

Dover High School Summer Reading for AP Literature and Composition

Welcome to AP! Incoming AP English Literature and Composition students are required to read several texts in preparation for the class and the AP exam. One portion of the AP exam, the Free Response essay, demands that students have familiarity with a wide body of literary works from which they can draw when writing the essay. The goal of the course's reading, however, is not only to prepare you for the exam but to provide you with the opportunity to interact and reflect on texts that will engage and challenge your thinking. You will read two novels and three short stories.

1. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe
2. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey
3. Your choice of **any three short stories** written by Stephen King which you haven't previously read. While King isn't mentioned on the AP Exam, we will use his work as a basis for comparison to works of "literary merit." See his collection *Nightshift* as a starting point.

I. You are required to come to the first day of school with a 2-3 page essay using ONE of the first two books to address ONE of the following topics. These are questions from previous AP exams and will give you the first tip of what you should expect.

1970. Choose a character from a novel or play of recognized literary merit and write an essay in which you (a) briefly describe the standards of the fictional society in which the character exists and (b) show how the character is affected by and responds to those standards. In your essay do not merely summarize the plot.

1987. Some novels and plays seem to advocate changes in social or political attitudes or in traditions. Choose such a novel or play and note briefly the particular attitudes or traditions that the author apparently wishes to modify. Then analyze the techniques the author uses to influence the reader's or audience's views. Avoid plot summary.

2004. Critic Roland Barthes has said, "Literature is the question minus the answer." Choose a novel, or play, and, considering Barthes' observation, write an essay in which you analyze a central question the work raises and the extent to which it offers answers. Explain how the author's treatment of this question affects your understanding of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

II. Take notes on both novels: In order to get the most out of your reading (and make your fall assignments much easier), make sure you're an active reader of these books. As you read, take notes over **character/character development, conflict, theme, rhetorical devices/word choice, setting, and form/structure.** (You'll have two sets of notes—one for each work.) I would recommend setting up a couple of pages for each category in a notebook or journal.

Pose questions and do your best to answer them. Remember to jot down page numbers so it is easy to find the passages you want.

These notes should be ample proof that you have carefully read the work. Do not just summarize the plot!

III. Write a response to the King stories: Write a one-two page response as soon as possible after you finish the three short stories you choose. This is just an informal, first person reaction. Did you like them? Why or why not? What did you find to be interesting in them as a whole? There are really no rules for a response; it's just a chance for you to collect your thoughts on his writing and vent your excitement, frustration, or questions.

Your notes and responses will be due the first day of class—make sure to bring them with you! These will be graded as a Test grade and late work will not be accepted for these assignments.