

AP Prep English 11 Summer Reading

Please read the following novels in preparation for class discussions, tests, and essays during the first weeks of school in September. Since it is likely that a significant amount of time will pass between the reading and the evaluations, you are strongly encouraged to take notes on the novels.

For each novel and play that you read during this course, you will be required to complete a summary in the format attached to these directions. The best way to approach this is to create a template in MS Word (or similar program) and fill it in as you read each literary work. (The purpose for this will be explained later.) **It is very important to note that these *Literature Review Sheets* are to be filled out in your own words!** These will be due on the day of the test for each novel.

You will notice that the selections have many common themes, not the least of which is how Americans have dealt with the concept of being an outsider during the 20th century. As you read, try to draw comparisons among the ways each author presents this issue and others. Be aware also that the Educational Testing Service, which administers the AP test, determines much of the reading for this course. It is geared toward the *mature student* who *voluntarily* elects the most accelerated English course for which you are eligible to earn dual credit through the county college.

Summer selections (can be read in any order):

1. Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: Having won all the highest literary prizes, Toni Morrison's popularity and critical acclaim continue to grow annually. Having Oprah Winfrey as a big fan doesn't hurt either! Just a few years ago, Oprah's production company brought Morrison's novel to the screen (though not in a remarkable or celebrated manner). Supernatural elements add intrigue to this novel about having a connection to the past.

2. Richard Wright's *Native Son*: Although this novel appears *huge*, it is a deceptively fast read. Once you get caught up in Bigger's predicament, you will not be able to put the book down until it is resolved (if it ever is)!

3. Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*: Innovatively presented in the form of a mah jong game, the sixteen sections of this novel are sometimes viewed as thematically related short stories. The most fundamental connection among the stories is the shifting narration of mothers and daughters. Some former students were so impressed with this popular novel that they encouraged their moms to read it too!

Want to get a head start?

John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*: This will be the first novel I distribute to you in September, but if you'd like to borrow one from the library (or perhaps your parents have a copy sitting around the house), you can get a head start on the reading for the first marking period. One of the great American novels, Steinbeck's classic about poverty, determination, and the American Dream is a must read for any serious student of literature. We will actually be pacing ourselves through this novel in the first month of school scrutinizing and explicating all the details Steinbeck carefully includes. Be aware that there are two different kinds of chapters, some which detail the plight of the Joad family and others that more generally expose the unfortunate historical circumstances that families in the southwest encountered during the Depression.

Name _____

Literature Review Sheet

Title: _____

Author: _____

Publication Year: _____

A. Symbols:

B. Themes:

C. Personal critical response:

D. General Information and Observations:

(Optional/Recommended)