

Syosset High School
AP Literature and Composition
Summer Reading Assignment 2025

Welcome to AP Literature and Composition! In AP Literature you are expected to read not only a breadth of texts, but to read such texts in a deep and meaningful context. You will engage in close reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature to deepen your understanding of the ways writers use language to comment on experiences, institutions, social structures as well as to provide meaning and enjoyment.

The following **Big Ideas** serve as the foundation of the course, enabling students to create meaningful connections among concepts. Each big idea correlates with an enduring understanding, a long-term takeaway related to the big idea:

Character: Characters in literature allow readers to study and explore a range of values, beliefs, assumptions, biases, and cultural norms represented by those characters.

Setting: Setting and the details associated with it not only depict a time and place, but also convey values associated with that setting.

Structure: The arrangement of the parts and sections of a text, the relationship of the parts to each other, and the sequence in which the text reveals information are all structural choices made by a writer that contribute to the reader's interpretation of a text.

Narration: A narrator's or speaker's perspective controls the details and emphases that affect how readers experience and interpret a text.

Figurative Language: Comparisons, representations, and associations shift meaning from the literal to the figurative and invite readers to interpret a text.

Literary Argumentation: Readers establish and communicate their interpretations of literature through arguments supported by textual evidence.

(CollegeBoard.org)

I. Please choose ONE text from the following list to read this summer:

James, Percival Everett

An action-packed reimagining of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, both harrowing and darkly humorous, told from the enslaved Jim's point of view. When Jim overhears that he is about to be sold to a man in New Orleans, separated from his wife and daughter forever, he runs away until he can formulate a plan. Meanwhile, Huck has faked his own death to escape his violent father. Thus begins the dangerous and transcendent journey by raft down the Mississippi River toward the elusive and unreliable promise of the Free States and beyond.

Station Eleven, Emily St. John Mandel

Set in the eerie days following civilization's collapse, *Station Eleven* tells the spellbinding story of a nomadic group of actors roaming the scattered outposts of the Great Lakes region, risking everything for art and humanity.

It is fifteen years after a flu pandemic wiped out most of the world's population. Kirsten is an actress with the Traveling Symphony, a small troupe moving over the gutted landscape, performing Shakespeare and music for scattered communities of survivors. But when they arrive in the outpost of St. Deborah by the Water, they encounter a violent prophet who digs graves for anyone who dares to leave. Spanning decades, moving back and forth in time, and vividly depicting life before and after the disaster brought everyone here, this suspenseful, elegiac novel is rife with beauty, telling a story about the relationships that sustain us.

***Martyr!*, Kaveh Akbar**

Cyrus Shams is a young man grappling with an inheritance of violence and loss: his mother's plane was shot down over the skies of the Persian Gulf in a senseless accident; and his father's life in America was circumscribed by his work killing chickens at a factory farm in the Midwest. Cyrus is a drunk, an addict, and a poet, whose obsession with martyrs leads him to examine the mysteries of his past—toward an uncle who rode through Iranian battlefields dressed as the angel of death to inspire and comfort the dying, and toward his mother, through a painting discovered in a Brooklyn art gallery that suggests she may not have been who or what she seemed. Kaveh Akbar's *Martyr!* is a paean to how we spend our lives seeking meaning—in faith, art, ourselves, others.

***My Name Is Red*, Orhan Pamuk**

Set amid the artistic splendor and religious intrigue of sixteenth-century Istanbul, this novel is a fantastical story of love and murder propelled by the philosophical puzzle at its core.

The Ottoman sultan has commissioned the most acclaimed artists in the land to create a great book celebrating the glories of his realm—but he wants them to illuminate it in the European style. Because there are those who believe art that imitates the real is an affront to Islam, the project must be kept secret. Panic and scandal erupt when one of the chosen miniaturists disappears, along with a crucial page of the manuscript. The surviving artists—bitter rivals variously motivated by pride, greed, faith, and love—are all under suspicion of murder, and the only clue to the mystery lies in the half-finished illustrations themselves.

***Stone Yard Devotional*, Charlotte Wood**

Burnt out and in need of retreat, a middle-aged woman leaves Sydney to return to the place she grew up, taking refuge in a small religious community hidden away on the stark plains of rural Australia. She doesn't believe in God, or know what prayer is, and finds herself living this strange, reclusive existence almost by accident.

But disquiet interrupts this secluded life with three visitations. First comes a terrible mouse plague, each day signaling a new battle against the rising infestation. Second is the return of the skeletal remains of a sister who disappeared decades before, presumed murdered. And finally, a troubling visitor plunges the narrator further back into her past.

***The Dutch House*, Ann Patchett**

At the end of the Second World War, Cyril Conroy combines luck and a single canny investment to begin an enormous real estate empire, propelling his family from poverty to enormous wealth. His first order of business is to buy the Dutch House, a lavish estate in the suburbs outside of Philadelphia. Meant as a surprise for his wife, the house sets in motion the undoing of everyone he loves.

The story is told by Cyril's son Danny, as he and his older sister, the brilliantly acerbic and self-assured Maeve, are exiled from the house where they grew up by their stepmother. The two wealthy siblings are thrown back into the poverty their parents had escaped from and find that all they have to count on is one another. It is this unshakable bond between them that both saves their lives and thwarts their futures.

II. As you read, please keep thorough, thoughtful notes by writing down examples of the first five of the Big Ideas (*character, setting, structure, narration, figurative language*) and providing commentary about the author's use of each. This will be submitted at the start of the course. You may use and expand the organizer provided in the link below to write your notes.

[Summer Assignment Notes](#)

III. And finally, upon the start of the course in the fall, you will be given an in-class writing assignment in which you will write a response to explore the sixth Big Idea- *literary argumentation*. You will use your knowledge of your chosen text as well as your notes to write your response.