

Isle of Wight Academy
2026-2027 Required Summer Reading
AP English 11

The goal of the AP English 11 summer reading assignment at IWA is to help students continue building strong reading, thinking, and writing skills over the summer while preparing for the rigor of an advanced English course. As students get ready for a year centered on close reading, discussion, analysis, and argument, they should continue practicing how to annotate thoughtfully, recognize an author's craft, and support ideas with clear textual evidence. This assignment is designed to help students engage deeply with a text and begin the year ready to read carefully, think critically, and write with purpose.

Required Reading

Choose one book from the list below.

Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer: A nonfiction work that explores the life and death of Christopher McCandless while raising questions about identity, freedom, risk, privilege, and the American ideal of self-reliance.

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald: A classic American novel that invites analysis of the American Dream, wealth, class, illusion, and identity.

The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien: A powerful work that blends fiction and truth while exploring memory, storytelling, war, fear, and emotional burden.

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston: A rich and layered American novel focused on voice, identity, gender, love, growth, and self-realization.

All assignments are due on the first day of school.

Part 1: Active Annotation of the Entire Book (25 points)

- Annotate your book as you read. Your annotations should show that you are actively engaging with the text, not simply underlining random lines.
- Strong annotations may include important passages, questions or reactions, comments about characterization, notes about tone, imagery, symbolism, diction, or structure, theme development, patterns or repeated ideas, connections to history, culture, or other texts, moments that reveal the author's purpose or message, unfamiliar vocabulary, and brief summaries in the margins when helpful.
- Annotate consistently throughout the book. Annotations should show thought and purpose. Simply highlighting without commenting will not earn full credit.
- You may annotate directly in the book, with sticky notes or tabs, or on printed pages if using a digital copy.
- Whenever you mark a passage, include a note explaining why it matters.
- Please see the annotation guide at the end of this packet.

Part 2: Significant Passage Chart (25 points)

- Choose five meaningful passages from the book and complete the chart below.
- For each passage, include the page number, direct quote, brief context, and an explanation of why the passage matters.
- Your explanation should go beyond summary. Focus on what the passage reveals about the theme, character, conflict, tone, symbolism, structure, or author's craft.

Page	Direct Quote	Context	Why This Passage Matters

Part 3: Literary Analysis Response (30 points)

- Write a 500-700 word literary analysis response over your chosen book.
- Choose one prompt from the list below.
- Your response must include a clear thesis, organized paragraphs, at least three specific references to the text, thoughtful commentary that explains how the evidence supports your ideas, complete sentences, formal academic tone, and a word count.
- This should be an analytical response, not a plot summary and not primarily a personal reflection.

Prompt Options

- Option A: Analyze how the author develops one major theme over the course of the text.
- Option B: Analyze how the author uses one literary element such as symbolism, point of view, tone, imagery, or structure to shape meaning.
- Option C: Analyze how a central character's conflicting motivations, choices, or relationships contribute to the text's larger message.

Part 4: Reader Reflection (10 points)

- Write a 200-300 word reflection answering the following question: What challenged you most about this book, and what did you learn about yourself as a reader from the experience?
- This section may be more personal, but it should still be thoughtful, specific, and well written.

Part 5: Preparation for Discussion (10 points)

- Come to class prepared to discuss your book.
- On a separate sheet or note card, bring two discussion questions, one passage you think is especially important, and one idea about a theme or message in the text.

Show, Don't Tell

One important goal of AP English is learning how to write with depth, specificity, and maturity. As you move into college-level work, it is not enough to simply tell the reader what you think. Strong writing shows the reader through details, examples, and analysis.

Telling	Showing
The character is lonely.	The character eats dinner in silence each night, avoids eye contact with others, and repeatedly watches life happening around him without <u>joining in</u> .
This quote is important.	This quote marks a turning point in the novel because the author shifts the tone from hopeful to uncertain, revealing that the character's <u>confidence is beginning to crack</u> .
The author uses symbolism.	The green light becomes more than a physical object. It represents Gatsby's longing, his belief in reinvention, and the unreachable future he continues to chase.

