those who needed him most—and his hardest battle against the woman he loved? What is the world's motor—and the motive power of every man?

Tremendous in its scope, this novel presents an astounding panorama of human life—from the productive genius who becomes a worthless playboy...to the great steel industrialist who does not know that he is working for his own destruction...to the philosopher who becomes a pirate...to the woman who runs a transcontinental railroad...to the lowest track worker in her Terminal tunnels.

Peopled by larger-than-life heroes and villains, charged with towering questions of good and evil, Atlas Shrugged is Ayn Rand's masterpiece. It is a philosophical revolution told in the form of an action thriller.

The book's female protagonist, Dagny Taggart, struggles to manage a transcontinental railroad amid the pressures and restrictions of massive bureaucracy. Her antagonistic reaction to a libertarian group seeking an end to government regulation is later echoed and modified in her encounter with a utopian community, Galt's Gulch, whose members regard self-determination rather than collective responsibility as the highest ideal. -- Encyclopedia of Literature

Title: The Jungle

Author: Sinclair, Upton

Description: 1906 bestseller shockingly reveals intolerable labor practices and unsanitary working conditions in the Chicago stockyards as it tells the brutally grim story of a Slavic family that emigrates to America full of optimism but soon descends into numbing poverty, moral degradation, and despair.

Title: Of Mice and Men

Author: Steinbeck, John

Description: They are an unlikely pair: George is "small and quick and dark of face"; Lennie, a man of tremendous size, has the mind of a young child. Yet they have formed a "family," clinging together in the face of loneliness and alienation. Laborers in California's dusty vegetable fields, they hustle work when they can, living a hand-to-mouth existence. For George and Lennie have a plan: to

own an acre of land and a shack they can call their own.

When they land jobs on a ranch in the Salinas Valley, the fulfillment of their dream seems to be within their grasp. But even George cannot guard Lennie from the provocations of a flirtatious woman, nor predict the consequences of Lennie's unswerving obedience to the things George taught him.

Title: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Author: Twain, Mark

Description: Climb aboard the raft with Huck and Jim and drift away from the "civilized" life and into a world of adventure, excitement, danger, and self-discovery. Huck's shrewd and humorous narrative is complemented by lyrical descriptions of the Mississippi valley and a sparkling cast of memorable characters.

Title: Slaughterhouse Five

Author: Vonnegut, Kurt

Description: Slaughterhouse-Five, an American classic, is one of the world's great antiwar books. Centering on the infamous firebombing of Dresden, Billy Pilgrim's odyssey through time reflects the mythic journey of our own fractured lives as we search for meaning in what we fear most.

Title: The Color Purple

Author: Walker, Alice

Description: Celie is a poor black woman whose letters tell the story of 20 years of her life, beginning at age 14 when she is being abused and raped by her father and attempting to protect her sister from the same fate, and continuing over the course of her marriage to "Mister," a brutal man who terrorizes her. Celie eventually learns that her abusive husband has been keeping her sister's letters from her and the rage she feels, combined with an example of love and independence provided by her close friend Shug, pushes her finally toward an awakening of her creative and loving self.

Title: The Book Thief

Author: Zusak

Description: It's just a small story really, about among other things: a girl, some words, an accordionist, some fanatical Germans, a Jewish fist-fighter, and quite a lot of thievery. . . .

Set during World War II in Germany, Markus Zusak's groundbreaking new novel is the story of Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich. Liesel scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement before he is marched to Dachau.

This is an unforgettable story about the ability of books to feed the soul.

*Please remember that in addition to *The Fountainhead* and the book of your choosing from this list, you are to also read another book that is appropriate to the AP Literature course. You may consult book lists of frequently cited novels or top 100 book lists, etc. Remember you need to read 3 books!