

AP ENGLISH IV SUMMER READING LISTS

Welcome to AP English IV. I am very excited to work with you next year and am ready to move through a discovery process together.

This summer, I am going to ask you to read two texts - one of my choosing and the other of yours. You will be asked to write an essay early in the year on both of these texts, so I would ask you to annotate the text to the best of your ability, seeking to discover patterns (in character action, conflict, symbolism, plot events, themes, etc . . .). We will be working on annotation strategies very much throughout the school year, but at the very least, you should follow the instructions below for the Kafka reading and then do something similar with the reading of your choice.

1. Every person must read Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis. Please read the instructions on page two to understand how best to read and pay attention to Kafka.
2. Using the list on pages three through eleven, select an author who you will study this year. Let me explain some very important details: You will be writing one research paper next year in the spring. That research paper will examine three texts by one author or three texts that discuss a thematic idea. Over the summer, you will need to select an author or topic below and read one of the three texts listed. Then, when we return to school in the fall, you will be asked to write an essay on that text. Later in the fall, you will read a second text from that list of three and you will write a comparison and/or contrast essay discussing the two texts you have selected. Then, as I stated above, in the spring term, you will read the third text and write a research paper discussing all three texts.

For example, one collection of texts I could choose would be three plays by Shakespeare: *King Lear*, *Richard III*, and *Macbeth*. In the summer I would read *Macbeth* (taking care to annotate the play to the best of my ability). Then, in the fall, I would read *Richard the III*. Finally, in the spring I would read *King Lear*.

A few very important notes before we get to all the possibilities:

- You must read texts that you HAVE NEVER STUDIED BEFORE IN OR FOR A CLASS.
- The order in which you read the texts only matters if they are set up as a trilogy or sequels.
- You WILL NOT be able to change authors once school starts, so consider and choose WISELY. My best advice here would be to read the first chapter or two of a text before you decide definitively that you will continue to read that selection or not.

Please take your time and consider your choice carefully. WHEN YOU HAVE MADE A DECISION, PLEASE EMAIL ME YOUR CHOICE AT pdreisbach@lshigh.org. I will be expecting to hear from you by August 1.

Please feel free to come by and see me in the next few days to clear up any confusion or questions you may have. Also, feel free to email me at pdreisbach@lshigh.org over the summer with questions and ideas. It may take me a few days to respond, but I will get back to you.

Sincerely,

Paul Dreisbach

Summer Reading Assignment - Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*

PURPOSE

This year in AP English 4, we will be focusing on the development of philosophy on our purpose here on earth. To get started looking at this issue, I would like to begin the year by reading about and examining the relationships in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*.

BACKGROUND AND KEY QUESTIONS

Franz Kafka's weird novel - and believe me, it is a weird one - is about a man who wakes one morning having transformed into a gigantic beetle-like bug. While this is certainly significant, the author chooses to focus his attention instead on how the man and his family respond to this change. Consequently, the novel focuses much of its attention on human relationships and our purpose.

After having read the novel, you should be able to answer the following questions:

1. What was Gregor's life like before the transformation?
2. How does Gregor respond to his change and his new life over the course of the novel?
3. How does the family respond to his change initially?
4. How does the family's response to Gregor and his transformation change over time?
5. What examples, besides Gregor's, are there of change in the novel?
6. If we were able to ask Kafka himself, how would he answer the following question: What is the power or importance of relationships?

ASSIGNMENT

When we return to school, you will be asked to write an essay that discusses the key questions above. In an effort to make sure you understand the novel and can find useful evidence to support your ideas, please read the novel and take notes in one of the ways below.

Option #1: In-novel Annotations

As you read take notes in the margins of your book:

- at the top or bottom of every two pages, briefly note the actions and events which have happened on that page;
- note details that help answer the questions above in the side margins of your novel (you should have something noted nearly every page).

