

American Literature CP 2026 Summer Reading Assignment

Welcome to American Literature! I am very excited about our upcoming school year together. In order to be successful next year, it is important that you complete your summer reading assignment. This year, you will choose your own novel to read. The book you choose must meet the following criteria:

- It must be at least 200 pages long.
- It must be written by an American author.
- It must be appropriate for a student entering eleventh grade.
- It must be approved by your parent/guardian.
- You may not read *The Scarlet Letter*.

Assignment One

As you read, you will need to annotate and mark up the text. This will be very important when you return to class in August. One of the first assignments you will have is a graded discussion with the class. The more you annotate and mark up the text, the easier it will be to refer back to the novel and cite specific examples to help you contribute to this discussion.

Annotating and Marking a Text

The practice of annotating is very important to help you be able to participate in class discussions. It will also help you refer back to the text for writing assignments that require textual evidence. Each time you sit down to read, you should have with you: a pen/pencil, a highlighter, page flags and or Post-It notes (these are especially important if you are annotating a book that does not belong to you.) As you read, you should look for and mark the following:

- Chapter titles are important and will always hint at something to come. Provide a prediction based on the chapter title.
- Passages that are meaningful. This could be a personal opinion about a passage or a passage that you think is meaningful to driving the plot.
- Words that you do not know. Sometimes these span beyond being a vocabulary word. Perhaps a character is using something or participating in something that you have never heard of before. In that case, mark it. When you are done reading for the day, go back and look it up.
- Check for and note the point of view (first person, second person...). Determine who is narrating the story and find places of reliability. Can the narrator be believed?
- Question, question, question! Write questions you have about the text. Question the characters' motives, actions, reactions, relationships, word choice, etc. Then consider possible answers to these questions.
- Are there any repeating ideas or symbols? Look for ideas that present themselves in more than one way and mark them.

- Make connections with the text. How does the text connect to something you have read or seen before? How does the text relate to real-world situations or other real-world situations outside of this text? How does this text relate to your own situation and your own situations?

Assignment Two:

The following questions should be hand-written on notebook paper. Answers should be thorough and well-developed. Additionally, your responses should be neat and legible. This assignment is due on the first day of class.

1. What is “The American Dream”? In your own words, consider what it means. After you have provided your own thoughts on “The American Dream,” do some research on the topic. Is there a true definition? Be sure to cite the sources you used to define the American Dream. What words in the definition(s) stand out as important? Why did you choose these words?
2. How does your novel reflect the ideas of “The American Dream”? Provide at least five examples as proof. If you do not think that your novel does not display characteristics of “The American Dream,” explain what keeps it from showing elements of “The American Dream.” What could the author have included to make it more obvious?
3. Write about **five** characters in your novel. Things to consider as you respond:
 - Who is the character?
 - What is their name?
 - Who are they related to?
 - Who are their friends?
 - How can the character be described?
 - What are their hobbies/ interests?
 - What do they look like?
 - How do they respond to the world around them?
 - What are their goals/ dreams?
 - What do they want out of life?
 - If you were to introduce the character to another person, what would you say?
 - What is significant/ memorable about the character?
 - What do you enjoy most about the character?
 - What do you enjoy least?
 - If you could talk to the character, what would you say? Why?
 - Does this character remind you of anyone? Defend your response with examples and evidence. (a character from a movie or another piece of literature, a person you know?)

Please contact Brandy Thompson if you have questions. Bthompson@fbns.org