

Honors American Literature
Reading List
2026-2027

Required Summer Readings:

Hawthorne, Nathaniel	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i> (essay due on the first day of school with topic given below)*
Glaspell, Susan	<i>Trifles</i> (test on first day of school)

Essay Topic for Required Summer Reading:

**The Scarlet Letter* shows how people change in different ways under difficult circumstances.

Write an essay in which you compare the changes experienced during the course of the novel by two of the main characters-Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale. (see info on essay writing at end of this handout)

Suggested Readings for the Remainder of the School Year:

Cooper, James Fenimore	<i>Last of the Mohicans</i> <i>The Deerslayer</i>
Nathaniel Hawthorne	<i>The House of the Seven Gables</i>
James, Henry	<i>Portrait of a Lady</i> <i>Washington Square</i>
Faulkner, William	<i>Light in August</i> <i>The Sound and the Fury</i>
Hemingway, Ernest	<i>For Whom the Bells Tolls</i> <i>A Farewell to Arms</i>
Lewis, Sinclair	<i>Babbitt</i> <i>Main Street</i>
Cather, Willa	<i>My Antonia</i>
Steinbeck, John	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>

McCullers, Carson	<i>A Member of the Wedding</i> <i>The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter</i>
Wharton, Edith	<i>Ethan Frome</i>
Melville, Herman	<i>Moby Dick</i> <i>Billy Budd</i>
London, Jack	<i>The Sea-Wolf</i>
Richter, Conrad	<i>The Trees</i> <i>The Fields</i> <i>The Town</i>
Herbert, Frank	<i>Dune</i>
Warren, Robert Penn	<i>All the King's Men</i>
Kantor, McKinley	<i>Andersonville</i>
Agee, James	<i>A Death in the Family</i>
Fitzgerald, F. Scott	<i>Tender is the Night</i> <i>The Last Tycoon</i>
Tan, Amy	<i>The Joy Luck Club</i>
Hersey, John	<i>A Bell for Adano</i>
Michener, James	<i>Hawaii</i>
Bradbury, Ray	<i>Fahrenheit 451</i>
Howells, William Dean	<i>The Rise of Silas Lapham</i>
Norris, Frank	<i>The Octopus</i>
Sinclair, Upton	<i>The Jungle</i>
Steinbeck, John	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>

The essay due on the first day of school, and any succeeding novel reports/papers/essays during the year, are to be typed in in Times New Roman 12 pt. Font. After the summer reading essay is graded and returned, all successive writing assignments will be placed in the same folder and will be turned in at the end of the school year. If you would like to keep a personal copy, please be sure to save to a flash drive.

Remember that the two required summer reading assignments are for the first day of school. There are no acceptable excuses for late work, for you have over two months to complete the assignments. If you are not ready to take the test or do not have the essay on the first day of classes, be prepared to be placed in the Survey of American literature class.

Essay Requirements:

Your essay is to be at least five paragraphs (including an introduction and conclusion). Each paragraph must have at least five sentences each. It should be two-three pages in length.

Guidelines for Writing the Essay:

The following is a sample for structuring your essay: (adapted from *Thinking and Writing About Literature* by Edgar V. Roberts).

Theme: Arsat inspires understanding and compassion in the reader.

Paragraph 1: Introduction containing the central idea and the thesis sentence.

Central idea: Arsat inspires a sense of understanding and compassion in the reader.

Thesis Sentence: The sense of understanding and compassion inspired by Arsat results from his love for Diamelen, from his grief for the loss of his brother, and from Joseph Conrad's artful presentation of Arsat's feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Body: Containing three topic sentences.

Paragraph 2: Topic Sentence: Arsat's love for Diamelen establishes him as both Passionate and conflicted.

Paragraph 3: Topic Sentence: His grief underscores the guilt that he feels because

of his role in the loss of his brother.

Paragraph 4: Topic Sentence: Joseph Conrad's artful presentation of Arsat's feelings of loneliness and isolation inspires the reader's compassion.

Paragraph 5: Conclusion
Topic Sentence: Understanding and compassion for Arsat are powerful statements made by the story.

Writing Tips:

Introduction- The introduction begins with general ideas and ends with specific points. Be sure to state what works, authors, characters, and ideas are under consideration. The first part of the introduction should present ideas that are related to the subject. The second part of the introduction states the thesis, which will draw the reader into the main text of the essay. Your thesis sentence should anticipate the body of the essay.

Body- In each paragraph of the body of your essay, present one of the main points in your thesis sentence, expanding and supporting with examples from the work or research.

Conclusion- The conclusion ties together the points of the essay or thesis. The closing lines may make a connection between the idea presented in the essay and life in general.

Novel Report Format (for use during the school year)

1. Authorial Background (include reasons for writing the book) ***research required for this section, meaning you need a citation***
2. Literary Period **THIS IS NOT THE SAME THINGS AS THE TIME PERIOD!!** (This will be the Romantic Period, the Modern Period, etc.) Refer to other writers of the same period; how does the author relate? Is the author typical or atypical of the period? ***research required for this section, meaning a citation***
3. Setting (Is the setting significant? How? Is it merely a backdrop for the action? Why?)
4. Character (Describe and analyze using literary terms: direct/indirect characterization, external/internal conflict, static, round, stereotypical, dynamic, etc.)
5. Theme (use examples from the novel to demonstrate how the theme is evident through the plot and characters)
6. Unique Literary Devices Used (symbolism, allusions, flashback, epiphany, motif, etc.) ***research required for this section, meaning a citation***

Novel reports are to be written in paragraph form. Research is required for the above sections of 1,2, and 6. MLA format and research necessitate the inclusion of in-text citations and a works cited page. MLA style is required. All novel reports are to be turned in inside of a folder (the same one you turned in on the first day of school) with the most recent paper on top of all returned papers.

Please give yourself a July or first week of August deadline and stick to it. You will not feel as pressured, and you will more than likely do a better job on the assignment.

Please note for all essays, research papers, novel reports, etc. , the standard rules of grammar apply. All grammar mistakes are one point off each. For each day a paper is turned in late, a deduction of eight points will be taken off the final grade. After one week goes by, I will not accept late papers.

Cliff's Notes, Sparknotes, etc. on any literary work will not be acceptable as reference material. I do allow the use of Litcharts.com. If you are unsure of a source, please ask me. I suggest you use *Novels for Students*.