Option #2: Journal Notes

As you read take notes on separate pages;

- on one set of separate pages, keep a running list of actions and events which occur - including the page numbers on which they happen (this list should be at least 20 items in length);
- using two column notes, take notes as you read about details which help answer the questions above; in the left-hand column, note an event or action or quotation (with the page number), and in the right-hand column, write a sentence or two about how that event, action or quotation addresses one of the key questions above (you should have something noted for every page of the novel).

FINAL NOTE

These notes - whether in your novel or on separate sheets of paper - will be collected and evaluated by me at the beginning of the school year. Please feel free to contact me at pdreisbach@lshigh.org over the summer if you are struggling with this assignment or the reading in general.

Happy Reading!

Below you will find sets of three books. For the second summer reading selection, choose one set from this list then read one book from that set. Along with a list of the three books for each set, there are some comments, written by me, about the author or the themes to help provide some background for you and, in some cases, there are comments written by a current senior who read that set this year. Pay close attention to their remarks as they have done what you face this next year.

JUST A FEW REMINDERS:

- If you have studied any of the three texts in a class before, please choose another set.
- Be aware that you will NOT be able to change your selection once the school year starts, so choose wisely.
- Email me at pdreisbach@lshigh.org once you have made your choice to tell me which set you will be studying this year.
- Read one of the three texts this summer and annotate carefully. You will be writing an essay about this text early in the school year.
- Feel free to email me with any questions or concerns.

1. William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*
Three Shakespearean comedies about relationships. 'Nuff said.

2. William Shakespeare's *King Lear*, *Richard III*, and *Macbeth*
Three Shakespearean tragedies about the weight of the throne. 'Nuff said.

If you have never read Shakespeare's plays before, you will likely find these three plays quite challenging, because Shakespeare heavily utilizes vivid imageries, sonnets, and tone to bring about his message in a play with a very predictable plot. Furthermore, don't overcomplicate yourself with Shakespearean plays (I tried to see the message of Shakespearean tragedy in a different light and it did not work well), for their message is often simple. There is a very fine line between what Shakespeare supports, and what he does not; however, you should pay more attention to how Shakespeare utilizes his command of language to convey his simple message. If you are choosing the three tragedies, you will likely end up reading them more than once. Despite the small volume, the three tragedies contain vast information that you need to be attentive to in order to write an effective essay. Anyway, I hope you do choose the three tragedies because they may be some of the most complex work you will ever get in touch with in your high school career. Best of luck to you!

~ Soso Xue

3. Albert Camus's *The Plague* and *The Fall* and Jean Paul Sartre's *No Exit*

Both Camus and Sartre are often regarded as the pre-eminent Existentialist writers of their age, and as such, they are very interested in the relationship the individual has with his or her society. These three stories present interesting engagements between people in a variety of situations that ask the reader to think about morality and the individual's responsibility to him or herself and society.

4. Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five*, *Cat's Cradle*, and *Breakfast of Champions*

Vonnegut was heralded as a brilliant satirist of the human condition. His work is often full of the funny and the serious placed back to back for grand effects.

Vonnegut's books are short. The editions I read were each approximately three-hundred pages long and the font on each page was huge. Along with that, Vonnegut's books are easy reads, so if you're tired of hunting through your dictionary every three lines for the definition to an unknown word or struggling through complex sentences trying to discern what the writer is actually saying, these books might be perfect for you.

Before you decide to take on Vonnegut though, I should warn you – you will be confused. Even though his books are easy reads, his plots and ideas can be rather confusing, and if you want to successfully dissect the book, you will have to invest some additional time into annotating them. Each book varies dramatically in the subject matter Vonnegut discusses, from critiques about war to religion to consumerism, but all of these topics have the same trademark of Vonnegut – black humor. He takes every subject he addresses and joins it with some absurd storyline, from time-travelling men who speak to aliens to three awkward children in control of a doomsday weapon. These stories, soaked in black humor, are what make me love Vonnegut. In fact, I often find myself forgetting to annotate and am simply absorbed the novel, delighting in every word Vonnegut inscribed on the pages.