As you write, remember:

- be specific
- use details from the text
- explain how and why something matters
- avoid vague statements
- push beyond summary into analysis

A strong AP response does not just state an idea. It develops that idea with evidence and commentary.

Example of a Strong Analytical Response Start

Prompt: Analyze how the author develops one major theme over the course of the text.

In *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald develops the theme of illusion versus reality by showing how characters create false versions of themselves in pursuit of status, love, and success. Through Gatsby's carefully constructed identity, Daisy's polished charm, and the glamorous but hollow world of East Egg, Fitzgerald suggests that the American Dream often depends on appearances that cannot hold up against reality. As the novel unfolds, these illusions begin to collapse, revealing the emptiness beneath them.

Why this works:

- it clearly answers the prompt
- it includes a focused thesis
- it names specific ideas that can be developed
- it sets up analysis rather than summary

MLA Help Box

For formal written assignments in AP English 11, please use **MLA format** unless your teacher gives different instructions. MLA is the standard format most often used in English classes, and it helps your writing look organized, polished, and professional.

Your paper should:

- be typed in **12 point Times New Roman**
- be **double spaced**
- use **1 inch margins**
- include the correct **MLA heading** on the first page
- include your **last name and page number** in the upper right corner

MLA Heading Example

Your Name

Teacher's Name

Course Name

Due Date

Direct Quotes

Rule	Example
Use quotation marks when you use the exact words from a text.	Gatsby is described as someone who “turned out all right at the end” (Fitzgerald 2).

Paraphrasing

Rule	Original Idea	Weak Paraphrase	Strong Paraphrase
If you put an author's idea into your own	Gatsby spends much of the novel chasing a	Gatsby spends a lot of the novel chasing a	Throughout the novel, Gatsby remains focused on an ideal future that he will never truly be

words, you still need to cite it.	dream that can never fully become reality.	dream that cannot really become real.	able to reach (Fitzgerald 95).
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Remember

Do not drop a quote into your writing without explanation. Introduce it, include it, and then explain why it matters.

Need Help?

If you need a refresher on MLA format, citations, or paper setup, use **Purdue OWL**:

<https://owl.purdue.edu>

Rubric

Part 1: Annotation Rubric (25 points)

Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Developing	Needs Improvement	Points
Completion and Consistency	Annotation is thoughtful and consistent throughout the book	Annotation is mostly complete and consistent	Annotation is uneven or incomplete in places	Very limited annotation	/10
Quality of Thinking	Notes show insight, questioning, and attention to craft and meaning	Notes show understanding and engagement	Notes are basic or mostly summary	Notes show little engagement	/10
Clarity and Purpose	Annotations clearly explain why passages were marked	Most annotations include purpose	Some annotations lack explanation	Markings have little or no explanation	/5

Part 2: Passage Chart Rubric (25 points)

Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Developing	Needs Improvement	Points
Passage Selection	Passages are meaningful and well chosen	Passages are appropriate	Some passages are too obvious or	Passages are weak or incomplete	/5

Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Developing	Needs Improvement	Points
			underdeveloped		
Context	Context is clear and accurate	Context is mostly clear	Context is limited	Context is unclear or missing	/5
Analysis	Explanations are thoughtful and analytical	Explanations show understanding	Explanations are more summary than analysis	Limited or missing analysis	/10
Clarity	Writing is clear and organized	Mostly clear	Sometimes unclear	Difficult to follow	/5

Part 3: Literary Analysis Rubric (30 points)

Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Developing	Needs Improvement	Points
Thesis	Clear, focused, and analytical thesis	Clear thesis	Thesis is present but broad or weak	Thesis is unclear or missing	/5
Evidence	Uses at least 3 strong and specific references from the text	Uses appropriate textual support	Uses limited or uneven evidence	Little to no relevant evidence	/10
Commentary and Analysis	Insightful explanation of how evidence supports the claim	Clear explanation and analysis	Some explanation, but may lean into summary	Minimal analysis	/10
Organization and Style	Well organized, formal, and clear	Organized and mostly clear	Some uneven organization or style	Disorganized or unclear	/5

Part 4: Reflection Rubric (10 points)

Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Developing	Needs Improvement	Points
Thoughtfulness	Reflection is specific and thoughtful	Reflection is clear	Reflection is somewhat general	Reflection is vague or incomplete	/5
Writing Quality	Writing is polished and organized	Writing is mostly clear	Writing has several errors	Writing is difficult to follow	/5

Part 5: Discussion Preparation (10 points)

Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Developing	Needs Improvement	Points
Preparedness	All materials completed thoughtfully	All materials completed	Some materials missing or weak	Incomplete	/10

Parent Note: <https://shorturl.at/uFMZ0>.

Want to read alongside your student? Ask questions such as:

- What seems to matter most to the author?
- Which character or idea is the most complicated?
- What patterns do you notice in the language or imagery?
- What does the book seem to suggest about American life, identity, or values?
- Which passages feel especially important, and why?

A Reader's Guide to Annotation

Annotating a text is like having a conversation with the book. It allows you to ask questions, respond to important ideas, notice patterns, and mark passages that deserve a closer look. Annotation is more than simply highlighting lines that stand out. It is a record of your thinking as you read and a way to show your engagement with the text.

In AP English, annotation is one of the most important habits of strong readers. It helps you move beyond basic comprehension and into deeper analysis. Thoughtful annotation can help you track character development, recognize important themes, notice an author's craft, and gather evidence for discussion and writing.

As you work with your text, think carefully about the different ways you can connect with what you are reading. Some of the suggestions below may not apply on every page, but they should help guide your thinking throughout the novel.

Before You Begin

Plan on reading many passages more than once. The first reading helps you understand what is happening on the surface. The second reading helps you notice how the author creates meaning through language, structure, detail, and style.

Use a red pen to annotate the novel unless your teacher gives different instructions. If you do not want to write directly in the book, you may use sticky notes, annotation tabs, or write notes on printed pages if you are reading a digital copy.

Important Reminder

Whenever you underline, circle, highlight, bracket, or otherwise mark a passage, you should also include a brief note explaining **why** you marked it.

Highlighting without commentary is not true annotation.

Your annotations should show that you are thinking, questioning, noticing, and responding as you read.

What to Do as You Annotate

As you read, you may:

- underline or highlight important passages
- circle unfamiliar words and define them
- summarize important ideas in your own words
- write questions about passages that confuse, surprise, or interest you
- make connections to history, culture, other texts, or relevant real world ideas
- draw lines between related moments or repeated ideas in the text
- comment on the descriptions, actions, or development of characters
- notice conflicts, turning points, and moments of realization
- comment on the author's language, tone, imagery, or structure
- explain symbols, patterns, or repeated ideas
- note historical context or social customs that help explain the passage
- add a brief sketch when a visual connection is genuinely helpful

You do not need to annotate every line. Instead, annotate with purpose. Focus on moments that seem important, revealing, confusing, or worth revisiting.

What Strong Annotations Often Look Like

Instead of writing:

- important
- good quote
- sad
- confusing

Try writing:

- This marks a turning point because...
- The imagery here creates a tone of...
- This reveals that the character is beginning to...
- The repetition of this word suggests...

- This detail connects to the larger theme of...
- The author's diction emphasizes...
- This moment is ironic because...
- This symbol may represent...

The strongest annotations move beyond summary and begin to explain how and why a passage matters.

Suggested Literary Devices and Elements

As you annotate, you may find some of the following literary devices and elements helpful to notice. You do not need to find every one. Instead, focus on the moments that genuinely help you better understand the text.

