English 12 Summer Assignment 2026

Your summer reading assignment is to read a novel from the list below and create a presentation.

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

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.