

English 12 AP Pre-Approved Summer Books

For the summer homework, you will be reading *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* and an AP-aligned novel. You will be using the novel as your application text for at least 50% of the chapters in *Professor*. Your teacher will also have you do something with the novel in the fall, so make sure you read the book itself. Movies and Spark Notes will not give you the details and familiarity with the text that you will need to complete all the work connected to the novel.

The list below is considered a pre-approved novel list, but if none of them appeal to you, then feel free to use the summer Remind to get approval for an alternate text. Any novel that will be taught this year or has been taught in AP feeder classes will not be approved. Plays will also not work for this assignment.

The summaries below each text are copied from Amazon. Books with an asterisk (*) in front of them are texts that can be checked out from the school's library after school during the last week of school when you check out *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. You may also opt to check your selected novel from the public library or other source. If you're struggling with the summer work, don't forget that help is just a Remind away!

***indicates that the CHHS library has some copies of the noted text.**

Happy reading!

***Beloved*, Toni Morrison**

Sethe, its protagonist, was born a slave and escaped to Ohio, but eighteen years later she is still not free. She has too many memories of Sweet Home, the beautiful farm where so many hideous things happened. And Sethe's new home is haunted by the ghost of her baby, who died nameless and whose tombstone is engraved with a single word: *Beloved*. Filled with bitter poetry and suspense as taut as a rope, *Beloved* is a towering achievement.

***Catcher in the Rye*, J. D. Salinger**

The hero-narrator of *The Catcher in the Rye* is an ancient child of sixteen, a native New Yorker named Holden Caulfield.

Through circumstances that tend to preclude adult, secondhand description, he leaves his prep school in Pennsylvania and goes underground in New York City for three days. The boy himself is at once too simple and too complex for us to make any final comment about him or his story. Perhaps the safest thing we can say about Holden is that he was born in the world not just strongly attracted to beauty but, almost, hopelessly impaled on it.

There are many voices in this novel: children's voices, adult voices, underground voices-but Holden's voice is the most eloquent of all. Transcending his own vernacular, yet remaining marvelously faithful to it, he issues a perfectly articulated cry of mixed pain and pleasure. However, like most lovers and clowns and poets of the higher orders, he keeps most of the pain to, and for,

himself. The pleasure he gives away, or sets aside, with all his heart. It is there for the reader who can handle it to keep.

***Grendel*, John Gardner**

The first and most terrifying monster in English literature, from the great early epic *Beowulf*, tells his own side of the story in this frequently banned book. This classic and much lauded retelling of *Beowulf* follows the monster Grendel as he learns about humans and fights the war at the center of the Anglo Saxon classic epic. This is the book William Gass called "one of the finest of our contemporary fictions."

****Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison (only a handful of copies are available in the CHHS library)**

The book's nameless narrator describes growing up in a black community in the South, attending a Negro college from which he is expelled, moving to New York and becoming the chief spokesman of the Harlem branch of "the Brotherhood", before retreating amid violence and confusion to the basement lair of the Invisible Man he imagines himself to be.

****Kite Runner*, Khaled Hosseini (only a handful of copies are available in the CHHS library)**

The unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, caught in the tragic sweep of history, *The Kite Runner* transports readers to Afghanistan at a tense and crucial moment of change and destruction. A powerful story of friendship, it is also about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption; and an exploration of the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, their lies.

***One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Ken Kesey**

Here is the unforgettable story of a mental ward and its inhabitants, especially the tyrannical Big Nurse Ratched and Randle Patrick McMurphy, the brawling, fun-loving new inmate who resolves to oppose her. We see the struggle through the eyes of Chief Bromden, the seemingly mute half-Indian patient who witnesses and understands McMurphy's heroic attempt to do battle with the powers that keep them all imprisoned.

***Poisonwood Bible*, Barbara Kingsolver**

The Poisonwood Bible is a story told by the wife and four daughters of Nathan Price, a fierce, evangelical Baptist who takes his family and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959. They carry with them everything they believe they will need from home, but soon find that all of it—from garden seeds to Scripture—is calamitously transformed on African soil. What follows is a suspenseful epic of one family's tragic undoing and remarkable reconstruction over the course of three decades in postcolonial Africa.

The novel is set against one of the most dramatic political chronicles of the twentieth century: the Congo's fight for independence from Belgium, the murder of its first elected prime minister, the CIA coup to install his replacement, and the insidious progress of a world economic order that robs the fledgling African nation of its autonomy.

***Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austin**

Pride and Prejudice is a novel of manners by Jane Austen, first published in 1813. The story follows the main character, Elizabeth Bennet, as she deals with issues of manners, upbringing, morality, education, and marriage in the society of the landed gentry of the British Regency. Elizabeth is the second of five daughters of a country gentleman living near the fictional town of Meryton in Hertfordshire, near London. Page 2 of a letter from Jane Austen to her sister Cassandra (11 June 1799) in which she first mentions Pride and Prejudice, using its working title First Impressions.