While at times these novels may be confusing, you should know that they are always enjoyable. Every page is a joy to read, and looking back, I am glad I made the choice I did to read these novels, and I hope that you might do the same.

~ James Church

Future students – Vonnegut is a great, entertaining, comical writer who keeps you laughing and reading. These books aren't typical novels; they're whimsical and free-flowing. The reads are definitely quick and easy, and large vocabulary is not an issue. Any person with a crammed, busy schedule can for sure have enough time for Kurt Vonnegut. The unique novels are an enjoyable vacation from some more classic, but stiffer reads. The American author only demands an audience who is open to listen to what he has to say. You won't regret this read.

~ Paul Auxier

5. Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

Hardy is a fantastic storyteller who crafts characters very well. As a writer living in Victorian England, he was very aware of the structures of society. He is interested in discussing social and economic class, education, and relationships, often doing so in very satirical ways.

6. Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, and *Pride and Prejudice*

Austen, like Hardy is a product of Victorian England. Thus, much of her work is about manners and behaviors. In these three selections, she is very interested in examining the ways in which relationships - between family members, between members of the same social class, and between men and women - develop and work.

These three novels are about young women in the Victorian era society that find love through trials and tribulations. Each book is easy to understand and the writing is sophisticated. The only things that were occasional road blocks were the references that Austen would make to that time period, but it was fairly easy to figure out based on context. One thing that I highly recommend is starting these books as soon as you can once they are assigned. They are all long, so it takes more than a weekend to read. If you think that you can read through it in two or even three nights, you are wrong. You have to annotate for information that you will use in your paper, so it is important that you pay close attention to what is going on. Make a schedule for how many pages or chapters to read a night and stick to it. I also suggest reading *Emma* first, then *Sense and Sensibility*, and then *Pride and Prejudice*. The last two are the easiest to compare, so if you read them close together then they will be fresh in your mind for the research paper. They are all comparable in many ways, but the last two are the best to compare for many different reasons. Also, my least favorite was *Sense and Sensibility*, so you don't want to start or end the works of Austen with that. And *Pride and Prejudice*

is the best, so you'll end with a bang! In general, these novels are amazing, and they are great not only to write about, but just to enjoy reading.

~ Kimber Haner

For future students who are considering the Jane Austen series, I would like to say that while I personally enjoyed the books, that they are definitely not for everyone. The books are fairly long, and they require focus because they are written in such a different syntax than we speak today. Also, I would like to warn students considering this series that they take a little bit longer to finish than some of the other series to read. While reading these books, I recommend doing self check-ins to make sure you understand what is going on, for it is easy to lose track of what is happening with the vocabulary they use. Also, even though it may be a pain at the time, it would be really helpful to keep a separate place for important quotations because when writing the essays it saves you a lot of time from having to go through the book to find them. This series would probably be better for a girl than a guy because of the point of view of the characters. I highly recommend this book series for anyone who loves books focused on relationships.

~ Kat Ressler

7. Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, and Jane Austen's *Emma*

Like Austen, the Bronte sisters wrote a great deal about relationships and how they should and how they should not develop. Additionally, there is much discussion in these novels about the development of character and the impact a person's habitat has on the development of their morality.

8. Sophocles's *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*

The quintessential Greek tragedies, these three plays, which should be read in this order, follow the story of a family that is tracked by and even doomed by Fate. The big question to answer is what fault do they bear for their own actions?

