

AP Literature & Composition Summer Reading 2026

Dear AP Lit & Comp Students,

Congratulations on accepting the challenge of enrolling in this course for the 2026-2027 school year. We will be reading a variety of short stories, novels, dramas, and poems, so be prepared to not only read but also to discuss these pieces and write about them. Your dedication and effort this year will help you understand and appreciate complex literature as we prepare for the AP exam.

The literature selection for summer reading this year is important in preparing for the AP exam but hopefully you will find enjoyment in your reading as well. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please let me know. I can be reached at elion@bishopbrady.edu. I am available throughout the summer if additional help or guidance is needed on an assignment. Please note that an email response may take a few business days.

Ms. Lion

Linked Documents: (at end of this document)

- [Annotation Guidelines](#)
- [Thesis Statement Writing](#)
- [MIST Poetry Reading Strategy](#)

Assignments:

Contemporary Fiction: *North Woods* - Daniel Mason

1. **Read** *North Woods* by Daniel Mason.
 - You are encouraged to **annotate** your text focusing on nature, humanity, and interconnectedness. Make sure you've written your reactions/thoughts in addition to highlighting/underlining.
 - Your annotations will not be graded/assessed.
2. **Project** - Create a visual project showcasing the ways in which Mason's novel highlights the interconnectedness of nature and humanity through time and space. **Your project must be a physical, tangible project; no digital components.** Your project could be a diorama of one of the settings, a series of letters, a scrapbook, a museum exhibit, a timeline, etc.
 - Be creative and display your knowledge and understanding of the complexity of the novel; do not merely summarize.
 - **This is due the first week of class, by Thursday, September 3, 2026.** You will present during the first two weeks of class.

Classic Dystopian Fiction: Choose one of the following:

The Handmaid's Tale - Margaret Atwood

1984 - George Orwell

1. **Read** *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood OR *1984* by George Orwell.
 - You are encouraged to [annotate](#) your text focusing on character and theme. Remember that more isn't always better. Make sure you've written your reactions/thoughts in addition to highlighting/underlining.
 - Your annotations will not be graded/assessed.
2. **Thesis Statement Writing**: Consider the following essay prompts. Write one thesis statement per prompt based on which novel you read.
 - A thesis statement should be one sentence that thoroughly addresses all aspects of the prompt. The ability to develop a strong thesis statement is highly beneficial when writing, and practicing the skill of thesis writing is a key part of writing stronger statements.
 - **This is due the first week of class, by Thursday, September 3 to GoogleClassroom.**
3. **Timed Write** during the first week or so of class on your selected novel. The timed write prompt will be from a former AP exam for Free Response Question 3.

Poetry Collection (Personal Choice)

1. Look into the many poetry collections available these days. **You need to purchase a physical copy of a poetry collection. A poetry collection is a collection of poems by one poet.** Choose one that is interesting to you. Your poet can be contemporary or one of the classic names.
2. **Read** the poetry collection. Try out the [MIST reading strategy](#) for at least **ten** poems.
3. You will select one of the poems from your collection and share it with the class through an informal presentation. We will also be analyzing these poems in writing during the first weeks of class.
4. Your poetry collection will be collected and your MIST reading strategy annotation will be assessed. *If you do not submit your annotated book, you will receive a zero.
5. Additionally, at the start of each class, one student will share a poem with the class and lead us through a brief discussion on the poem. Start taking note of poems that are worthy of discussion/sharing/pondering.
6. **Your MISTED/annotated poetry collection is due the first week of class by Thursday, September 3, 2026.**

The Finer Points of Annotation

Discuss: First, what are your thoughts on annotating a text? Why do you feel this way?

Here's what Nick Otten of Clayton High School in Clayton, Missouri, has to say on annotating a text versus taking notes:

Annotating is “a way of making notes directly onto a text such as a book, a handout, or another type of publication. The advantage of having one annotated text instead of a set of note papers **plus** a text should be clear enough: all the information is together and inseparable, with notes very close to the text for easier understanding, and with fewer pieces to keep organized.”

What are the benefits of annotation?