Set in England in the early 19th century, Pride and Prejudice tells the story of Mr and Mrs Bennet's five unmarried daughters after the rich and eligible Mr Bingley and his status-conscious friend, Mr Darcy, have moved into their neighbourhood. While Bingley takes an immediate liking to the eldest Bennet daughter, Jane, Darcy has difficulty adapting to local society and repeatedly clashes with the second-eldest Bennet daughter, Elizabeth.

***The Awakening*, Kate Chopin**

The Awakening, originally titled A Solitary Soul, is a novel by Kate Chopin, first published in 1899. Set in New Orleans and the Southern Louisiana coast at the end of the nineteenth century, the plot centers on Edna Pontellier and her struggle to reconcile her increasingly unorthodox views on femininity and motherhood with the prevailing social attitudes of the turn-of-the-century American South.

It is one of the earliest American novels that focuses on women's issues without condescension. It is also widely seen as a landmark work of early feminism, generating mixed reaction from contemporary readers and criticism. The novel's blend of realistic narrative, incisive social commentary, and psychological complexity makes The Awakening a precursor of American modernist literature.

****The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck**

First published in 1939, Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize-winning epic of the Great Depression chronicles the Dust Bowl migration of the 1930s and tells the story of one Oklahoma farm family, the Joads, driven from their homestead and forced to travel west to the promised land of California. Out of their trials and their repeated collisions against the hard realities of an America divided into haves and have-nots evolves a drama that is intensely human yet majestic in its scale and moral vision, elemental yet plainspoken, tragic but ultimately stirring in its human dignity.

A portrait of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, of one man's fierce reaction to injustice, and of one woman's stoical strength, the novel captures the horrors of the Great Depression and probes the very nature of equality and justice in America.

****The Joy Luck Club*, Amy Tan**

Four mothers, four daughters, four families whose histories shift with the four winds depending on who's "saying" the stories. In 1949 four Chinese women, recent immigrants to San Francisco, begin meeting to eat dim sum, play mahjong, and talk. United in shared unspeakable loss and hope, they call themselves the Joy Luck Club. Rather than sink into tragedy, they choose to gather to raise their spirits and money. "To despair was to wish back for something already lost. Or to prolong what was already unbearable." Forty years later the stories and history continue.

With wit and sensitivity, Amy Tan examines the sometimes painful, often tender, and always deep connection between mothers and daughters. As each woman reveals her secrets, trying to unravel the truth about her life, the strings become more tangled, more entwined. Mothers boast or despair over daughters, and daughters roll their eyes even as they feel the inextricable tightening of their matriarchal ties.

****The Life of Pi, Yann Martel***

After the sinking of a cargo ship, a solitary lifeboat remains bobbing on the wild blue Pacific. The only survivors from the wreck are a sixteen-year-old boy named Pi, a hyena, a wounded zebra, an orangutan—and a 450-pound royal bengal tiger. The scene is set for one of the most extraordinary and beloved works of fiction in recent years.

The Secret Life of Bees, Sue Monk Kidd

Set in South Carolina in 1964, *The Secret Life of Bees* tells the story of Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. When Lily's fierce-hearted black "stand-in mother," Rosaleen, insults three of the deepest racists in town, Lily decides to spring them both free. They escape to Tiburon, South Carolina—a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. Taken in by an eccentric trio of black beekeeping sisters, Lily is introduced to their mesmerizing world of bees and honey, and the Black Madonna. This is a remarkable novel about divine female power, a story that women will share and pass on to their daughters for years to come.

****The Things They Carried, Tim O'Brien***

Depicting the men of Alpha Company—Jimmy Cross, Henry Dobbins, Rat Kiley, Mitchell Sanders, Norman Bowker, Kiowa, and the character Tim O'Brien, who survived his tour in Vietnam to become a father and writer at the age of forty-three—the stories in *The Things They Carried* opened our eyes to the nature of war in a way we will never forget. It is taught everywhere, from high school classrooms to graduate seminars in creative writing, and in the decades since its publication it has never failed to challenge our perceptions of fact and fiction, war and peace, and courage, longing, and fear.

Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte

Wuthering Heights tells the story of a romance between two youngsters: Catherine Earnshaw and an orphan boy, Heathcliff. After she rejects him for a boy from a better background he develops a lust for revenge that takes over his life. In attempting to win her back and destroy those he blames for his loss Heathcliff creates a living hell for those who live at Wuthering Heights. This tale of hauntings, passion and greed remains unsurpassed in its depiction of the dark side of love.

Other????

If none of these texts sound appealing, contact us through Remind to have an AP-appropriate text of fiction approved.