



# **AP Literature and Composition**

2021-2022

*Summer Assignment*

Mr. Brooker

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Hello class of 2022,

Written below, you will find the directions for the summer work to prepare you for AP English Literature and Composition. This course, as the name suggests, focuses on literature of all kinds. There is not a set “curriculum;” instead, you are expected to investigate texts and understand what choices lead to its power/meaning. As such, the summer reading is meant to engage you in different experiences.

The theme is “Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Viewed.” You can see the particulars for each category below. Please note: two of these are required, and two are optional. The optional ones simply provide an idea of other ways you could expand/continue to practice skills we will use through the year. It’s also an opportunity to start the year with a good grade!

Keep in mind that some of these texts could involve particularly difficult or mature scenes or language. If you have any questions about the suggestions below, please ask me.

Have a great summer,  
Brooker

## #1. Something Old (Optional)

7 points

Reread a novel you've read before as a class assignment previous to the 11th grade (something you read in 10th grade or before). Then write a reflection on the prompt listed below.

A sampling of books that have been assigned to you that might be worth revisiting:

- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
- *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury
- *1984* by George Orwell
- *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
- *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry
- *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller

### **Prompt:**

Write a 1-2 page reflection where you detail anything you've observed in this second read through. As you've matured, your perception of literature has most likely shifted. How has your understanding of this novel changed from reading it again? Don't focus on whether you liked it or not - focus on your understanding of the work and its literary merit.

## #2. Something New (Required)

10 points

Read one of the following novels and write a brief (2-3 page) essay on the prompt listed below.

*All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr (2014)

A blind girl and her family flees Paris when it's occupied by the Nazis. A German boy is enlisted to help find the resistance. Despite their differences, they carve a path of survival in the desolation of war.

*American Gods* by Neil Gaiman (2001)

The old gods never died, they just lost power when people stopped believing in them. Now they're out looking for new believers and a few sacrifices.

*The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead (2019)

The Nickel Academy prides itself on helping turn wayward boys into upstanding citizens. Just don't ask about the secret graveyard out back where they hide the bodies of the boys that didn't turn out so good.

*Sing, Unburied, Sing* by Jesmyn Ward (2017)

It's the prototypical road trip story, this time through the heart of Mississippi and the history of inequality.

*Swamplandia!* By Karen Russell (2011)

A tight-knit family runs a decrepit gator-wrestling theme park on the outskirts of the Everglades. After years of crafting a family fiction, the lies they've told themselves start to unravel.

*A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan (2011)

This narrative spans the world and time as various characters live their lives, unaware of how their story connects, maybe even in a small way, to someone else's.

*White Noise* by Don DeLillo (1985)

One of the most influential modern novels, this pattering drama follows one family and the travails of simply living in the current age.

### **Prompt:**

Write an essay in which you explore one prominent literary choice made by this author (symbolism, imagery, narrative structure, extended metaphor, etc.) to tell their story. Make sure to focus on a choice that bears significance that bears weight on the meaning of the work as a whole.

### **#3. Something Borrowed (Optional)**

7 points

Ask a friend, relative, stranger, teacher, etc. to suggest a text for you to experience. A “text” could mean almost anything that requires your active engagement, but it should be something that the recommender feels is foundational to them. If you need a suggestion, take a look at some of what Mr. Brooker suggests [here](#).

After experiencing the text, write a 1-2 page reflection on what you learned about the recommender from this text and why this could be foundational to them. Or express what you took away from the text that you experienced.

#### #4. Something Viewed (Required)

10 points

Watch one of the following black and white, classic films. Then write a brief essay, addressing the prompt below.

*The Bicycle Thief* dir. Vittorio de Sica (1948)

\*Viewable on Kanopy for free through the LA Library\* Sometimes a bicycle is the difference between poverty and freedom. A groundbreaking neorealist drama, de Sica makes us question how we would act in a similar situation.

*Citizen Kane* dir. Orson Welles (1941)

Loosely based on William Hearst (of Hearst Castle), a reporter seeks to uncover what Kane meant in his dying words: “Rosebud.”

*Casablanca* dir. Michael Curtiz (1942)

Can the world’s biggest cynic be convinced to give a damn? This classic film weaves a tale of personal history and the impact of one’s choices.

*Dr. Strangelove: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* dir. Stanley Kubrick (1964)

A comedy where everything goes wrong in the Cold War (or is it actually going right?)

*Stagecoach* dir. John Ford (1939)

An all-encompassing Western film that introduced the world to John Wayne, this film shows that the genre can tell stories bigger than cowboys and indians.

*A Streetcar Named Desire* dir. Elia Kazan (1951)

The adaptation of the play by the same name, the film earns its place in history due to the electrifying performances by the lead players. This movie explores the carnal natures of man and our inability to shirk them.

*Sunset Boulevard* dir. Billy Wilder (1950)

A darkly comedic movie about Hollywood and the self-interested systems which feed fame. Be warned: Mr. Brooker wrote his college thesis on this movie!

#### **Prompt:**

After watching your selected film, consider how this movie is considered a “classic.” How does this movie elevate the visual narrative to something worthy of reverence and emulation? Focus on specific aspects of the film that demonstrates that it does something more than mere popcorn fare.