

Additional Honors English/AP Literature Summer Reading Requirements 2023

Honors or AP students will sign up for a [school-wide community reading book](#) and complete the additional grade-level requirement described here.

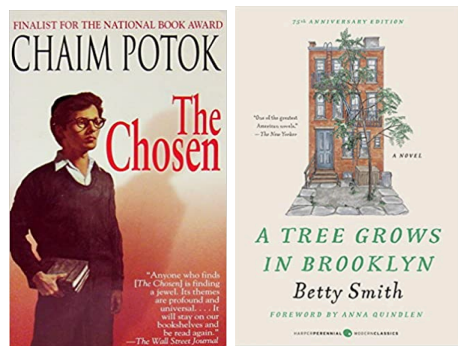
* We believe that all of these texts contain powerful writing and important themes. As is often the case with literature, there may be scenes that include difficult content. We have tried to alert students to these potential triggers in the descriptions below.

Grade 9 Honors students: You will be reading either *The Chosen* by Chaim Potok **OR** *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith. [Please click here for the Grade 9 Honors requirements.](#)

Honors/AP students in Grades 10-12: For all other grade levels, the expectation is that you will take your own notes on the three prompts listed beside your required text(s) and find your own quotes to use when you write your on-demand response on one of the first days of class. Your notetaking can take many forms: sticky notes in the book, a reader response journal, highlighting/notes in the book itself, a Google Doc. The notes are to help you come to a deeper understanding of the text and the larger ideas it raises. Keep these three prompts in mind as you are reading, taking notes, and finding key quotations.

We are not asking you to write an essay over the summer. In September, you will write about one of these prompts in your English class. Since you will not know which prompt you will write about, be prepared for all three. During this on-demand writing day, you may use your own notes and copy of the book (if you have it). All notes must be your own. The writing assignment will give your teacher a glimpse into your thinking about the book and your approach to writing an organized, thesis-driven essay. This will count as an assessment for Quarter One and will serve as a starting point for your growth as a writer this coming year.

Grade 9



***The Chosen* by Chaim Potok**

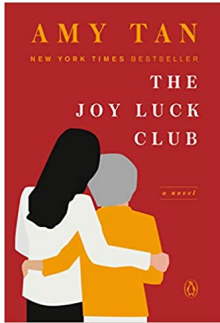
OR

***A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith**

(This story contains moments of assault and involves a character who struggles with alcoholism.)

[PLEASE CLICK HERE FOR FRESHMAN SUMMER READING REQUIREMENTS.](#)

Grade 10



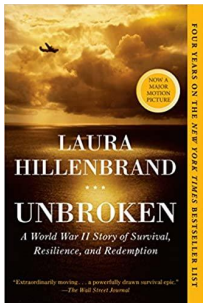
***The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan**

As you read, take notes on the following prompts:

1. How are the notions of balance (*yin* and *yang*) and energy flow (*feng shui*) an important theme in the novel? Does the Chinese notion of balance and flow translate to the characters' lives in America?
2. By telling a story from the perspective of Chinese immigrants and first-generation Americans, what does the book reveal about American culture?
3. How do the struggles of the daughters mirror the tragedies of their mothers? What does this suggest about the relationships between parents and children?

Grade 11

For students taking Honors English:



***Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* by Laura Hillenbrand**

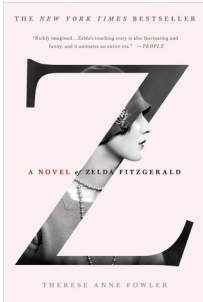
(This story contains moments of violence and abuse that Louis Zamperini experienced during WWII.)

As you read, take notes on the following prompts:

1. In his 1998 book *The Greatest Generation*, American journalist Tom Brokaw wrote that the men and women of the World War II generation fought not for fame or recognition, but because it was the "right thing to do." Show to what extent this statement applies to one of the service members profiled in the book, both during and after the war. What do this person's choices imply about human nature?
2. Evil flourishes when good people do not challenge it. Using evidence from Laura Hillenbrand's text, explain how the American POWs challenged their captors. What creative, clever, risky, memorable, violent and/or nonviolent means did these captives use to maintain self-respect and prevent their spirits from being broken? What did their resistance teach you?
3. Laura Hillenbrand's book rightly focuses on the heroism of its subject, Louis Zamperini, but there were many other people in his life—both before and after the war—who helped him reach his full potential. Focusing on no more than two of these "supporting actors," explain how Louis Zamperini's accomplishments are due at least in part to the help he received from others.

