



THE STEWARD SCHOOL

AP English Literature

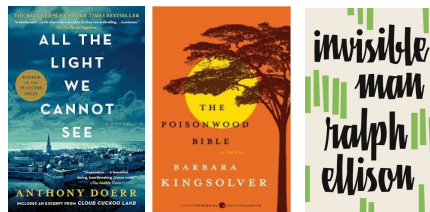
Summer Work 2025

- **Due date:** Monday, August 25 (the first day of school)
- **Estimated time:** Three hours for written assignments; approximately ten hours for reading (This is for planning purposes only; please work until you finish.)

Dear AP Student,

Welcome to Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition. This packet outlines the reading assignments and requirements for your summer work; please read it carefully.

Over the summer, you will be reading **one** long work of fiction---[*All the Light We Cannot See*](#) (531 pages) by Anthony Doerr (referenced on the AP test in 2018 and 2021), [*The Poisonwood Bible*](#) by Barbara Kingsolver (referenced on the AP test in 2010, 11, 12, 14) (570 pages) or [*Invisible Man*](#)* by Ralph Ellison (referenced on the AP test in 1976, 77, 78, 82, 83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91, 94, 95, 96, 97, 2001, 03, 04, 05, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 24,25) (610 pages). (*Though it is often referenced on the exam, note that *Invisible Man* does feature some mature content.) Please select the work that seems most appropriate for you. Note your choice [here](#), though you may change it at any time before the start of the school year.



Course resources are posted on my website, [I Heart English](#). Feel free to take a look at the [AP Literature](#) page. Success on the AP English Literature exam is directly related to the breadth of your reading and your continual practice of literary analysis through composition. The AP English course requires a significant amount of reading, writing, and analysis. The AP Literature and Composition Exam is scheduled for **May of 2026**; it is never too early to start preparing for it.

If you have any questions about the summer reading assignment or about the course in general, please reach out to me. I will also be checking my e-mail over the summer, should you have any questions (stephanie.arnold@stewardschool.org). I hope you find the summer reading engaging. I look forward to a wonderful year!

Sincerely,

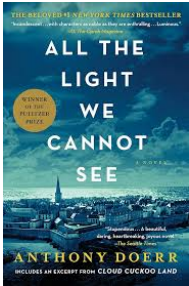
Stephanie Hope Arnold

English Curriculum Chair

A. Reading Assignment

Read *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr, *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver, or *Invisible Man** by Ralph Ellison. *All the Light We Cannot See* and *The Poisonwood Bible* are more contemporary texts, while *Invisible Man* is a classic. All of the novels are richly layered and complex.

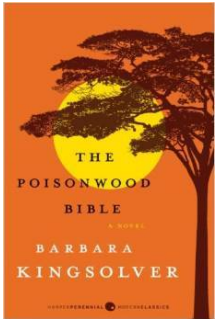
Please review the following summaries from Goodreads:



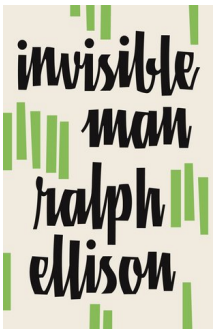
“Marie-Laure lives in Paris near the Museum of Natural History, where her father works. When she is twelve, the Nazis occupy Paris and father and daughter flee to the walled citadel of Saint-Malo, where Marie-Laure’s reclusive great uncle lives in a tall house by the sea. With them, they carry what might be the museum’s most valuable and dangerous jewel.

In a mining town in Germany, Werner Pfennig, an orphan, grows up with his younger sister, enchanted by a crude radio they find that brings them news and stories from places they have never seen or imagined. Werner becomes an expert at building and fixing these crucial new instruments and is enlisted to use his talent to track down the resistance. Deftly interweaving the lives of Marie-Laure and Werner, Doerr illuminates the ways, against all odds, people try to be good to one another.

From the highly acclaimed, multiple award-winning Anthony Doerr, the stunningly beautiful instant *New York Times* bestseller about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II.”