The plays in the Oedipus cycle are short, which means they can be easily read more than once, and finding quotes for an essay is simplified when you don't have to flip through hundreds of pages to find the one you want. The plays are in every aspect a Greek myth put into play form; in fact, Sophocles wrote these stories based on local Athenian myths. All that applied to the Greek myths and heroes you studied Freshman and Sophomore year apply here as well. In terms of plot, the stories go in this order: *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, then *Antigone*. However, Sophocles wrote them in this order: *Antigone*, *Oedipus the King*, then *Oedipus at Colonus*. Reading the plays in the order of the plot would allow you to see a seamless flow from one event to another, making for a flowing and logical read. However, *Oedipus at Colonus* was the last plays Sophocles wrote, and in many ways, he uses it as a conclusion piece to the Oedipus Cycle. Also, Sophocles's writing progresses as he goes along. It's hard for me to define what exactly is different about *Oedipus at Colonus* as compared to *Antigone* in terms of the writing style. It's smoother maybe. I believe it would be relatively simple to piece together the plot if you read them out of order, while Sophocles's writing style and conclusion in the middle of the series could hinder the deeper significance if they were to be read according to plot. Also, make sure to pick a translation that has notes on the translation. Scholars debate the meaning of words and even entire phrases in places that are thematically significant, so understanding these differences will help you tremendously. Be prepared for a lot of references to Greek culture that you may not be familiar with. Again, choose a translation with good notes so you can understand these references. One thing you must understand is that the Greek view of fate is very different than how we see fate: The Ancient Greeks believed that one's fate was inescapable, yet, how they reacted to that fate and the knowledge of that fate was the real important matter. Also, the Greek concept of fate was not like karma - it did not punish bad people and reward good people - it acts without any notions of justice or morality.

~ Jackson Riso

9. Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, *Song of Solomon*, and *The Bluest Eye*

Morrison is considered one of the most successful African American writers working today. These stories discuss the African American experience in a variety of ways. Heralded by critics and *The New*

***York Times Book Review* as some of the best writing being done in English in the past thirty years, these books are a must read for a lover of literature.**

Reading and writing essays on *The Song of Solomon*, *The Bluest Eye*, and *Beloved* was a great experience. All three of the novels focus on an individual's journey that involves family problems and obstacles, recognizing one's potential and relation to family, and finding oneself through the course of this investigation and exploration. The basic plot and story line is the main character comes to realize that something is missing in their lives and they must take tremendous strides to accomplish or achieve that goal. The journey is usually full of ruckus and troublesome ordeals that leave the character stronger, wiser, and smarter in the end. If one were to read these texts I suggest you be into examining and looking at the issues of family, spiritual matters, and how an individual goes about reaching their objective.

~ Kori Urben

Reading a Toni Morrison novel is like listening to a really emotional, powerful song – they evoke responses whether one wants one or not. Her writing is a brutally honest look – often with mature themes – at everything ranging from African American-white relations to the concept of ideal beauty in American society, and to express her thoughts she uses everything from poetic, lyrical writing styles to symbolism involving things as simple as hands and trees. Readers should prepare to not have every complex concept (and the concepts in her works are complex because they are meant to mimic reality as much as possible) handed to them on a silver platter, but close reading reveals her incredibly interesting insights and make the difficulty worth it. *Beloved* in particular, the story of a former slave named Sethe, is considered her masterpiece as well as the greatest literary work of the past 25 years according to a NYT poll of living authors (she also won the Nobel Prize for it). I very highly recommend this set of books and I'm glad I'm graduating having read them.

~ Josh Hallquist

10. George Orwell's *1984*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Margaret Atwood's *A Handmaid's Tale*

These three texts are all “utopian” novels that discuss futuristic societies trying to create the perfect place on earth. As can be expected, all three societies fail to create “heaven on earth,” but they fail in very different ways.

Enter a completely strange, new world in this dystopian trilogy—*Brave New World*, *1984*, and *The Handmaid's Tale*—where the totalitarian governments rule over every aspect of their citizens lives. Prepare to identify with the characters and to feel frustrated with the restraints they experience from society, and prepare for some shock at the means these institutions govern their citizens. Know that you will most likely enjoy what you read, unless you have absolutely no taste in literature, but it will be hard to draw great conclusions about the books that are not completely obvious, since the common theme in each story is the government and its effects on people. Pay close attention to the attitudes, emotions, and actions of the characters from the beginning to the end of the novel, as well as the vivid descriptions that particularly characterize *The Handmaid's Tale* and *1984*. Read the novels and prepare to immerse yourself in these new worlds, and you'll find utopia in reading the dystopian trilogy.