Grade 11

For students taking Humanities: America and the World for Honors credit:



Click [here](#) for an overview of the entire Honors Humanities requirement.

Z: A Novel of Zelda Fitzgerald by Therese Anne Fowler

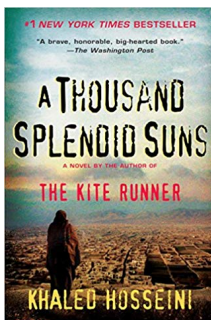
(This novel contains moments of domestic violence and alcohol abuse as it describes Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald's relationship.)

As you read, take notes on the following prompts:

1. Writers often highlight the values of a culture or a society by using characters who are alienated from that culture or society because of gender, race, class or creed. How does Zelda's gender influence the novel and her position in 1920s society?
2. Morally ambiguous characters---characters whose behavior discourages readers from identifying them as purely evil or purely good--are at the heart of many works of literature. Choose a character from Z that you feel is morally ambiguous, explain why the author created this character's ambiguity and why his or her moral ambiguity is significant to the work as a whole.
3. In literature, characters often face conflicts that push them to overcome great obstacles in the name of progress. Choose a character from Z and explain to what extent he or she is able to achieve his or her dreams in the face of internal and/or external conflict.

Grade 12

For students taking 12 Honors:



A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

(This story contains moments of domestic violence and abuse.)

As you read, take notes on the following prompts:

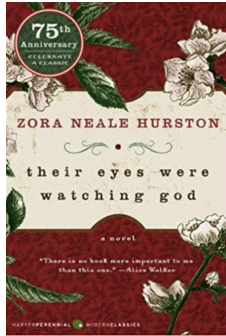
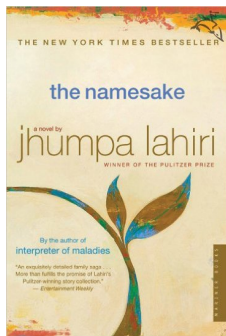
- 1: The British novelist Fay Weldon offers this observation about happy endings: "The writers, I do believe, who get the best and most lasting response from their readers are the writers who offer a happy ending through moral development. By a happy ending, I do not mean mere fortunate events -- a marriage or a last minute rescue from death -- but some kind of spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation, even with the self, even at death." Does *A Thousand Splendid Suns* contain the kind of ending Weldon describes? Identify the "spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation" evident in the ending and explain its significance in the work as a whole.

2: One of the strongest human drives seems to be a desire for power. How does a character in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* struggle to free themselves from the power of others or seek to gain power over others? Be sure to include how the author uses this power struggle to enhance the meaning of the work.

3. What does the novel say about what makes a good father? A good mother? What does Khaled Hosseini suggest about the role that parents play in the formation of one's self-concept and identity? Consider this through the characters of Nana, Jalil, Babi, and Mammy. Track how one or more of these characters helps to answer these questions about the importance of parenthood in the novel.

Grade 12

For students taking 12 AP Literature & Composition:



***The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri**

AND

***Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston**

As you read each book, take notes on the following prompts:

1. An effective literary work does not merely stop or cease; it concludes. A satisfactory ending is not, however, always conclusive in every sense; significant closure may require the reader to abide with or adjust to ambiguity and uncertainty. Focus on how each novel ends. Explain precisely how and why the ending appropriately or inappropriately concludes the work.

2. The eighteenth-century British novelist Laurence Sterne wrote, "Nobody, but he who has felt it, can conceive what a plaguing thing it is to have a man's mind torn asunder by two projects of equal strength, both obstinately pulling in a contrary direction at the same time." In *The Namesake* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, focus on a character whose mind is pulled in conflicting directions by two compelling desires, ambitions, obligations, or influences. Identify each of the two conflicting forces and explain how this conflict within one character illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole.

3. Critic Roland Barthes has said, "Literature is the question minus the answer." In your view, what is the central question that each novel raises and to what extent does it offer answers? Explain how the author's treatment of this question affects your understanding of the work as a whole.

Students: Please read regularly throughout the summer. Keep your mind engaged by exploring interesting books on your own.

(Many of the writing prompts are taken directly or adapted from past AP Literature writing prompts that have been released by the College Board. Questions for *The Joy Luck Club* have been selected from the [National Endowment for the Arts Big Read program's discussion guide](#).)