

AP Literature & Composition~ Brady Summer Reading

List of summer reading options on the back

Please get a physical copy of the book so you can use it for an in-class essay in August. A library book or printed pdf is fine (if the book is in the public domain). I also have spare copies of these books in my classroom which I could loan out (while supplies last). I will put copies in the front office to check out. Mrs. Pierson will have a sign-out sheet as well as some copies.

Annotations are optional. If borrowing a book, you may want to consider using post-it notes. When you come to school in August, you will be writing an in-class essay answering a prompt about the book you read. You are welcome to use your book and any post-it notes in the book. You need to have a good understanding of the book, and the ability to cite specific examples from the text.

All of these books have been referenced on previous AP Exams and are considered “classics” for various reasons. They are also books with which I am quite familiar. In any case, I will be rereading some of these this summer right along with you!

These books contain important commentary on human condition and society in the time in which they were written. Because of the mature nature of the books, they all contain **mature content** (violence, sexual misconduct, suicidal ideation, racial slurs, racism, drug use, strong language, etc.). Please research the book and **read content warnings** before making a decision about which book you want to read.

The content of some of these books and the themes expressed in them are not always in accord with the truths of the Catholic faith. However, as the Gospel is able to respond to the reality of all human experience, even the most broken, it is appropriate to bring the Christian faith into engagement with uncomfortable topics that we may encounter in literature. We will be talking about the books you choose and analyzing them through the lens of faith in a fallen world.

Below are the two novel selections. Please read the information below and consider which novel would best suit your interests.

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/147791.Things_Fall_Apart

Things Fall Apart is a classic narrative about Africa's cataclysmic encounter with Europe as it establishes a colonial presence on the continent. Told through the fictional experiences of Okonkwo, a wealthy and fearless Igbo warrior of Umuofia in the late 1800s, *Things Fall Apart* explores one man's futile resistance to the devaluing of his Igbo traditions by British political and religious forces and his despair as his community capitulates to the powerful new order.

With more than twenty million copies sold and translated into fifty-seven languages, *Things Fall Apart* provides one of the most illuminating and permanent monuments to African experience. Achebe does not only capture life in a pre-colonial African village, he conveys the tragedy of the loss of that world while broadening our understanding of our contemporary realities. (Barnes & Noble)

The challenge with reading this novel centers around the names and terms. You will become familiar with Okonkwo and his family and friends. After a few chapters you will be able to recognize the essential characters. Do not let the names discourage you. Make a brief note to know the characters and keep reading if this is your novel of choice.

OR

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/37415.Their_Eyes_Were_Watching_God?ref=nav_sb_ss_1_9

A classic of the Harlem Renaissance, this beautiful, haunting story follows a woman's search for love, independence and, ultimately, self-discovery. A lyrical novel that has become a Southern masterpiece.

One of the most important and enduring books of the twentieth century, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* brings to life a Southern love story with the wit and pathos found only in the writing of Zora Neale Hurston. Out of print for almost thirty years--due largely to initial audiences' rejection of its strong black female protagonist--Hurston's classic has since its 1978 reissue become perhaps the most widely read and highly acclaimed novel in the canon of African-American literature. (Barnes & Noble)

Summer Reading: Part One Assignment

Choice Reading Video

Due Date: August 10, 2026

After finishing the novel you selected for the first portion of your summer reading assignment, record and submit a video which addresses the elements below. Please consult the rubric that follows for feedback on how this assignment will be assessed.

Use whatever method works best for you to record and share the video with me. I suggest one of the following methods; however, you may certainly use a different method, app, or website if it works better for you.

- Use your laptop (or phone) to record a video of yourself. Submit the video on Canvas by attaching it. Canvas will be updated by the end of July.
- Record your video directly through Canvas.

The Logistics

- I must be able to see your face in your video.
- The video should be no fewer than 2.5 and no more than 5 minutes.
- The video must be submitted by 11:59 PM on August 10, 2026 to be eligible for full credit.

The Content

- **Introduction:**
 - Identify your full name and the name by which you prefer to be called.
- **Book Review / Reaction:**
 - Which book did you choose? Identify the title and author.
 - Why did you select this novel?
 - On a scale of 1 to 5 stars, how would you rate this novel? Justify your rating, using specifics from the book for support
 - Speak naturally as if you were having a conversation about the book.
- **Analysis:**
 - Choose **one** of the questions from the boxes below and answer it thoughtfully, using specific examples from the novel for support. No matter which question you answer, please note: You must articulate how the concept you are discussing helps to build a larger meaning or significance within the book. This can take any number of directions, but ultimately needs to answer the question, **“Why does this matter to the story the author is trying to tell?”** **Avoid discussions along the lines of “this makes the reader feel ____.”** Concentrate on what themes, symbols, or interpretations of the characters and events are developed within the book itself.

Character	Setting	Structure	Narration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a character (or two). How does the character demonstrate complexity, irony, or nuance in their beliefs, values, or actions? How do different characters in the novel parallel and/or contrast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do elements of the setting- time and place- shape or contribute to the characters' values, situations, or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How- and why- does the author play with chronology (time) and/or format (use of flashbacks, switching narrators, etc.)? What is the impact of telling the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the voice(s) telling the story provide insight that shapes the understanding and interpretation of the books' characters, plot, and themes?

Some examples of questions you might consider that will lead you to a discussion of the significance include, but are not limited to:

- How do the differences between two major characters help to highlight a theme?
- Do any of the elements of the setting feel particularly symbolic or impactful upon the characters? How so?
- How does the unusual timeline of the book (jumping back and forth between past and present; starting at the end and then flashing back; etc.) impact the overall interpretation of the characters?
- What do the chapters which are narrated from the perspective of a minor character bring to the novel which would otherwise be absent?

If you are struggling or have questions, reach out via email. Please allow at least 48 hours for response during the summer.

Rubric

Criteria	Maximum Possible Points
<p>Book Choice The student has selected a book from the approved list and clearly identifies the title and author.</p>	3
<p>Rating and Justification The student provides a rating and a thoughtful justification for it, citing specifics from the book for support.</p>	4
<p>Complexity: Addresses Question The student clearly articulates an answer to a question posed on the assignment sheet for one of the four areas: <i>character</i>, <i>setting</i>, <i>structure</i>,</p>	3
<p>Complexity: Depth of Thought The student's answer to the question is plausible, thoughtful, and justified with accurate examples. The student does not simply recap the book itself, but instead thoughtfully analyzes a plausible larger meaning or</p>	8
<p>Timeliness The assignment is completed and submitted by the August 10, 2026</p>	2