~ Anton Santos

If you are a lover of either science fiction, history, or both, then the dystopian novels will more than engage you. All three books present you with an interesting, if somewhat dire and depressing, negative utopia to get lost in as well as offer a lot to think about in terms of society at large. I'd recommend starting with the one that seems most interesting to you as choice one, or if none of the three particularly grab your interest more than another than chronological (*Brave New World*, *1984*, *The Handmaid's Tale*) order would be interesting, too. I decided to avoid *1984* until the end because it's so well-known, and I didn't want my first essay to feel boring or recycled, but make the choice for yourself. Because two of the three books are extremely famous, and the topic-at-large has been thoroughly discussed, there is no shortage of critical analysis or commentary,

which is another major plus; however, it is a double-edged sword, for discovering something original will be very difficult to do.

~ Michael Buker

The dystopian novels are really interesting, as they present tyrannical governments struggling to maintain complete control over their citizens, who must either conform and surrender their identities for the good of the state, or fight for any bit of freedom they can get before the government kills them. The authors are fantastic, incorporating irony and humor into their stories, which are rich in detail and overall pretty easy to read. Though they are of a fairly substantial length, between 250 and 400 pages, the plots are interesting enough to hold your attention, which makes getting through one of these books in a week very possible. With the same themes and ideas reoccurring in the different governments, all three books can be easily connected, compared, and contrasted in essays or arguments. There are almost an infinite number of topics to write on concerning these books, and I, personally, was excited about every topic I wrote about. Pick these books!

~ Teresa Pimentel

11. Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*
Hemingway is always very interested in what it takes to be heroic. These three texts all discuss relationships which develop amongst groups of people that profoundly shape their actions and attitudes. Famous for his "iceberg" technique, much of the real significance of these novels lies below the surface of the actions and statements of the characters.

The three Hemingway novels are not a hard read but an interesting one. Lengthwise, they are rather short which is added to by their seemingly simplistic writing style. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is quite a bit longer than the other two, so expect that if you choose to read them because it surprised me. The books can sometimes seem a little lacking in emotion due to the fact that Hemingway describes everything matter-of-factly, but it's there if read correctly. The books do tend towards becoming more optimistic and happy as one progresses through them in order; however, none of them are purely happy, and Hemingway's motto was that all stories will end in death. Don't expect any really happy endings, but do expect interesting characters and lots of conversations. They're all narrated by slightly cynical army men who speak in tough understatements, but I rather enjoyed the protagonists despite their assorted flaws. All in all, they're a fairly easy read of interesting characters in interesting situations who are deeply in love.

~ Alex Lodromanean

12. Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Love in the Time of Cholera* and Isabel Allende's *House of Spirits*

Both Latin American writers in the "magical realism" school, the three novels above all are about families and their interaction with a world that involves such magical things as flying carpets, ghosts, and insomnia plagues which last four years.

For my Author/Theme Study I read *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel García Márquez and *The House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende. After finishing *Solitude*, I couldn't decide if I liked the novel or not, probably because I was mildly disgusted by [some of relationships] between the characters and because of the confusing nature of the plot and characters (a LOT of the characters share the same names or some combination of them). Once I looked past these factors, though, I discovered that I very much liked the characters, who, despite their similar names, vary in personalities and have different experiences.

While *Cholera* also contains many [interesting and some inappropriate] relations between characters as well, I decided I liked the novel almost immediately after finishing it simply because of the relationship between Fermina Daza and Florentino Ariza - it's pure, true love. I didn't have a problem with names in this novel like I did with *Solitude*, thankfully, though García Márquez's writing can sometimes be confusing because he uses so many descriptions, and his recollection of events (fictitious though they may be) does not

necessarily occur in chronological order. Nevertheless, I now admire his writing, and I'd like to read more of his works.

