

Parents and Students,

**(Scroll to the end of this document for the assignment).** Choose at least one of the following selections (there are many!) to read prior to the school year. Other than recommendations from people you know who have studied or read the works, an easy option for choosing a book is to look up an excerpt of the novel/drama. That way, you know the level of difficulty as well as the author's style and language. Almost all good literature contains less-than-savory elements -- language, sinful behavior, sometimes even an overt or subtly-skewed world view. With that disclaimer comes the fact that most, if not all good literature that I have read doesn't glorify sin but punishes it in some way. Christian family review sites also exist, including the following: Redeemed Reader, Focus on the Family, Plugged In, and Common Sense Media. Below is a lengthy article by Bob Jones University that deals with potentially objectionable material from a biblical worldview in a thorough manner.

[Bob Jones article](#)

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### Most Frequently Cited Books in AP Lit Exam 1970-2014

**At the end of this list, I will comment on some of these I have read and recommend a few that I have read in the past few months. (They are in order of most to least cited - which DOES NOT mean that the ones that are higher on the list are the ones you should read/have more merit)**

\* Choose ONE of these works from the "Most Frequently Cited Books" List. **It is fine if you pick one that is highlighted, yet we have either read these in my classroom or will -- hopefully -- at some point.**

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| 26 <i>Invisible Man</i> by Ralph Ellison                       | 11 <i>Light in August</i> by William Faulkner              |
| 20 <i>Wuthering Heights</i> by Emily Bronte                    | 10 <i>Antigone</i> by Sophocles                            |
| 18 <i>Great Expectations</i> by Charles Dickens                | 10 <i>As I Lay Dying</i> by William Faulkner               |
| 17 <i>King Lear</i> by William Shakespeare                     | 10 <i>Beloved</i> by Toni Morrison                         |
| 16 <i>Crime and Punishment</i> by Fyodor Dostoevski            | 10 <i>The Color Purple</i> by Alice Walker                 |
| 16 <i>Heart of Darkness</i> by Joseph Conrad                   | <b>10 <i>The Glass Menagerie</i> by Tennessee Williams</b> |
| <b>16 <i>Jane Eyre</i> by Charlotte Bronte</b>                 | 10 <i>Native Son</i> by Richard Wright                     |
| 15 <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> by Mark Twain     | 10 <i>Othello</i> by William Shakespeare                   |
| 15 <i>Moby Dick</i> by Herman Melville                         | 10 <i>Song of Solomon</i> by Toni Morrison                 |
| 14 <i>Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i> by James Joyce | 10 <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> by Tennessee Williams   |
| <b>13 <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> by Nathaniel Hawthorne</b>     | 9 <i>Death of a Salesman</i> by Arthur Miller              |
| 13 <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> by Zora Neale Hurston   | 9 <i>A Passage to India</i> by E. M. Forster               |
| 12 <i>The Awakening</i> by Kate Chopin                         | 9 <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> by Lorraine Hansberry         |
| 12 <i>Catch-22</i> by Joseph Heller                            | 8 <i>All the Pretty Horses</i> by Cormac McCarthy          |
| <b>12 <i>The Great Gatsby</i> by F. Scott Fitzgerald</b>       | 8 <i>Anna Karenina</i> by Leo Tolstoy                      |
| 11 <i>Billy Budd</i> by Herman Melville                        | 8 <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i> by Rudolfo Anaya                 |
| 11 <i>Ceremony</i> by Leslie Marmon Silko                      | 8 <i>Candide</i> by Voltaire                               |
|  | 8 <i>The Crucible</i> by Arthur Miller                     |
|  | 8 <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> by John Steinbeck             |

8 *Jude the Obscure* by Thomas Hardy  
 8 *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair  
 8 *Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James  
 8 *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* Stoppard  
 8 *Sula* by Toni Morrison  
 8 *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett  
 7 *All the King's Men* by Robert Penn Warren  
 7 *Cry, The Beloved Country* by Alan Paton  
 7 *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton  
 7 *Lord Jim* by Joseph Conrad  
 7 *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe  
 6 *Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton  
 6 *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen  
 6 *An Enemy of the People* by Henrik Ibsen  
 6 *Equus* by Peter Shaffer  
 6 *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift  
 6 *Hedda Gabler* by Henrik Ibsen  
 6 *Major Barbara* by George Bernard Shaw  
 6 *Medea* by Euripides  
 6 *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare  
 6 *Moll Flanders* by Daniel Defoe  
 6 *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf  
 6 *Murder in the Cathedral* by T. S. Eliot  
 6 *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa 6 *The Piano Lesson* by August

