

**Summer Reading for  
AP English Literature and Composition Students  
(Grade 12)**

Students planning to take AP English Literature and Composition (AP/GT 12) must use their summer to prepare for this demanding course. As the course title indicates, this course will focus on reading literature and composing analyses. Therefore, students will have some required reading and an assignment to complete before school opens in the fall.

***Required Readings:***

*Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë (<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/768>)

*Othello* by William Shakespeare (<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1531/1531-h/1531-h.htm>)

***Assignment:*** Some common themes in literature include revenge, man versus man, and man versus society. After reading the two works of high literary merit listed above, compose a 4-6 page (double-spaced, of course; one-inch margins; proper MLA format) paper in which you present a ***convincing argument*** that **one** of those three themes is ***prominent*** in **BOTH** of the works. Students are expected to construct a clear, concise thesis statement; make assertive points about each work, including thorough, documented support from the works; and prepare an accurate bibliography. Parenthetical citations and bibliography entries should conform to proper MLA format. Students may (but are not required to) consult sources of literary criticism, but any material (including the required readings) used must be cited. Students should be prepared to turn in this assignment the first week of school (due: **first Friday of the school year—Sept. 1—by 2:20 pm**; this is a firm deadline). Hard copies of the paper are expected; if students need printing assistance, they should follow the instructions I provide the first week of school. I will address any and all questions or concerns on the first day of class. However, ***students with questions or concerns over the summer may email me at [klewis2@bcps.org](mailto:klewis2@bcps.org); I will check my email weekly over the summer and get back to students as soon as possible.***

***For clarification purposes (learn from the mistakes of previous generations!):***

- Focus on **only one** theme...and yes, you must choose from the three provided.
- There is no wrong answer. A credible argument could be made for any of the themes. What I am looking for (and grading you on) is how well you ***make your argument***. Convince me. Be assertive. Support your points. Make your case.
- Refer to the Spec Sheet. Notice the breakdown of points. Clearly the argument must be strong as it is worth more than half the points. Your analysis of the works is what you will use to support your contention. Your job is to use that analysis to answer the task (i.e., that \_\_\_\_\_ theme is prominent in both works; this means you should be telling me ***how*** it is prominent as well). Do NOT fall into the trap of plot summary. Assume your reader is familiar with the works; there is no need to summarize them. Keep focused on your analysis and bring in only the textual evidence that supports your argument.
- Make sure you think about what ***prominent*** means. If a theme is prominent, what does that mean to the work and how can that help your argument? ***This is a vital piece!*** (Don't forget the ***why/how*** aspect after you assert your theme is prominent. This should be clear in both your thesis and your argument!)
- I strongly urge you to review the Analytical Writing Musts (see list) before you begin composing. Those "musts" are **NOT optional**, and I expect you to adhere to them in all of your writing.
- Once again, do not be shy. If you have questions, email me (do not forget the "2" in my email!).

# AP Summer Reading Assignment Spec Sheet

<i><b>Criteria</b></i>	<i><b>Points Worth</b></i>	<i><b>Points Earned</b></i>
Student submitted a 4-6-page paper in <b>correct MLA format</b> with spec sheet stapled behind it.	5	
Student included a bibliography in <b>correct MLA format</b> . <i>(Note: there is a difference between a bibliography and a Works Cited page!)</i>	10	
Student offers a clear, concise, effective thesis statement that sets up student's argument and fully answers the task given.	7	
Student organizes an argument in a manner that makes his/her <b>analysis convincing</b> . Student's analysis is <b>clear and coherent</b> . <i>Student must make strong, clear points about <b>each</b> work, explicitly <b>linking</b> analysis to the thesis. Build your case!</i>	55	
Student correctly uses parenthetical citation to cite quoted and/or borrowed material.	10	
Student's paper is free of spelling and grammatical errors.	8	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>95</b>

## Analytical Writing Musts

- 1) Tone. All assignments for this course are academic assignments, and as such, you must use an appropriate tone. Do not be conversational! Keep your editorial comments to yourself.
- 2) Avoid clichés and colloquialisms. That ties in with tone. Do not be conversational!
- 3) Avoid contractions. They are inappropriate for academic papers.
- 4) Avoid pronouns. Do not use “you”, “your”, “we”, “our”, etc. It weakens your argument. You may always use “the reader”.
- 5) Avoid pronoun confusion. Be wary of confusing usage of multiple “he”s in a sentence.
- 6) Word choice. You are high school seniors. “Bad,” “good,” “thing,” etc. are not acceptable. You can do better, so do better!
- 7) Tense is very important. Be consistent. Stories should be described in the present tense.
- 8) Never refer to an author by his first name. You don’t know him personally, and you are not friends. Also, do not use Mr. and Mrs. either! Simply use the last name.
- 9) Organization. Unless SPECIFICALLY told that structure does not matter, always observe organizational rules. This means that you must formulate a strong, clear thesis and include an introductory paragraph, body paragraphs with strong analytical points and textual evidence as support, and a conclusion paragraph. This is not optional.
- 10) Treat every response like an argument. All academic papers are arguments, for your task is always to prove something. Therefore, build your case with strong analytical points and convincingly support these points with reliable textual evidence.
- 11) Avoid “I”. Do not use “I think,” “I feel,” “I believe,” or anything of that ilk. Duh. You wrote this. Of course, you think it, feel it, believe it. It is unnecessary and only serves to weaken the argument.
- 12) Thoroughly respond to all tasks of the prompt/question. If a question asks you to describe why you would choose a particular character as a friend, you cannot merely describe that character. You must CLEARLY provide justification for why that character’s traits and/or actions appeal to you. Or, if the task is to argue that a particular theme is prominent in a work, merely asserting that it exists in the work is not answering the task.
- 13) Effectively build your case. Always lead with analysis. Open body paragraphs with strong analytical points that also link to your task (set up the point you will prove). Then thoroughly discuss, analyze, and support with textual evidence that point. Finally, end body paragraphs with a strong summative statement that again connects clearly to your task. Basically, show your reader that you are building your case.
- 14) Connect your analysis to your task. Always make clear connections (or links) to your thesis statement so that your reader is certain that you are indeed making your case. Your reader should not have to work hard to make the connections; make them for him!
- 15) Do not rely on quotes to make your argument for you. Quotes from the text should not comprise the bulk of your argument. They are merely support. Consider them to be like spices. Use them sparingly but effectively, as they pack a punch.
- 16) Do not rely on plot summary. Assume you have an educated reader. Do not waste time summarizing whole stories. Keep it analytical and focused on what proves your case. Focus on your points and then bring in the appropriate textual evidence.
- 17) Set up your quotes well. You must introduce a quote; you cannot simply stick it in the midst of your analysis without introducing and assume your reader will make the leap you want him to.  
*Example: Throughout the series of awakenings experienced by Edna Pontellier, both the audience and the characters in the story are given strong hints of what is to come. A perfect example is something Edna says to Madame Ratignolle that clearly takes issue with Victorian societal ideals for women: “I would give my life for my children, but not myself” (Chopin 98).*  
Also, be sure that you do not end a paragraph with a quote. You must explain it and how it helps your case.
- 18) Cite your quotes correctly. Follow MLA format (no commas!) and always include a bibliography if you cite anything.
- 19) Proofread. Typographical errors are inexcusable. Be wary of typing the wrong words as well. It makes you, the writer, look careless, and your argument weaker. In addition, a lack of proofreading equates to a lack of respect for your reader, and you NEVER want to convey that!