Spirits was very similar to *Solitude* because of the elements of magical realism and war and the plot, which follows a single family through its generations. With both *Spirits* and *Solitude* I got a bit confused about and fed up with all the talk about the war between the liberals and conservatives, but it didn't detract significantly from the novel from my perspective. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed reading and analyzing all three of the works, and I would highly recommend this series to anyone who doesn't mind doing a bit of extra reading, since the novels are on the longer side.

~ Julia Sheets

13. Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and *Notes from Underground* and Solzhenitsyn's *The Cancer Ward*

Two of the best known Russian writers, Dostoevsky and Solzhenitsyn are very interested in the role of the individual in society. Additionally, morality of action is another key idea that both would like to discuss in their work.

14. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*, and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Grey*

Interested in the monstrous, all three of these books deal with "monsters" in some way. In some cases, the monster is not the obvious one at all.

than it will **Please Note: The following review is for a collection that was slightly different for 2009-2010 be for 2010-2011.**

If you are considering choosing the collection of *Frankenstein*, and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Prometheus Unbound*, then I think that one has to understand that they are nothing like what you see in the movies or on TV. If you go in expecting this, you will most likely be disappointed. Rather, they are much more "intellectual", which I feel is a positive attribute. The main theme deals with the flaws in human nature, and reveals the true monster whether it be creature or mankind. These works proved to be very interesting, and hold the reader's attention. One of the difficulties you might face would be less criticism on the novels than other series, because they are based on a theme rather than one author (which tends to be easier to research), but it is manageable. The novels do not exceed 300 pages in length, and the easiest novel to read (*Frankenstein*) is the longest, so length isn't an issue, providing some pretty easy reading (aside from *Prometheus Unbound*). If you don't have a favorite author, don't already have a series selected or an idea, or just want a grouping that others will not choose, then this is an excellent choice.

~ Taylor Wagner

15. Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*, *The Fountainhead*, and *Anthem*

Rand is famous for her stand on Objectivism, a belief system that highlights the human individual as the most important part of society. In her work, Rand presents the fundamental need to respect the individual over the collective.

Before I get into how these books are difficult, let me first say that I highly recommend them. Without a doubt, Ayn Rand has one of the most interesting philosophies about the way people should live their lives. If you're like me and are looking for something to read that might give you insight to another belief or an opinion, this series is for you; however, it has its faults. First of all, in all three of her novels, Rand essentially beats you over the head with her beliefs, which is good because it makes it easy to understand, but at the same time, it's rather frustrating. There is very little expansion to make in your papers other than to talk about her beliefs, the characters, and, occasionally, the setting. Also, if you disagree with her philosophy, you may find it difficult to read in places. I certainly did, but I was truly interested in what she had to say, which made it easier. Lastly, with the exception of *Anthem*, her novels are 700+ pages and 1000+ pages. My biggest piece of advice is to only read this set if you have time! And if I were to do it again, I

would read the longest, *Atlas Shrugged*, over the summer. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed reading this series. At times, I may have hated it, but I feel like I've achieved, particularly in my writing, and that's exactly what I was hoping to get out of it.

~ Matt Owen

16. Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, *Bleak House*, and *Oliver Twist*

Yet another Victorian writer, Dickens is interested fundamentally in social and economic class. Dickens's magic is in his creation and development of conflict and character.

17. Cormac McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses*, *the Crossing*, and *Cities of the Plain* (otherwise known as the Border Trilogy)

In this set of novels, which should be read in this order, McCarthy describes human interaction along the Mexican-American border at various times. Beautifully written and very evocative, McCarthy's genius shines through these novels.

