

2025 Summer Reading for ENTERING 11TH AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION (AP LIT ONLY)

Assignment: Students will read **two** texts and complete assignments:

- ***Beowulf* as translated by Seamus Heaney and complete an essay (instructions below)**—due Friday, August 8, 2025 (first draft is ungraded; revised draft will be an **essay** grade)
- **A book chosen from the list below and a completed PowerPoint (instructions below)**
 - The chosen book should be one you have **never read before** in order to best prepare you for the AP Lit test in the spring.
 - Due Monday, August 11, 2025 (**test** grade)

AP Summer Reading/ Essay Assignment

Required: *Beowulf*, translated by Seamus Heaney (this ISBN number ONLY: 9780374111199)

Essay: In a well-written 2-4 page essay (double spaced/MLA style) choose one of the following topics to respond to:

Option #1: The most important themes in literature are sometimes developed in scenes when a death or deaths take place. **Using *Beowulf*, select such one such scene and discuss how the death or deaths in that scene contributes to a meaning of the work as a whole. Be specific about what that meaning **is** in your thesis. Avoid mere plot summary.**

Option #2: A symbol is an object, action, or event that represents something or that creates a range of associations beyond itself. In literary works a symbol can express an idea, clarify meaning, or enlarge literal meaning.

Focusing on one symbol you found in *Beowulf*, write an essay analyzing what the symbol is, how that symbol functions in the work, and what its significance reveals about the meaning of the work as a whole. Your thesis should specifically state what that meaning **is. Do not merely summarize the plot.**

Option #3: It has often been said that what we value can be determined only by what we sacrifice.

Consider how this statement applies to a character from *Beowulf*. Select one character who deliberately sacrifices, surrenders, or forfeits something in a way that highlights that character's values. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the particular sacrifice illuminates the character's values and provides a deeper understanding of the meaning of the work as a whole. Your thesis should specifically state what that meaning **is. Do not merely summarize the plot.**

Requirements:

- Typed, double spaced, MLA format with in-text citations and a works cited page.
- Make sure you have a clear and specific thesis as the last sentence in the introductory paragraph. Your thesis should be a one-sentence answer to the prompt.
- Provide textual support (details, quotes, or summaries) in ***every*** body paragraph (at least **two** citations per paragraph)
- Essays must have **at least** five complete paragraphs (more are allowed)

- Essays less than 2 pages in length will not be accepted
- You will turn in your first draft Friday, August 8, 2025, to Turnitin.com. You will have a chance to get feedback from your teacher and revise this essay before the final grade (which will be an **essay/test** grade).

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR POWERPOINT ASSIGNMENT

AP Summer Reading PowerPoint Assignment

Parents: On this page, you will find a list of engaging and well-written stories that represent a variety of genres and time periods. While we endeavor to choose books that are representative of appropriate content, age level, and maturity, we recommend each family research the suggested selections on the Recommended Reading List. You may find sites such as www.squeakycleanreviews.com or www.thrivingfamily.com helpful as you discern the best publication for your student.

Your book MUST be the unabridged version.

Ancient/Medieval:

The Iliad by Homer (Fagles translation)
The Aeneid by Virgil (Fagles translation)
Oedipus Rex by Sophocles (Fagles translation)
Antigone by Sophocles (Fagles translation)
Agamemnon by Aeschylus (Fagles translation)
The Libation Bearers by Aeschylus (Fagles translation)
Eumenides by Aeschylus (Fagles translation)
The Inferno by Dante (Pinsky or Sayers translation)

Renaissance/Enlightenment:

Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes (Penguin Classic Edition)
Othello by William Shakespeare
Macbeth by William Shakespeare
King Lear by William Shakespeare
Henry IV, Part 1 by William Shakespeare
Henry IV, Part 2 by William Shakespeare
Henry V by William Shakespeare
Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare
As You Like It by William Shakespeare
Dr. Faustus by Christopher Marlowe
St. George and the Dragon by Sarah Kous (Modern Version of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*)
Paradise Lost by John Milton
Gulliver's Travels by Johnathan Swift

Romantic/Victorian:

Ivanhoe Sir Walter Scott
Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen
Persuasion by Jane Austen
Northanger Abbey by Jane Austen
Emma by Jane Austen
Mansfield Park by Jane Austen
Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte
Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte
Great Expectations by Charles Dickens
A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens
Idylls of the King by Alfred, Lord Tennyson
The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde
The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson
The Man Who Was Thursday by G.K. Chesterton
Dracula by Bram Stoker
War of the Worlds by H.G. Wells

Silas Marner by George Eliot
Middlemarch by George Eliot

More Options on the Next Page →

20th Century:

Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw
Heart of Darkness by Joseph Campbell
The Dubliners by James Joyce
The Wasteland by T.S. Eliot
Murder in the Cathedral by T.S. Eliot
The Once and Future King by T.H. White
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
1984 by George Orwell
Rebecca by Daphne Du Maurier
The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis
And Then There Were None by Agatha Christie
To the Lighthouse by Virginia Woolf
Howard's End by E.M. Forster
Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe
Lord of the Flies by William Golding

This assignment will be due on Monday, August 11th, 2025, electronically. This will count as a **test** grade.

