

Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition
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Yes! There is no longer any more summer work for Westmont students! Instead, we have summer play! Please review the following six items for you to “play” with over the summer.

1. Reading: I strongly encourage you to read two of the following pieces of literature. Studies show that all great minds have one thing in common: they read voraciously! Please see the list below of nine great books and study questions to guide you. If you have other books in mind, please 😊 let me know.

•*The Andromeda Strain* by Michael Crichton (1969).

- i. Prophetic! Crichton writes the novel as if he were re-telling an actual biological disaster that happened in the U.S. What examples can you find where he foreshadows the whole COVID-19 thingy?
- ii. Prophetic! Doesn't society put too much emphasis on technology? Get off the TikTok, please. Put away your cell phone once in a while. Are we screenagers or what? Find examples where humans put too much emphasis on technology in this story.
- iii. What is ironic about Stone's opinion of Hall's ability to contribute to the Wildfire project?
- iv. Explain Montaigne's comment: Men under stress are fools, and fool themselves. How does this apply to *The Andromeda Strain*?
- v. Who is ultimately responsible for the tragedy at Piedmont? The army? The scientists? The doctor and the capsule? Support your answer with examples.

•*Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya (1972).

- i. Antonio (Tony) has several dreams in the story...which dream is most significant? Explain.
- ii. The vitamin kid is a minor character; however, he plays a significant role. What's the purpose of the vitamin kid? Foreshadowing? Symbolism?
- iii. The golden carp: Cico says the golden carp will rule again. What does he think will happen to the town? Why is Tony crestfallen after the discussion of the golden carp in Chapter 11?
- iv. In Chapter 19, Florence tells Tony that “you couldn't be their priest.” Huh? What does Florence mean? Why can't he “be their priest?” Is Florence correct?
- v. Pretend! Yay! Pretend that we visit Antonio 25 years after the novel's conclusion. What path did Tony take in life? What is Tony doing for his career?

•*Candide* by Voltaire (1759).

- i. Voltaire pokes fun at numerous philosophies. What is his philosophy?
- ii. If you are not laughing while reading, then you probably don't get the satire. Find four satirical moments. What is Voltaire making fun of?
- iii. Names! What is the deal with the names in this novel: Candide, Anabaptist, Pangloss, Pocourante, Cunegonde? Did you find any meaning to the names? Fitting? Ironic?
- iv. The final words of the novel...what is the deal? What does this mean? What kind of advice is this?
- v. After finishing the story, watch *Forrest Gump*. How many similarities are there between this film and this novel? Epic!

•*Cry, the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton (1948).

- i. Author's style: Paton vividly describes the various settings in his novel. What did you notice about his word choice and imagery with the particular settings—Stephen's home, Arthur's home, Johannesburg?

- ii. Loss of innocence: List in chronological order all the events that cause Stephen Kumalo to lose his innocence.
- iii. Theme: Children struggle with disappointing their parents. How/when/where in the story do sons (Arthur and Absalom) reconcile with their fathers?
- iv. Racial injustice: List five instances in the story in which you see racism. Then, list instances in which James Jarvis supports Stephen Kumalo.
- v. Msimangu: List 5-6 adjectives to describe this character. Provide a quote by him that best describes him. Provide an explanation of this quote.

•***Educated* by Tara Westover (2018).**

- i. Why do you think that Westover chose the Virginia Woolf epigraph at the beginning of her story?
- ii. Wait a second! At times, Westover includes footnotes in her story. Why? What's the purpose here?
- iii. Growing up so far removed from the world and conventional education, Westover had many gaps in her knowledge of the world, including not understanding the meaning of "holocaust." Discuss how the moment when she realizes this gap impacted her. What significant knowledge gaps have you discovered in your own education journey?
- iv. What's your favorite quote or passage from the book?
- v. Westover writes, "You could call this selfhood many things...Transformation. Metamorphosis. Falsity. Betrayal. I call it an education." What do you make of this? Do you agree with her assessment?

•***Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (1813).**

- i. How does the first sentence of the novel prepare us for what follows? Or does it trick us?
- ii. Elizabeth represents prejudice (misjudges Darcy)...but how does pride play a part in her behavior? What scenes bring out this quality?
- iii. Darcy seems to represent pride...but when does Darcy show prejudice?
- iv. Compare the characters of Charlotte, Lydia, Jane, and Elizabeth (Lizzy). How are their personalities similar or different? Which two characters provide the greatest contrast?
- v. Describe the tone of the conversation between Lizzy and Darcy in Chapter 60. What does the tone show us about the two characters? How have they changed since their first meeting?