If you have read and enjoyed the work of Cormac McCarthy, I highly recommend *The Border Trilogy*. While the novels are based on the life of cowboys and may seem unappealing to readers who aren't fans of western style novels, do not let this hinder your decision to choose this trilogy, because the books are hardly the traditional American west novel, and truly have a lot more insight to offer. The plot of the novels entices the reader with the topics of romance, religion, morality, the individual, and much more, and the first two novels combine exceptionally well in the last book of the series, arguably the best. The novels are of a medium length, but if not given enough time, you may have to skim over some of McCarthy's rich, complicated, and deep sections or scenes because they can be extremely hard to comprehend without a lot of contemplation and time. Overall, *The Border Trilogy* is a challenge, but mostly a rewarding read that will prove useful for in-class discussions, AP exam material, enjoyment, contemplation, and self-discovery.

~ Lindsay Allais

18. Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, *Blood Meridian*, and *No Country for Old Men*

In another trio of books, McCarthy discusses the nature of evil and viciousness amongst men. Written in varying styles, these three selections have wildly varying stories that center on a theme that McCarthy wants to present thoroughly to his audience.

The single most important thing to tell kids next year is that if they are afraid they will not have enough to talk about the McCarthy series is the way to go. I could have easily written one hundred pages regarding these novels if necessary. The helpful thing about McCarthy is that his style is so distinct in each of his novels that you could talk about its significance forever. Students should also know that violence is the basis of the novel for these three works and absolutely gruesome events are described.

~ Lucas Flagg

19. John Updike's *Rabbit*, *Run*, *Rabbit Redux*, and *Rabbit is Rich*

Updike's three (out of four) stories, which should be read in this order, follow the story of Rabbit, a man who serves to comment on America for Updike. Rich in characterization and social commentary, Updike's work is heralded by critics as quintessentially "American."

20. DH Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and *Women in Love*

A Romantic writer, Lawrence delves into the world of sensuality and relationships. He is well known for capturing realistic portrayals of men and women and their inner lives.

21. Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, and *The Voyage Out*

Virginia Woolf, considered one of the earliest feminist writers and a stream-of-consciousness writer, presents the inner lives of women and men in her novels. Often discussing a relatively short amount of time in a large space, Woolf's work brilliantly captures the inner dialogue we have with ourselves.

22. Aristophanes's *The Clouds*, *The Frogs*, and *The Wasps*

Another of the great Greek playwrights, Aristophanes is a fantastic commentator of social ills and issues he notices in his native Athens. Cleverly weaving in the immortals with the daily lives humans, Aristophanes is able to criticize and uplift at the same time.

23. Sophocles's *Antigone* and *Electra* and Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*

Again with the Greeks, these three plays all take a woman as the protagonist and ask the reader to judge the morality of her actions. Much discussion exists about the roles of fate and free will and the obligation a woman has to her family and to the nation-state.

24. E.M. Forster's *Howards End*, *Room with a View*, and *Passage to India*

Forster, as a product of Victorian England, is interested in . . . you guessed it: relationships and social class. Addressing the hypocrisy he saw in the system, Forster's novels ask the reader to think about expectations and limitations based on economic class and gender.

The novels by E.M. Forster, including *A Passage to India*, *A Room With A View*, and *Howards End*, all deal with social divisions and the ways in which people act towards one another. In *A Passage to India* Forster examines the division between Indian natives and English imperialists which results from the English occupation in India. *Howards End* and *A Room With A View* both focus on the division between social class and how one's social class effects one's opportunities and treatment by others. Overall, these novels are easy to read and are no longer than 360 pages. If you enjoy novels that deal with social standards and include a bit of action, mystery, and romance, then these novels are for you.

~ Melissa Merrigan

25. W. Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge*, *Of Human Bondage*, and *The Painted Veil*

Maugham is often credited as a writer who captures the reader's imagination to such a degree that the reader is forever changed by the experience of reading him. This work is from the early part of the 20th Century and uses exotic locales to make its point.

