

PRE-REQUISITE READING LIST: AP English IV 2024-25 Sommer Sneed Husbands

Students entering AP English IV at Oxford High School must have completed the following assignments (**both Part 1 and Part 2**) before the first day of class.

PART 1:

1. Read three books from the following list. You have a couple of choices to make, but the Hurston novel is mandatory for all AP IV students.
2. Come to school prepared to a) take a comprehension test and/or produce writing entries on the selections and b) discuss thoroughly and in-depth the concepts and themes of the books.
3. Annotating the texts is **strongly suggested**, as you will need a working knowledge of all three texts when you return to school in August. It will be easier to review your notes than reread the whole book.
4. Also, look for connections between the three books in terms of theme, characterization, function of setting, use of language, etc.

Book List:

1. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston (1937)

One of the most important and enduring books of the twentieth century, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* brings to life a Southern love story with the wit and pathos found only in the writing of Zora Neale Hurston. Out of print for almost thirty years—due largely to initial audiences’ rejection of its strong black female protagonist—Hurston’s classic has since its 1978 reissue become perhaps the most widely read and highly acclaimed novel in the canon of African-American literature. (Note: the dialect can be challenging at first; remember to read phonetically when encountering dialect in regional novels. You can also find dialect guides online as needed.)

2. Bronte Sisters Option:

You may choose either *Jane Eyre* or *Wuthering Heights*

- ***Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë (1847)**

Immediately recognized as a masterpiece when it was first published, *Jane Eyre* is an extraordinary coming-of-age story featuring the strong female protagonist—poor and plain Jane. Orphaned and oppressed throughout her childhood, she manages to emerge into adulthood with her spirit and integrity unbroken to become a governess in the household of the dark, impassioned Mr. Rochester. Mystery and secrets lurk in Rochester’s household that will affect Jane in very personal ways. One of the world’s most beloved classic novels, *Jane Eyre* is a startlingly modern blend of passion, romance, mystery, and suspense.

- ***Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë (1847)**

Wuthering Heights is a wild, passionate story of the intense and frenzied love affair between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, an orphan her father takes in. After Mr. Earnshaw's death, Catherine's brother bullies and humiliates Heathcliff who leaves the estate (called *Wuthering Heights*), only to return years later as a wealthy and polished man. He proceeds to exact revenge for his former miseries. The action of the story is chaotic and unremittingly violent, but the accomplished handling of a complex structure, the descriptions of the lonely moors, and the poetic grandeur of vision combine to make this unique frame novel a masterpiece and classic.

3. Shakespeare Option:

You may choose either ***Twelfth Night*** or ***Macbeth***

- ***Twelfth Night*** (comedy, c. 1602)

Named for the twelfth night after Christmas, *Twelfth Night* plays with love, gender, and power. The Countess Olivia, a woman with her own household, attracts Duke (or Count) Orsino. Two other would-be suitors are her pretentious steward, Malvolio, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek. Onto this scene arrive the twins Viola and Sebastian; caught in a shipwreck, each thinks the other has drowned. Viola disguises herself as a male page and enters Orsino's service. Orsino sends her as his envoy to Olivia—only to have Olivia fall in love with the messenger. The play complicates, then wonderfully untangles, these relationships. This text can be easily accessed for free online.

- ***Macbeth*** (tragedy, c. 1606)

Set in medieval Scotland and partially based on historical accounts of Scottish royalty, the play charts the bloody and ambitious rise to power of the soldier Macbeth. Encouraged by his ruthless wife and the prophecy of a trio of witches, a once honorable warrior becomes a deceptive and paranoid king and pays the price for his political ambition. This text can be easily accessed for free online.

Finding/Purchasing Books:

- All of the listed books should be available at Square Books and/or Square Books, Jr.
- For cheaper or used copies, there are many bargain book websites available, and all titles are currently in print and readily available.
- These books can be found at the public library.
- Classmates are welcome to share books throughout the summer, so as to alleviate the cost of purchasing all books.
- Feel free to look for online versions, as well, but make sure you do not read an abridged version of any of the texts.

PART 2:

1. Access the attached file: “**Allusions in Literature.**” It is split into classical/ mythological and Biblical allusions, and the tests will be separated into those categories, as well.
2. Study its contents.
3. Come to school prepared to take tests on these allusions.

***Note: the files on allusions should also be posted on the summer reading section of the district website.