



# SMITHTOWN

## CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Summer Reading Assignments: *AP Literature and Composition 2026*

**Due Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2026**

**Required Reading Texts:**

- One fictional text of your choice listed on the next page from a list of titles. This is a list of commonly cited books on the AP Literature Exam free response prompt.
- Five poems:
  1. "The Grave of Keats"- Oscar Wilde
  2. "The Waking" - Theodore Roethke
  3. "When I Have Fears That I May Cease To Be"- John Keats
  4. "Constantly Risking Absurdity (#15)"- Lawrence Ferlinghetti
  5. "Facing It"- Yusef Komunyakaa

**Note: The full text of each poem follows the Annotation Requirements page.**

**Reading Requirements:**

- Reading Requirements:  
Read and annotate ALL of the works using the annotation guide on the last page. You may use Post-its or write in the book itself if you purchased it.

**Writing Requirements:**

- Prose (NOVEL)-Reflection (minimum of 500 words) on the book you choose.  
Your reflection should include:
  - One paragraph review of how you felt about the book.
  - One paragraph describing what topic you would choose and why if you were to write a full literary analysis essay on your choice (do not write the actual essay)
  - Any other information you found valuable from the experience.
  - Mention specific details-must be able to determine that you actually read the book
- Poetry-Select one of the three poems to write a literary analysis of how the use of poetic devices develop the subject of the poem.

Your analysis should include

- A strong thesis that clearly defines the subject of analysis.
- Direct evidence from the poem itself.
- A strong argument defending your thesis.
- Standard MLA format.

## Prose Reading Choices

If you would like to borrow a book, titles can be obtained from the Smithtown Public Library or titles with an asterisk are available at Smithtown High School West English Department Office (631-382-3036) July 1st-July 14th 7:30am-12:00pm

1. *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison
2. *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky
3. *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte
4. *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville
5. *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller \*
6. *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
7. *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker \*
8. *Light in August* by William Faulkner
9. *Native Son* by Richard Wright
10. *Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison
11. *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy
12. *Jude the Obscure* by Thomas Hardy
13. *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster
14. *Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James
15. *All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy
16. *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck
17. *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair
18. *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert
19. *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen \*
20. *Sula* by Toni Morrison
21. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy
22. *Cry, The Beloved Country* by Alan Paton
23. *Lord Jim* by Joseph Conrad
24. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy
25. *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner
26. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway
27. *Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton
28. *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift
29. *Moll Flanders* by Daniel Defoe
30. *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf
31. *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa
32. *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens
33. *Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin
34. *Sister Carrie* by Theodore Dreiser
35. *Wise Blood* by Flannery O'Connor
35. *Atonement* by Ian McEwan
37. *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote \*
38. *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen \*
39. *Snow Falling Cedars* by David Guterson \*
40. *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey \*

## Annotations Requirements

A+ to A - The text is thoroughly and thoughtfully highlighted with many margin, response, and device notes. The annotations demonstrate that the student has carefully read and considered the text and its meaning. In addition, these annotations serve not only as an outline and show thoughtful understanding of literary and rhetorical devices, but also show that the student is having a dialogue with the text. Consistently excellent, no missing sections, both highlighted (underlined) AND annotated.

A- to B+ - The text is thoroughly and thoughtfully highlighted with fewer margin, response, and device notes. The annotations demonstrate that the student has carefully read the text and has thought about its meaning. In addition, these annotations serve not only as an outline and show an understanding of literary and rhetorical devices, but also show that the student is having some dialogue with the text. Inconsistent at times, more highlights than notes, more notes than highlights, light missing sections.

B to B- - The text is highlighted with many margin, response, and device notes. The annotations demonstrate that the student has read and considered the text and its meaning. The annotations serve as an outline and show a basic understanding of literary and rhetorical devices. The annotations show the student is having minimal dialogue with the text. Inconsistent, larger areas missing or just highlighted (painted),"ran out of steam."