These three works are not too difficult to understand, but he does use a lot of French in his writing so it might be easier if you speak French; however, I don't speak French and I still understood the stories. *Of Human Bondage* follows a boy in England from the age of nine until his adult life, and the struggles he encounters in relationships, mainly with one woman in particular. It's a little slow and the first half could be cut out and it would still be a good book, but overall, still a good read. *The Painted Veil* is almost the exact same novel as *Of Human Bondage*, only this time it takes place in China and the main character is a woman. This book is the weakest of the three. *The Razor's Edge* was the best read of the series, in my opinion. It takes place partly in America and partly in Europe, and follows two people as their lives grow apart and back together again, emphasizing the changes each individual incurs over the years. The series overall keeps you occupied, and I would recommend it to anyone who likes a different sort of love story than what most are used to.

~ Katy Howe

26. Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faust*, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*, and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

All of these texts (Marlowe's and Goethe's based on the same story) are about the ill effects of giving away the soul to gain some kind of "power." For those people interested in the wages of sin, this trio is for you.

27. Charles Johnson's *Middle Passage*, Richard Wright's *Native Son*, and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*

Detailing the African-American experience, these three authors are widely seen as some of the most influential African American writers.

28. Nabakov's *Lolita*, Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, and Nathanael West's *Miss Lonely Hearts* These three "American Dream" novels are wildly different in their story line, but all three comment on the possibility of obtaining the American Dream. If you liked Gatsby for Fitzgerald's social commentary, you will like these three.

These three books have a theme of pursuing happiness, and *Lolita* and *On the Road* both do this in an off-the-beaten-path way. *Miss Lonelyhearts* is a short but very depressing book on the struggles of a New York newspaper editor trying to find some meaning and bliss in his downtrodden world. The best part of this book is that it is only 58 pages. *Lolita* (around 300 pages) definitely has shock value because it is a book about a pedophile and his travels and encounters with the young girl Lolita. This is a good book, and has a lot of hidden clues, which sometimes requires close reading. *On the Road* (also around 300 pages) is an interesting book about a carefree narrator who is always on the road, traveling and trying to pursue happiness through girls, jazz, and parties. If you want to read a book about the adventurous 'Beat' generation of the late 1940s-1950s, then this book is for you. This series consists of books focusing on the problems and daily life of the mid 20th century.

~ Patrick Dalton

29. John Irving's *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, *Garp*, and *Hotel New Hampshire*

One of the most respected (and prolific) American writers of the last half century, Irving has the ability to craft scenes in such a visual and engaging way that the reader must wrestle himself away from the storyline. If you like humor and sadness wrapped in the same package, these three are for you.

I could literally not put any three of these books down. Let me tell you that I do not classify myself as an avid reader or proponent of literature, but when I started reading *A Prayer For Owen Meany* (later adapted as the movie *Simon Birch*), my eyes would start to water from the amount of time I spent in front of that book. *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, *The World According to Garp*, and *The Hotel New Hampshire*, at first seemed to be a bit tedious seeing as each book is about 400 pages long, but the way Irving writes makes it so incredibly easy to read. He doesn't use any over-sophisticated language or ideas, and much of his plot is built around character development, making the read much easier than anything you will encounter in AP English this year. I must warn you though, for the faint of heart or the old-fashioned, these books go way beyond the scope of "school appropriateness" that you are used to at LaSalle— All three of these books are pretty graphic and disturbing beyond traditional comprehension, but that's why I found it so appealing. I've never read the things that I've read in these novels before. Though, if you happen to pick these books to write on, I found it quite difficult to pry any deeper philosophical meaning to the writing, which is either a good or bad thing depending on your point of view. Much of Irving's style is quintessentially comprised of surface level crisis, which in my opinion makes it much easier to read and write about. If you pick these books to read, which I highly recommend you do, I would recommend reading *Owen Meany* either at the beginning or end of the year mainly because I feel *Garp* and *Hotel* should be read back-to-back since they are so similar in nature. These are easy books to read and write about; challenge yourself and pick them.

~ Tarik Chakko