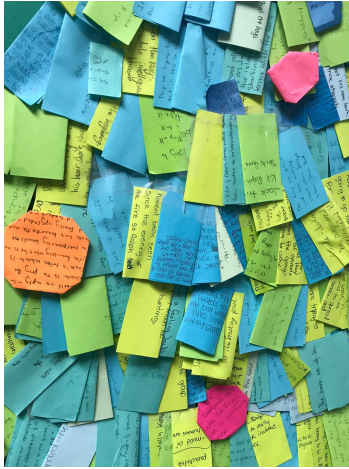


"*The Poisonwood Bible* is a story told by the wife and four daughters of Nathan Price, a fierce, evangelical Baptist who takes his family and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959. They carry with them everything they believe they will need from home, but soon find that all of it -- from garden seeds 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."



"Published in 1952 and immediately hailed as a masterpiece, *Invisible Man* is one of those rare novels that have changed the shape of American literature. For not only does Ralph Ellison's nightmare journey across the racial divide tell unparalleled truths about the nature of bigotry and its effects on the minds of both victims and perpetrators, it gives us an entirely new model of what a novel can be.

As he journeys from the Deep South to the streets and basements of Harlem, from a horrifying "battle royal" where Black men are reduced to fighting like animals, to a Communist rally where they are elevated to the status of trophies, Ralph Ellison's nameless protagonist ushers readers into a parallel universe that throws our own into harsh and even hilarious relief. Suspenseful and sardonic, narrated in a voice that takes in the symphonic range of the American language, Black and white, *Invisible Man* is one of the most audacious and dazzling novels of our century."



B. Writing and Reflection Assignments

1. Active Reading

In order to prepare for our Socratic Seminars, please [annotate](#) passages of the text using sticky notes after you have read each chapter. You should write on **40 sticky notes** throughout the novel. Be sure to cover the whole book, not just one portion. (Please number them and have them sticking out to make them easy to read and assess!)

On a related note, we will use published discussion guides in addition to the authentic questions you generate for our discussions.

[All the Light We Cannot See](#) Discussion Guide

[The Poisonwood Bible](#) Discussion Guide

[Invisible Man](#) Discussion Guide

After each chapter, you might choose to use the discussion prompts to guide your annotations. Your sticky notes should be annotated with questions, observations, and reflections on the content as well as the writing. Comments should demonstrate analysis and interpretation – thinking beyond the surface level of the text.

2. Careful Composition

The AP exam will showcase three types of essays. The first is an analysis of a poem; the second essay analyzes the figurative language used in a particular literary passage. The final essay explores how a literary theme is illustrated in a particular novel.

Write one essay following the criteria below. This is a sample AP essay. There is no length requirement; however, your essay should not be less than two pages.

As is the case with the actual exam essay, you should supply adequate and relevant textual support from the text, but you do not need to embed quotations; simply reference six precise examples to support your

argument. Essays should be composed in a Google Doc, double-spaced, with 1" margins and 12 pt. font, using MLA format. They will be submitted as hard copies and electronically. All essays must be your original work. Any information that is added from another source must be correctly documented.

Essay: Literary Argument/ The Free-Response Question.

Refer to the College Board website for Writing Prompt #3 on the 2010 test. You may also use the link provided below. Use the long text you selected (*All the Light We Cannot See*, *Poisonwood Bible*, or *Invisible Man*) to compose your essay. A portion of the prompt is below.

"Palestinian American literary theorist and cultural critic Edward Said has written that "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted." Yet Said has also said that exile can become "a potent, even enriching" experience.

Select a novel, play, or epic in which a character experiences such a rift and becomes cut off from "home," whether that home is the character's birthplace, family, homeland, or other special place. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the character's experience with exile is both alienating and enriching, and how this experience illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot." Please compose this essay using *All the Light We Cannot See*, *Invisible Man*, or *Poisonwood Bible*. (Note: focus on ONE character!)

Link to Full Prompt: [AP® English Literature and Composition 2010 Free-Response Questions](#)

C. Evaluation of Summer Work

Your grade will be based on your successful completion of the assignments above and on your preparation and performance during a Socratic seminar. Here is a link to the official [rubric](#) for a Literary Argument/ Question #3 open prompt. The week we return to school, you will be asked to conduct a seminar based on questions you have generated. You should come to the seminar with authentic questions, textual support, and examples (with page references) for the long novel you will study.