C+to C- - The text is highlighted. There are virtually no notes; therefore, it is impossible to determine how thoroughly the student has read and considered the text. Very inconsistent, larger sections missing notes, all "reaction" notes with no explanations, incomplete.

D - The text is only highlighted and/or only minimal notes are shown. Parts of the text are unmarked or there are so few notations overall that the text may not have been read completely. Large areas or entire sections unmarked. Meaningless notes.

F - The text is handed in but unmarked. Little marked, no notes, few pages

Summer Reading Poems

**The Grave of Keats**

Oscar Wilde - 1854-1900

Rid of the world's injustice, and his pain,  
He rests at last beneath God's veil of blue:  
Taken from life when life and love were new  
The youngest of the martyrs here is lain,  
Fair as Sebastian, and as early slain.  
No cypress shades his grave, no funeral yew,  
But gentle violets weeping with the dew  
Weave on his bones an ever-blossoming chain.  
O proudest heart that broke for misery!  
O sweetest lips since those of Mitylene!  
O poet-painter of our English Land!  
Thy name was writ in water—it shall stand:  
And tears like mine will keep thy memory green,  
As Isabella did her Basil-tree.

Source: Poets.org: <https://poets.org/poem/grave-keats>

## The Waking

Theodore Roethke - 1908-1963

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.  
I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.  
I learn by going where I have to go.

We think by feeling. What is there to know?  
I hear my being dance from ear to ear.  
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Of those so close beside me, which are you?  
God bless the Ground! I shall walk softly there,  
And learn by going where I have to go.

Light takes the Tree; but who can tell us how?  
The lowly worm climbs up a winding stair;  
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Great Nature has another thing to do  
To you and me; so take the lively air,  
And, lovely, learn by going where to go.

This shaking keeps me steady. I should know.  
What falls away is always. And is near.  
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.  
I learn by going where I have to go.

Source: Poetry Foundation: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43333/the-waking-56d2220f25315>

## When I have Fears That I May Cease to Be

John Keats - 1795-1821

When I have fears that I may cease to be  
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,  
Before high-pilèd books, in character,  
Hold like rich garners the full ripened grain;  
When I behold, upon the night's starred face,  
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,  
And think that I may never live to trace  
Their shadows with the magic hand of chance;  
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,  
That I shall never look upon thee more,  
Never have relish in the faery power  
Of unreflecting love—then on the shore  
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think  
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

Source: Poetry Foundation: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44488/when-i-have-fears-that-i-may-cease-to-be>

Constantly risking absurdity

and death

whenever he performs

above the heads

of his audience

the poet like an acrobat

climbs on rime

to a high wire of his own making

and balancing on eyebeams

above a sea of faces

paces his way

to the other side of day

performing entrechats

and sleight-of-foot tricks

and other high theatrics

and all without mistaking

any thing

for what it may not be

For he's the super realist

who must perforce perceive

taut truth

before the taking of each stance or step

in his supposed advance

toward that still higher perch

where Beauty stands and waits

with gravity

to start her death-defying leap

And he

a little charleychaplin man

who may or may not catch

her fair eternal form

spreadeagled in the empty air

of existence

## Facing It

Yusef Komunyakaa - 1947- Present

My black face fades,  
hiding inside the black granite.  
I said I wouldn't  
dammit: No tears.  
I'm stone. I'm flesh.  
My clouded reflection eyes me  
like a bird of prey, the profile of night  
slanted against morning. I turn  
this way—the stone lets me go.  
I turn that way—I'm inside  
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial  
again, depending on the light  
to make a difference.  
I go down the 58,022 names,  
half-expecting to find  
my own in letters like smoke.  
I touch the name Andrew Johnson;  
I see the booby trap's white flash.  
Names shimmer on a woman's blouse  
but when she walks away  
the names stay on the wall.  
Brushstrokes flash, a red bird's  
wings cutting across my stare.  
The sky. A plane in the sky.  
A white vet's image floats  
closer to me, then his pale eyes  
look through mine. I'm a window.  
He's lost his right arm  
inside the stone. In the black mirror  
a woman's trying to erase names:  
No, she's brushing a boy's hair.