

# 12th AP English Literature and Composition Summer Reading

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Welcome to Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition! For the duration of this course we aim to prepare ourselves for the upcoming AP Lit and Composition Exam by performing several in-depth analyses on a wide variety of complex works from around the globe. To begin your literary journey, you are to read the following selections and complete the assigned tasks with each prior to the first day of school:

- *The Book of Job* (King James version – you may supplement your reading with other translations, but your essay should be based on your reading of the KJV)
- *J.B* (a play by Archibald Macleish; copies available in room 102)
- *The Stranger* (a novel by Albert Camus – also available in room 102)

These three works – two of which you will consider in direct relation to each other – deal with, among other weighty matters, the place of Man in the *cosmos*, especially given the existence of a Higher Power, or the conspicuous absence thereof. To earn credit for your summer reading, you must complete and be ready to submit the following two essays on the first day of the semester:

### The Assignments

1. You are to consider *The Book of Job* and *J.B.* together, for the latter is a reinterpretation of the original Old Testament story. In this essay, you should compare and contrast what the two works have to say on a fundamental and two-sided issue: the sovereignty of God, and the accountability of Man in the face of that sovereignty. (Let me remind you of what I stated earlier: the use of a modern translation of the Bible to aid you in your understanding of *Job* is perfectly permissible, but your essay must be based on – and incorporate passages from – the King James version. This King James Bible is universally considered one of the watershed achievements in English Literature.)
2. You are to analyze Camus's *The Stranger* (a work with which familiarizing oneself with the philosophy of *existentialism* would definitely prove helpful). This novel posits through its narrator a universe in which there is no God, sovereign or otherwise, and therefore questions of accountability to him are moot. In this essay consider what kind of moral and ethical standards exist if Man himself is the highest of powers. Discuss on what foundation such standards would be based if there is no Higher Power to which Man must give account than Man himself.

In addition to reading the works themselves, you are free to (and encouraged to) consult reputable supplemental resources to help you in comprehension and analysis. For example, you could use an online Biblical commentary in conjunction with *Job* and *J.B.*, while a basic encyclopedia text on philosophy would give you grounding in existentialism and Camus. **Of course, you should be sure to give proper credit to any such source if you draw information from them for your essays, supplying internal citations and a Works Cited page.**

## **Grading**

As stated above, all assignments are expected to be completed & ready to turn in on the first full day of school. Each essay should adhere to the following specifications:

- Each essay is to be a minimum of 1000 words in length. (Yes, I will count.)
- Each paper should be typed, double-spaced in size 12 Times New Roman or Cambria
- Each paper should include supporting passages from the work(s) in question. No essay can be considered complete without such supporting passages. (See also my comment above about supplemental resources.)
- Each essay will be graded on a scale of 1-9 according to the AP Literature and Composition Free Response Rubric (see attached).

Spark Notes and other online literary criticism websites are wonderful resources to aid in the understanding of a text, but anyone caught using materials like these as a **replacement** for any of the readings will receive a zero & possible further disciplinary action. If there are any questions or if you wish to have alternate reading assignments, please feel free to email Mr. Hensley at [chad.hensley@knoxschools.org](mailto:chad.hensley@knoxschools.org). I will try my best to respond to your email within 48 hours, assuming that I am not out of town. In this case, I will respond as soon as I am available.