AP Lit Summer Assignment 2026

Your summer reading assignment has two components: an assigned novel and a choice novel.

1. Your assigned novel is *Big Fish* by Daniel Wallace. Buy your own copy and annotate it as you read, making notes in the margins. Pay particular attention to the following: characters, conflict of the plot, point of view, symbols, theme topics of legacy and reconciliation, and the motifs of travel, water, and humor. Bring your copy of the text to class on the first day of school and be prepared for an assessment of the work sometime in the first full week of school.

2. Choose a novel from the list below. Buy your own copy and annotate it as you read, making notes in the margins. Pay particular attention to the work's structure, style, and themes, as well as its use of figurative language, imagery, and symbolism.

A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles
Alias Grace by Margaret Atwood
All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr
Atonement by Ian McEwan
Beartown by Fredrik Backman
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
Great Expectations by Charles Dickens
Little Fires Everywhere by Celeste Ng
Little Women by Louisa May Alcott
Lost Horizon by James Hilton
No Country for Old Men by Cormac McCarthy
Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen
Rebecca by Daphne duMaurier
Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt
Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel
To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath
The Color Purple by Alice Walker
The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt
The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck
The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood
The Haunting of Hill House by Shirley Jackson
The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan
The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini
The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver
The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne
The Secret History by Donna Tartt
The Sound and the Fury by William Faulkner
Water for Elephants by Sara Gruen
Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens
Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë

Please note that because they deal with intense subject matter, many of the books may contain abuse, graphic content, harsh language, and disturbing imagery. Please choose a book that fits with your family's values.

Summer Reading Presentation Instructions: Complete the following assignment. Be prepared to present your work when school begins. After reading your novel, prepare a presentation (PowerPoint, Google Slides, etc.) according to the directions below. All quotations must include page numbers.

• Slide 1: Book Title, Author, and Your Name

• Slide 2: Relevant Biographical and Historical Information. Include the most compelling details. Birth and death dates should appear, but focus on what is most significant about the author's life that influenced him to write this work. Explain what bearing these facts might have on the novel. TIP: Don't necessarily record the first facts you find.

• Slide 3: Characters. Choose four characters to describe. Include words or phrases used by the author (at least two quotes with citations) to describe the characters. You should have two quotes for EACH character for a total of eight.

• Slide 4: Setting. Mention only the major setting (time and place). Quote the author's words to describe the setting (at least 2 quotes with citations). In describing settings, the author will sometimes give the reader a clear indication of his central ideas and the conflicts he is presenting. Your quotations need not be full sentences. Reflect on how the description of the setting does more than merely present time and place.

• Slide 5: Memorable Quotes. Choose at least three substantial quotes that could prompt interesting commentary on the work's meaning. These should be the passages you see as some of the most significant in the book. Put the quotations with citations on your slide. Do not include any commentary on the slide, but be prepared to verbally explain their significance during your presentation.

• Slide 6: Significance of Opening and Closing Scenes & the Relationship Between the Two. Think about these key parts of the work whose full meaning is not apparent until the reader is finished and has reflected on the entire work. It is insufficient to describe how the opening introduces us to the setting, characters, etc., or how the ending brings the work to a conclusion. Instead, look at the details and discuss why the writer chose those particular details for this work. These scenes provide the backbone of an author's structure and almost always bear a relationship to one another.