- a deeper initial reading and an understanding of the text that lasts
- deliberately engage the author in conversation and questions, maybe stopping to argue, pay a compliment, or clarify an important issue
- if and when you come back to the book, that initial interchange is recorded for you, making an excellent and entirely personal study tool

Here are a few tips I've found to be helpful over the years:

- Owning a personal copy of the text is so helpful because you can make your notes and then keep them forever. If this isn't an option for you, use sticky notes (you can cut them into whatever size you'd like and use various colors for different things) and then remove them when finished.
- Make notes on the page about what's going on (or use your sticky notes). These can be observations, reactions, questions, or even a note of the use of a literary device, etc.
- At the end of a chapter/section, make a few notes – summarize what happened, jot down the key points from the chapter, make note of a question, or list some key words (it's amazing how helpful this is when discussing something you read a few days prior to the actual discussion)
- Use the inside front cover and title pages of the novel to keep a list of important page numbers or quotes. I always include author and background information on these pages in my novels.
- Many times vocabulary is often mentioned in regards to annotation, like keeping a list at the end of the novel. (I usually don't do this when I annotate, but I should.)

Annotating is a personal thing. Everyone's annotations are going to look different and sound different. The important thing is to start now in order to hone your skill before you traipse off to college. Seriously, get in the habit of reading and annotating thoroughly now, and it will make your life much easier in the long run.

If we were in class completing an annotation lesson, it'd go something like this:

Scene: Enter class, and there are stack of books on the tables/desks ranging from anthologies to novels to classics to poetry collections.

Now, let's talk about the example texts laying around the room. Jot down your observations about the annotation that has taken place in the provided books. Be nice to the books.

Things to consider:

- What stands out about the annotation?
- What do you like about the annotation style?
- What do you dislike about the annotation style?
- Was highlighter used? If so, was it done effectively? Or, are there just colors everywhere?
- Are there summaries at the ends of chapters/sections?
- What's going on inside the front cover and on the title page?
- Is vocabulary listed anywhere?
- Where are the annotations made in the text?
- Is there a chunk of the text lacking annotations? Why might this be?

What steps do you now plan to take to improve your annotating skills? Be prepared to share at least two with the class.

Any final annotation questions or comments?

Name:

AP Lit - Summer Reading - Thesis Statement Writing

For the following prompts, write one thesis statement for each based on which novel you read (*The Handmaid's Tale* - Margaret Atwood or *1984* - George Orwell). You are free to write your thesis statement however you see fit (specific points or overall point/argument). In your thesis statement, please be sure to include the title of the novel (in italics) and the author's name along with your point.

Basic Thesis Formula: In [author's name], *Title of Novel*, ___insert argument___.

Prompt 1: The conflict created when the will of an individual opposes the will of the majority is the recurring theme of many novels. Select a character in the novel who is in opposition to his/her society. In a critical essay, analyze the conflict and discuss the moral and ethical implications for both the individual and the society.

Thesis Statement:

Prompt 2: Some novels and plays seem to advocate changes in social or political attitudes or in traditions. First, note briefly the particular attitudes or traditions that the author apparently wishes to modify. Then analyze the techniques used to influence the reader's views.

Thesis Statement:

Prompt 3: 2007 Prompt: Works of literature often depict acts of betrayal. Friends and even family may betray a protagonist; main characters may likewise be guilty of treachery or may betray their own values. Select a novel or play that includes such acts of betrayal. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the nature of the betrayal and show how it contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. Choose a work from the list below or another novel or play of comparable quality. Avoid mere plot summary.

Thesis Statement:

Poetry. It's tricky to read, so let's use the MIST approach. Look for each element in the poems we read. Write directly on your poetry sheet.

M: Mood: How does it feel; WAHOO OR BOOHOO; WHAT IS THE PROBLEM IN THE POEM

- **Wahoo concepts:** unity, understanding, completion, agency, joy, celebration
- **Boohoo concepts:** isolation, confusion, waste, chaos, toil, futility

Sound and sense (euphonic and easy or harsh and grating; a struggle)

I: Imagery: adjective; connotation; impact of oppositional imagers (binaries, juxtaposition; inversion)

- Auditory, tactile, gustatory, visual, olfactory, and taste
- This is where the TENSION is most evident. The message of the poem comes through its images.
- Notice how the images lead you to a positive or negative mood. Is the imagery rich and lush, fantastic, light or dark? Is it an interior/exterior?
- Figurative Language is imagery
 - ◆ simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, symbol

S: Shifts and Structure

Structure

- –form; rules broken?
- –rhyme scheme
- –shifts, transitions, repetitions
- –syntax, line breaks, enjambment
- –pov or speakers
- –dramatic shifts in imagery

T: Tension:

- What seems to be the PROBLEM the piece considers?
- What are the emotions or ideas that seem to be engaged or in opposition? Tension is primarily created through the use of Imagery and Structure.
- Are there things that are in contrast or out of place/structure?