- Alliteration: the practice of beginning several consecutive or neighboring words with the same sound: e.g. "The **t**wisting **t**rount **t**winkled below"
- Allusion: a reference to a mythological, literary, or historical person, place, or thing: e.g. "He met his **Waterloo**"
- Flashback: a scene that interrupts the action of a work to show a previous event
- Foreshadowing: hints or clues in a narrative to suggest future action
- Hyperbole: a deliberate, extravagant, and often outrageous exaggeration; it may be used for either serious or comic effect: e.g. "The shot heard 'round the world."
- Idiom: an accepted phrase or expression having a meaning different from the literal: e.g. to drive someone up the wall
- Imagery: words or phrases a writer uses to appeal to the senses: e.g. "The sky was **periwinkle blue** with a **few scattered, wispy** clouds."
- Irony: there are three types
 - verbal irony: while the speaker or narrator says one thing while meaning the opposite; sarcasm is a form of verbal irony: e.g. "It is easy to stop smoking. I've done it many times."
 - situational irony: when a situation turns out differently from what one would normally expect; often a twist; e.g. a deep sea diver drowning in a bathtub is an ironic situation
 - dramatic irony: when a character or speaker says or does something that has a different meaning from what he or she thinks it means, though the audience and other characters understand the full implications: e.g. Anne Frank looks forward to growing up, but we, as readers, know that it will never be.
- Metaphor: a comparison of two unlike things not using 'like' or 'as': e.g. Time is money.
- Mood: the atmosphere or predominant emotion in a literary work
- Oxymoron: a form of paradox that combines a pair of opposite terms into a single unusual expression: e.g. "sweet sorrow" or "cold fire"
- Paradox: occurs when the elements of a statement contradict each other. Although the statement may appear illogical, impossible, or absurd, it turns out to have a coherent meaning that reveals a hidden truth: e.g. "Much madness is divinest sense." (something that may be called madness by an unthinking mob, may actually be a profound truth)
- Personification: a kind of metaphor that gives inanimate objects or abstract ideas human

characteristics: e.g. “The **wind cried** in the dark”

- Rhetoric: the art of using words to persuade in writing or speaking
- Simile: a comparison of two unlike things or ideas using words ‘like’ or ‘as’: e.g. “The **warrior** fought **like a lion**.”
- Suspense: a quality that makes the reader or audience uncertain or tense about the outcome of events
- Symbol: any object, person, place, or action that has both a meaning in itself and that stands for something larger than itself, such as a quality, attitude, belief, or value: e.g. a **tortoise** represents slow but steady **progress**
- Theme: the central message of a literary work. It is expressed as a sentence or general statement about life or human nature. A literary work can have more than one theme, and most themes are not directly stated but are implied: e.g. pride often precedes a fall
- Tone: the writer’s or speaker’s attitude toward a subject, character, or audience; it is conveyed through the author’s choice of words (diction) and details. Tone can be serious, humorous, sarcastic, indignant, etc.
- Understatement (meiosis, litote): the opposite of hyperbole. It is a kind of irony that deliberately represents something as being much less than it really is: e.g. “I could probably manage to survive on a salary of two million dollars per year.”

Suggested Method for Marking the Text

If you do not like writing directly in a book, you may want to use sticky notes. If you are especially organized, you may even choose to color code your annotations using different pens, tabs, or sticky notes.

For example, you might create a simple system such as:

- character development
- theme
- symbolism
- important quotes
- questions
- vocabulary

This is optional, but it can help you keep your thinking organized as you read.

Remember, a well annotated book should show evidence of an active, curious, and thoughtful reader. By the time you finish the novel, your pages should reflect your thinking, not just your highlighting. Strong annotation will make it much easier for you to participate in discussion, complete written assignments, and develop stronger analytical writing once the school year begins.