In his process, there is to be NO collaboration with other students. Any assistance from the Internet, AI, movies, or secondary sources such as Sparknotes, Cliff Notes, ChatGPT or Wikipedia will be viewed as cheating. If you have questions about format, email me at esadler@princeave.org.

Create a Microsoft PowerPoint for this assignment. Save it as “Summer Reading 2025_BOOKNAME.”

This assignment will help you and your fellow classmates have a wider knowledge base of various literary texts and forms, as well as prepare you for the AP Lit test in the spring. For this assignment, you will create a slide deck on Microsoft PowerPoint that consists of **9-10 slides**. Your slides will include:

- An **intro** slide that contains...
 - An MLA header (your name, my name, AP Lit, and 11 August 2025)
 - Your book name
 - The author's name
 - A picture of either the cover or the author
- A **plot summary** slide...
 - A **short** summary of the book (no more than 10 sentences)
 - This summary should include the ending! (spoilers are expected!)
- A **“favorite quote”** slide...
 - This slide should contain a quote (with the page number cited in MLA format) of a quote in the text that stood out to you. This quote can be longer than a single sentence, if needed.

- This slide should also contain an explanation of *why* that quote was important to you or important to the text as a whole
- **A protagonist slide...**
 - This slide should contain a picture of what you think the protagonist looks like
 - This slide should also contain a quote from the protagonist that you think best sums up his/her primary motivation
 - This slide should also contain a **short** explanation (3-5 sentences) of what the protagonist's goal is and why they wish to achieve that goal. Do they achieve it?
- **An literary device slide...**
 - This slide should contain ONE literary technique/device you noticed in the text
 - This slide should also contain an example of the device as its used in the text (if it's a longer one, like dramatic irony, you may summarize the section, but still cite it!)
 - This slide should also contain a citation of where in the text you found this device/technique used.
 - Possibilities include (but are not limited to!): Alliteration, Onomatopoeia, Tone (specify what *kind* of tone), Allusion, Oxymoron, Paradox, Symbol, Foreshadowing, Personification, Plot (exposition, climax, resolution), Hyperbole, Point of view (1st, 3rd, limited, omniscient), Characterization (static, dynamic, flat, round) (direct, indirect), Imagery, Repetition, Irony (dramatic, verbal, situational), Metaphor, Satire, Simile, Dialect, Meter, Setting, Diction (specify what *kind*), Mood (specify what it is), Juxtaposition, etc.
- **2-3 Theme slides...**
 - One slide should be a **short** explanation (3-5 sentences) of **one** of the themes you picked up on in the text
 - Remember that a theme is the “main idea” of the text; it is **NOT** a moral or lesson the reader should learn
 - The remaining slide should contain **two** examples from the text that help support the theme along with a citation for each example you give (whether it's quoted or paraphrased, it should still be cited!)
 - If your examples are too long, and you cannot fit both of the examples on one slide, split them into two slides.
- **A conclusion slide...**
 - Include a picture for visual interest
 - Tell who the “ideal audience” for this book is—who should read it? Who would most enjoy or get the most out of it?
 - HINT: Be more specific than “everyone.” Is this book for people interested in French Revolutionary history? People who enjoy cozy mystery stories by the fireplace? *etc.*
 - What was the most interesting thing you learned from this book?
 - NOTE: What you “learned” does not have to be a moral! It can be a new writing style you picked up on, a historical fact or idea, or just a general point of interest.
- **A Works Cited slide**
 - Cite the book you read in MLA format
 - Cite the web page(s) for any pictures that you used in MLA format.

Important Notes about PowerPoints:

- Don't put too much info on a single slide. Avoid full sentences and stick to bullet points, where possible.

- Make sure the font is at least 14 point. Also make sure the color of the font and the color of the background contrast—blue font on a blue background won't show up!
- Keep it visually interesting! Plain white backgrounds with black text doesn't keep people's interest. While we won't be presenting these in any formal context, other people will be viewing them, so you want to make sure it's visually appealing!
- To cite pictures in MLA format, see here: [MLA Works Cited: Other Common Sources - Purdue OWL® - Purdue University](#)

Grading:

A = Meaningful passages, plot and theme summary, protagonist/antagonist explanations, and quotation selections. Thoughtful interpretation and commentary about the text; avoids clichés. Includes comments about literary devices such as theme, narrative voice, point of view, imagery, conflict, symbols, etc., and how each contributes to the meaning of the text. Makes insightful personal connections and provokes thoughtful questions. Coverage of text is complete and thorough. Powerpoint is neat and visually appealing.

B = Less detailed, but significant, meaningful plot and quote selections. Some intelligent commentary; addresses some thematic connections. Includes some ideas of the theme, but less on how the examples contribute to the meaning. Some personal connections; asks pertinent questions. Adequately addresses all parts of reading assignment. Powerpoint is neat, complete, and readable.

C = Few significant details from the text. Most of the commentary is vague, unsupported, or plot summary/paraphrase. Some listing of theme and examples; virtually no discussion of meaning. Limited personal connections; asks obvious questions or makes obvious observations. Addresses most of the reading assignment, but is not very long or thorough. PowerPoint is relatively neat, but may be overly simple or difficult to read. Student did not follow all directions for organization; information is missing from some slides.

F = Did not complete or plagiarized. Fewer than 9 slides in deck. No Works Cited slide or citations within slides.