•***There There* by Tommy Orange (2018).**

- i. Consider the following statement from page 9: "We stayed because the city sounds like a war, and you can't leave a war once you've been, you can only keep it at bay." In what ways does the historical precedent for violent removal of Native populations filter into the modern era? How does violence—both internal and external—appear throughout the narrative?
- ii. Tony Loneman's perspective both opens and closes *There There*. Why do you think Orange made this choice for the narrative? What does Loneman's perspective reveal about the "Urban Indian" identity? About the landscape of Oakland?
- iii. How is femininity depicted in *There There*? What roles do the female characters assume in their community? Within their families?
- iv. Discuss Orvil's choice to participate in the powwow. What attracts him to the event? Why does Opal initially reject his interest in "Indianness"? How do his brothers react to it?
- v. Describe the resettlement efforts at Alcatraz. What are the goals for inhabiting this land? What vision does Opal and Jacquie's mother have for her family in moving to Alcatraz?

***Teacher's note :) I found this book to be REALLY depressing and incredibly tragic; however, many former students give this book a thumbs up. Just sayin'.

•***Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare (1602).**

- i. Why is the play called *Twelfth Night*? What does the subtitle (*What You Will*) mean?
- ii. Provide an example of a pun, a metaphor and an allusion. Explain them, and discuss their impact on the play.
- iii. Compare Viola to the Duke. Which male/female stereotypes do they fulfill and which do they defy?
- iv. How do the subplots mimic or comment on the play's themes (appearances do not always reflect reality, role-playing is a part of social life, love often resembles madness)?
- v. Duke Orsino says that a woman's love is not as deep as a man's love (2.2.93-103). Does Shakespeare agree with Orsino or not? What specific examples from the play prove his agreement or disagreement?

***Teacher's note:) If you like laughs, this is for you!

•***Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens (2018).**

- i. Examine the series of events that led to Kya living alone in the marsh. Who failed her, and who was there for her? Were there better choices that could have been made?
- ii. How do Kya's observations of nature influence her understanding of the world? Give examples of how Kya's decisions were influenced by things she saw in nature.
- iii. What is Kya's relationship like with Jumpin' and Mabel? Why are they drawn to Kya — and what do they have to offer her?
- iv. What does Kya learn about relationships by watching fireflies? How does her interpretation of their behavior inform her choices later?
- v. How did you feel about the outcome of the trial? Do you think Tate made the right decision? Why?

2. Units for the Class of 2026!

- Your two choices from the summer...keep exercising that brain. Refer to the nine choices above.
- The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
- A super fun, educational, and diverse short story unit
- College essays
- Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
- The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan
- The Stranger* by Albert Camus
- Satire
- Poetry and lyrical analysis
- Hamlet* by William Shakespeare

3. Documents to peruse

1. [Literary Terms](#)
2. [Sentence Patterns](#)
3. AP Lit Summer: Class of 2026...this actual document :)
4. [20 previous](#) AP English Literature open essay prompts
5. [Timed Writing](#)-The introductory paragraph rubric and examples
6. [Errors and Tips](#)

4. Some very important stuff (Wow, this will make your senior year fun...and educational).

1. Elements of a strong thesis statement:
 - Argument and divisions of proof that use parallel structure.
 - Thesis addresses the prompt.
 - Thesis contains a meaningful theme.

2. Elements of a strong introduction (3-4 sentences):
 - Hook/attention-getter. Embed! Integrate quotations!
 - Explanation of the hook/attention-getter.
 - Segue to your thesis.
 - Thesis.

3. Please understand the validity/importance of structure in writing essays. :) Psst! There is a incredibly strong chance that during the first two weeks of school, you will be writing timed introductions.

4. Please have a positive attitude, be mature, and be responsible. Whoo-hoo!

5. Please have a passion for literature, writing, and oral discussion. Yay!

5. AP English Literature Test in May 2026 🥰

1. Part I: 50-60 multiple-choice questions on poetry and prose passages in one hour.

2. Part II: Three essays in two hours. Students must analyze and write an essay on

*a poetry passage *a prose passage *and on a novel of their choice.

Please refer to the previous prompts in this packet. If a student writes three four-paragraph essays in two hours, then the student should spend 40 minutes on each essay and 10 minutes on each paragraph. Wow! OMG! On the AP Lang test, you were given time to read passages; there is NO reading time on the AP Lit exam. Yikes!

6. **Shortcuts:** These do not exist in the English language. If you want to succeed on MCQs, if you want to communicate at a high level, if you want to thrive in education and in the work environment, you need to be a voracious reader. In other words (ha!), do you read recreationally, do you read assigned texts, do you re-read, do you look up words that you do not know, do you refer to prefixes, suffixes, root words, do you make predictions, do you look for literary terms and their significance, do you look for logical fallacies with the narrator? Just askin'

7. **Your senior year will be terrific! Are you excited to read, write, and discuss literature? Are you ready for the brutal MCQs? Yes=terrific! No or umm 🤔=not too late to switch to a different English class 😊**