

AP English Literature Summer Reading

During the 2020 Summer, you have choices in what you read in preparation for AP English Literature. We have selected a range of contemporary writers whose works have been included in lists for the open-ended novel-based question on the AP English Literature Exam.

We suggest that you read at least two works from this list. You will not be quizzed on them at the start of the school year, but we will give you opportunities to use books you've read from this list for close reading exercises and for class journals.

We will also share with you a study guide for noting the important aspects of these novels, should you choose to write about one of them on a future AP exam. You will also have the option of writing about the book during an early AP English practice exam in the early months of the class.

In AP English Literature, we focus on how authors develop both poetry as well as fictional narratives. In reading fiction, we focus on the author's choices in characterization, point of view, the evocation of setting and the depiction of conflict. We are keenly interested in how elements of fiction work together to create larger thematic ideas. We examine the author's use of figurative language, symbolism, imagery, and diction. Students in AP English Literature learn how to weave an understanding of texts they've read into sophisticated interpretations. Ultimately, students learn how to read analytically, think critically, and write analytically.

Author	Title of Book	Notes on Book
Colson Whitehead	<i>The Underground Railroad</i> (2016)	Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award and #1 New York Times Bestseller
Colson Whitehead	<i>The Nickel Boys</i> (2020)	Pulitzer Prize (2020)
Jumpha Lahiri	<i>The Lowland</i> (2013)	Man Booker Prize Finalist
George Saunders	<i>Lincoln in the Bardo</i> (2017)	Man Booker Prize (2017)
Margaret Atwood	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (1985)	Dystopian Novel
Margaret Atwood	<i>The Testaments</i> (2019)	Man Booker Prize (2019) -- a sequel to <i>the Handmaid's Tale</i>
Muriel Barbery	<i>The Elegance of the Hedgehog</i> (2006)	Allusions to literature, philosophy
Haruki Murakami	<i>Kafka on the Shore</i> (2006)	World Fantasy Award

Anne Enright	<i>The Gathering (2007)</i>	Man Booker Prize (2007)
Chang-Rae Lee	<i>A Gesture Life (1999)</i>	Asian-American Literary Award
Chang-Rae Lee	<i>Native Speaker (1994)</i>	PEN/Hemingway Award
Esi Edugyan	<i>Washington Black (2018)</i>	Shortlisted for Man Booker Prize
Michael Ondaatje	<i>The English Patient (1992)</i>	Man Booker Prize (1992)
Monica Ali	<i>Brick Lane (2003)</i>	Man Booker Prize Finalist (2003)
Naguib Mahfouz	<i>The Journey of Ibn Fattouma (1963, republished in 2016)</i>	Nobel Prize Laureate addresses philosophical ideas, including utopian and dystopian societies
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	<i>Half of a Yellow Sun (2006)</i> <i>Americanah (2013)</i>	Orange Prize for Fiction National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award
Amy Tan	<i>The Bonesetter's Daughter (2003)</i>	Tan's novel was turned into an opera in 2008
Viet Thanh Nguyen	<i>The Sympathizer (2015)</i>	Pulitzer Prize for Fiction
Jesmyn Ward	<i>Sing, Unburied Sing (2017)</i>	National Book Award for Fiction
Mohsin Hamid	<i>Exit West (2017)</i>	Shortlisted for the International IMPAC Dublin Award
Barbara Kingsolver	<i>The Poisonwood Bible (1998)</i>	Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction
Emily St. John Mandel	<i>Station Eleven (2014)</i>	Arthur C. Clarke Award; Finalist for the National Book Award
Ling Ma	<i>Severance (2018)</i>	Kirkus Prize for Fiction; Finalist for Pen/Hemingway Award