7 *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert  
 7 *The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy  
 7 *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles  
 7 *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen  
 7 *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner  
 7 *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway  
 7 *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare  
 7 *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy  
 5 *Wise Blood* by Flannery O'Connor  
  
 Wilson  
 6 *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James  
 6 *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* by Edward Albee 5 *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens  
 5 *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chkhov  
 5 *Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe  
 5 *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley  
 5 *Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin  
 5 *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare  
 5 *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare  
 5 *Mrs. Warren's Profession* by George Bernard Shaw  
 5 *Sister Carrie* by Theodore Dreiser  
 5 *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dicken

**Additional late-20th and early 21st-century novels**

**Selected from 2015-2019 exams:**

- *All the Light We Cannot See* - Anthony Doerr

- *Death in Venice* - Thomas Mann
- *The Goldfinch* - Donna Tartt
- *Kindred* - Octavia Estelle Butler
- *Mama Day* - Gloria Naylor
- *Man and Superman* - George Bernard Shaw

- *The Power of One* - Bryce Courtena
- *The Bonesetter's Daughter* - Amy Tan
- *The Burgess Boys* - Elizabeth Strout
- *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* - Barbara Schultz
- *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* - Kim Edwards
- *The Alchemist* - Paulo Coelho

**Works from the May 2020 Exam**

- *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* – Anne Bronte (1822)
- *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* - James Weldon Johnson (1912)
- *BUNNER SISTERS* – EDITH WHARTON (1916)
- *THE VOYAGE OUT* – VIRGINIA WOOLF (1915)
- *THE SKETCH BOOK OF GEOFFREY CRAYON* – WASHINGTON IRVING (1912)
- *The Gift of Rain* – Tan Twan Eng (2007)
- *HER LETTERS* – KATE CHOPIN (1894)
- *ONE AMAZING THING* – CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI (2010)
- *THE AGE OF LIGHT* - WHITNEY SCHRARER (2019)
- *SO BIG* – EDNA FERBER (1924)
- “A THREAD WITHOUT A KNOT” (1916) DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER
- *THE MILL ON THE FLOSS* – GEORGE ELIOT (1860)

- WASHINGTON SQUARE – HENRY JAMES (1880)
- LOOK AT ME – JENNIFER EGAN (2001)
- The Other Americans - Laila Lalami (2019)
- Anita and Me - Meera Syal (1996)

Works listed on the **2021** released AP Literature Exam - May 5th test (Q3) **that are not previously listed above:**

- *All over Creation* by Ruth Ozeki
- *Brown Girl, Brownstones* by Paule Marshall
- *Elmet* by Fiona Mozley
- *Fences* by August Wilson
- *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy
- *The Haunting of Hill House* by Shirley Jackson
- *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi
- *A House for Mr. Biswas* by V.S. Naipaul
- *The House of Mirth* - by Edith Wharton
- *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros
- *Housekeeping* - by Marilynne Robinson
- *Howard's End* - by E.M. Forster
- *Nervous Conditions* - by Tsitsi Dangarmba
- *Never Let me Go* - by Kazuo Ishiguro
- *Northanger Abbey* - by Jane Austen
- *Passing* - by Nella Larsen
- *The Professor's House* - by Willa Cather
- *The Remains of the Day* - by Kazuo Ishiguro
- *The Round House* - by Louise Erdrich
- *Saturday* - by Ian McEwan
- *The Secret Garden* - by Francis Hodgson Burnett
- *Sense and Sensibility* - by Jane Austen
- *Sing, Unburied, Sing* - by Jesmyn Ward
- *Uncle Tom's Cabin* - by Harriet Beecher Stowe
- *Where the Crawdads Sing* - by Delia Owens
- *White Teeth* - by Zadie Smith
- *Wide Sargasso Sea* - by Jean Rhys

**As far as my recommendations, following are my takes on some of these (and other) works:**

- *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison is the first on the list, and I read it two years ago. I would NOT recommend it to lower high school students due to the violent and often rough times of a young black man's life during the civil rights movement.
- Anything by Charlotte or Emily Bronte is appropriate, but I have not read all of their novels.
- *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield* - anything by Dickens is appropriate and good.
- Most anything by Mark Twain is good; *Huckleberry Finn* would be a nice (yet, also tough with the racial tension) read if one has read *Tom Sawyer*.
- Herman Melville - I've read *Moby Dick*, and it is worthy yet a monster of a novel. I suggest maybe *Billy Budd* as a shorter Melville work, or even "Bartleby, the Scrivener" which is a short story but challenging.
- Anything by William Faulkner is worth reading but usually contains heavy subject matter.
- *All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy - kind of a western from a teenage boy's point of view. I haven't read it, but it looks pretty interesting and is written by a Knoxville-bred author who still frequents the local Barnes and Noble.
- *Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison (more of a modern classic).
- *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton is good and not lengthy, but it's been awhile since I've read it. A couple of

students chose it last year because it was short but did not enjoy it!

- *Pride & Prejudice* by Jane Austen is a great readable classic. (Some will not like the cookie cutter ending, but it is what it is. It's worth the read.)
- *Gulliver's Travels* is a great adventure novel (I have only read excerpts).
- *For One More Day* - Mitch Albom - Bittersweet yet hopeful.
- *A Better Man* - Louise Penny - a series novel of a morally upright French detective solving a crime.
- *Dear Edward* - Ann Napolitano - a moving account of a young boy who is the sole survivor of a plane crash.
- *The Clover Girls* - Viola Shipman - A nostalgic novel about four adult women who are summoned back to their childhood summer camp.
- *Clock Dance* - Anne Tyler - a hopeful, late-life coming-of-age novel.
- *Biloxi* - Mary Miller - A Southern fiction novel about a man, his dog, and the strange turns life can take.
- *All Over but the Shoutin'* - Rick Bragg (non-fiction) - Alabama professor and *Southern Living* columnist shares his poverty-stricken childhood and his emerging literary career, paying homage to his mother.
- *The Awakening* - by Kate Chopin - a short novel I read recently. It's well-written and worth the read, but contains mature themes (a woman having an adulterous relationship, but the sin is not glorified but rather contains consequences that are biblically based).
- Anything by C.S. Lewis is great.
- I love Flannery O'Connor! She is Southern gothic, and her stories contain strong Christian themes (albeit many times exposing hypocrisy of false religion). It's not light reading and usually contains an ironic twist.
- *The Glass Hotel* - by Emily St. John Mandel (the same author as *Station Eleven*). While I don't like it as well as *Station Eleven*, the characters are believable, and the interweaving of characters' lives is deftly written.
- *A Thousand Splendid Suns* - by Khaled Hosseini is a beautiful but sometimes harsh story set against the volatile events of Afghanistan's last thirty years, so historical fiction. Again, much literary merit but not difficult to read (this is the author of *The Kite Runner*, which I have not read).
- *Where the Crawdads Sing* - is a coming-of-age novel that has been very popular the last couple of years. I enjoyed it, but it does have some mature material (PG-13).
- *The Alchemist* - A delightful read, almost allegorical, with biblical themes.
- *Middlemarch* - by George Eliot (the pen name of Mary Ann Evans) - I have not read this but plan to at least begin it this summer (it's 848 pages!). My uncles, one a public high school English teacher and the other a college English professor, both tell me that for any serious English scholar, this is a "must-read!"

Thank you,

Mrs. Lewellyn

**Assignment:**

1. During the first week of your English semester (August or January), you will give a 4-6 minute oral presentation consisting of a short summary (unless someone else has already summarized your book), an analysis, and a review. You may use notes if you'd like.
2. During the first week of your English semester (August or January), you will write a paragraph about the book that deals with its universal themes and the meaning of the work as a whole. **(Do not do this during the summer; we will talk about it in class!)**