

AP English Language and Composition Summer Reading Assignment

2025 (preparation for 11th grade Advanced Placement English)

I. Non-fiction: Please choose **one** of these. **This is required.**

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. * [PDF version](#)

Gladwell, Malcolm. Multiple text options: [David and Goliath](#), [Blink](#)

Grann, David. [Killers of the Flower Moon](#)*

Harris, Dan. [10% Happier](#).

Kingston, Maxine Hong. [The Woman Warrior](#)*

Noah, Trevor. [Born a Crime](#).

Roach, Mary. Multiple text options: [Gulp](#), [Stiff](#).

Smith, Clint. *How the Word is Passed*. *

II. Fiction: Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. * **This is strongly recommended.**

If possible, please purchase both texts — many of my own books come from [Half Price Books](#) or are otherwise secondhand. This way, you can practice annotation and will have an easier time reflecting back on the text later. There is also [an online version of The Grapes of Wrath](#) available, or there are some available at Jefferson for you to check out. Talk to Mrs. Erdmann in C26 or Ms. Moe in C4.

For the **non-fiction piece**, please make notations as you read: How does it make you feel or react, and what has the writer done to get you to react that way? Be prepared to discuss what you noticed in your book the first few weeks of school.

*I have copies of *Killers of the Flower Moon*, *How the Word is Passed*, *Between the World and Me*, *Grapes of Wrath*, and *The Woman Warrior* available in C4 if you'd like to borrow one for the summer.

For the fiction piece (*The Grapes of Wrath*), we recommend that you heavily annotate your text as you read **or** complete a reading journal. Note the characters in the Joad family and the variety of people they encounter on the way, conflicts, the intercalary chapters, and anything else you deem noteworthy — possible symbols, interesting details, etc. Be an active reader: respond to the text, ask questions, make connections, etc. The [Notice and Note signposts](#) or [basic annotation rules](#) are a great place to start if you've never annotated a text before (both are explained on the back). This assignment should be a **tool to help you remember** the novel when we discuss it in class and work with the author's language.

If you can write **in** a book, do it. Get in the habit of annotating your observations. This is a great skill and can help you to stay on track while you read. It also forces you to get in the habit of actively reading, noticing a writer's techniques, and commenting on stylistic practices.

Have a great break and enjoy the readings! *If you're interested in getting ahead on reading for the year, see the back of this page for more titles.*

-Julia Moe and M. Susan Bianchi

STOP Signposts

As you read, you will want to keep track of significant moments in the story called signposts. These signposts will provide insight into or raise questions about literary elements, such as character development, setting, conflicts, and themes. Please STOP and mark these signposts as you encounter them with a sticky note while we read and take notes about your thinking as you consider each question.

- **Contrasts and Contradictions (or The Moments of Surprise)**
When a character does something that contrasts with what you'd expect or contradicts his earlier acts or statements, STOP and ask, "Why is the character doing that?" The answer will help you make predictions and draw inferences about the plot and conflict.
 - **Words of the Wiser**
When a character (probably older and wiser) takes the main character aside and offers serious advice, STOP and ask, "What's the life lesson and how might it affect the character?" This lesson is probably the theme of the story.
 - **Aha Moment**
When a character realizes, understands, or finally figures out something, STOP and ask yourself, "How might this change things?" If it is about a problem, it tells you something about the conflict; if it is a life lesson, it tells you something about the theme.
 - **Again and Again**
When you notice a word, phrase, or situation mentioned over and over, STOP and ask yourself, "Why does this keep happening over and over again?" The answer will tell you about the theme and conflict, or will foreshadow what might happen later in the story.
 - **Memory Moment**
When the author interrupts the action to tell you about a memory, STOP and ask yourself, "Why might this memory be important?" The answer will tell you about theme and conflict, or will foreshadow what might happen later in the story.
 - **Tough Questions**
When a character asks himself a very difficult question, STOP and ask yourself, "What does this question make me wonder about?" The answer will tell you about the conflict, and help you think about what might happen later in the story.
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Annotating Rules

1. **Circle** words you don't understand and write a ? if you are confused or have a question.
2. Underline/highlight key details
3. **Write notes** in the margins
 - Questions
 - Predictions
 - Reflections/Thoughts
4. Write a **one-sentence summary** at the end of each chapter/section
5. Draw a **star** in the margins for memorable quotes, striking lines, and greater human truths. You can also write a short note about why you marked the section in the margins.

Also, here are some of the texts we're planning to read if you would like to get ahead:

Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller

Kindred by Octavia Butler

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

Ethan Frome by Edith Wharton

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston

Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

Beloved by Toni Morrison

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne