

2026 Summer Reading and Assignments



The books and assignments listed below are required for students entering and returning to Ojai Valley School. Our goal is for students to read thought-provoking literature over the summer that will stimulate ideas for discussion at the start of the year, and to get a jump on Advanced Placement coursework. It is the student's responsibility to purchase these books listed below and to complete any accompanying assignments. It should be possible to obtain inexpensive copies of these books at Barnes & Noble, or online at Amazon.com or other websites. If your student prefers to listen to books, you may also find them on multiple platforms for audio books, such as Audible.

English 9	<i>Into the Wild</i> by Jon Krakauer
English 10	<i>The Most Dangerous Game</i> by Richard Connell
English 10 Honors	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> by Jane Austen
English 11	<i>See list and required assignments below</i>
AP English Language (11 th)	<i>See list and required assignments below</i>
English 12	<i>The Sun Also Rises</i> by Ernest Hemingway
AP English Literature (12 th)	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> by Emily Brontë <i>See required assignment below</i>
AP US History	<i>See required assignment below</i>
AP World History	<i>See required assignment below</i>
AP Calculus AB & BC	<i>See required assignment below</i>
AP Spanish	<i>See assignment below</i>

AP Statistics	<i>See required assignment below</i>
AP Seminar	<i>See required assignment below</i>
AP Chemistry	<i>See required assignment below</i>
AP Physics 1	<i>See required assignment below</i>
AP Biology	<i>Everything is Tuberculosis by John Green</i> <i>See required assignment below</i>
AP Environmental Science	<i>The Sixth Mass Extinction by Elizabeth Kolbert</i> <i>See required assignment below</i>

2026 Summer Reading and Assignments

AP English Literature
Ms. Brittany Whipple

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AP Literature is a course that depends heavily on reading notable works throughout the year to broaden a student's literary palate and exposure to significant themes and practices relevant to the AP Exam. One such work is the required novel that must be finished before the start of the school year, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë. The following assignment will allow the entire class to enter the course with the means to an immediate basis of discussion of literature. It will be imperative that the novel is fully read and the 2 tasks completed in order to begin writing assignments and literary discussions as soon as possible.

Task 1: Annotation

You are required to annotate the novel. Thorough and complete annotations will not only help you write about the novel, they are a graded component of the summer reading assignment.

There are many ways and styles in which to annotate a piece of literature. You may utilize any style that resonates with you but it must be recognizable as quality annotation. Examples of annotations might include: indicating and defining unfamiliar words/concepts, symbols such as stars or exclamation points for noteworthy plot points or thematic revelations, highlighting passages of significance, underlining, circling, arrows, use of sticky notes, and writing notes in the margins or the starts and ends of chapters. Whichever method you choose, you should be paying attention to and noting details like plot, character, setting, theme, figurative language like symbolism or irony etc, narrative structure, point of view, and linguistic items like syntax, juxtaposition, or dialects.

Task 2: Essay Prep

While you will NOT be writing an essay over the summer, you will be completing the preparations that will enable you to do so immediately upon your entrance into class. You will be required to prepare a document with relevant information to refer to when asked to write an essay in class and for other writing assignments that might be associated with the summer reading novel.

You will need the following information included in your document:

- List of main characters and brief descriptions of their personalities/roles in the plot/appearances
- List of main settings and brief descriptions
- 8 Quality quotations of your choosing. These should be from a variety of characters and related to multiple plot points. Include the chapter, page number, and 1-2 sentences to orient the quote within the plot or tie it to a theme.

2026 Summer Reading and Assignments

AP English Language and Composition and English 11

Reading is one of the best ways to improve your use of language and thus your performance in many types of classes. Select some books from this summer reading list and enjoy them. The list is compiled of American books, many of which have been awarded the Pulitzer Prize for literature, and all of which have an historical significance. There is a short summary of each book and some questions for guidance.

English 11AP students must complete the following:

1. Read *The Things They Carried*, a novel by Tim O'Brien, and write an essay on one of the questions. Be prepared to turn in the essay on the first day of class and to discuss the novel.
2. Read one additional novel of your choice from the summer reading list. You will be required to write an essay during class on your book of choice. Prepare your thoughts based on one of the questions on that book.

English 11 students will be required to read a book of their choice from the attached list and write an essay on one of the questions. Be prepared to turn in that essay on the first day of class.

Required AP novel:

The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien is a study of an infantry company of American soldiers during the Vietnam war. These short stories are linked together to paint a portrait of men in war - the horrors of the "killing fields" and the memories of the servicemen. (1991 runner-up for Pulitzer Prize for fiction)

1. What servicemen chose to carry revealed who they were. Select 3 of the characters. Explain what each carried and what was revealed about that character.
2. Explain why Tim O'Brien returned to Vietnam twenty years after the war. What was he trying to learn about himself? How does he feel after the trip is complete?

Books of choice

Moby Dick, Herman Melville's whaling story of Captain Ahab's vindictive quest for the white whale, has been lauded as America's greatest novel. Although it begins as a narrative about a whaling expedition, it turns into "a metaphorical study of the nature of good, evil, and reality." The complex novel has many layers: the story of a whaling ship's fateful voyage, the story of a bitter man's quest for revenge, and the story of humanity's relationship to the natural world. (Literature and the Language Arts)

1. Melville chose Nantucket, where the first whale was sighted in 1672, as the starting point for the "Pequod's" cruise. The book explores the American whalers, their individualism and heroic self-reliance.
2. The white whale with its enormous power and violence is seen as Ahab's evil foe, but it is also seen as mild and beautiful by other members of the whaling crew. Discuss the symbolism of the white whale.

Killer Angels by Michael Shaara won the Pulitzer Prize in 1975. The novel is set during the four days of the Battle of Gettysburg, and the characters are the actual historical figures, including General Robert E. Lee. Shaara's context is based on the letters, journal entries, and memoirs of the men who fought at Gettysburg.

1. The Battle of Gettysburg may have been a turning point between old and new methods of warfare. Explain the conflict and consequences of Lee's traditional strategies compared to Longstreet's insistence on more realistic defense tactics.
2. Good friends, Lew Armistead and Winfield Hancock represent two different sides. Explain how they portray the dilemma of the Civil War.

The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead "chronicles a young slave's adventures as she makes a desperate bid for freedom in the antebellum South. . . . Cora encounters different worlds at each stage of her journey, her odyssey through time as well as space." "Whitehead re-creates the unique terrors for black people in the pre-Civil War era." (Doubleday, 2016)

1. Throughout her journey many times Cora believes she has found freedom, only to discover that it is an illusion. Write an analysis of Cora's physical, mental and emotional characteristics that help her realize her goal.
2. Historically the Underground Railroad is the name given to safe places that aided in the movement of escaped slaves, not an actual railroad. This novel changes that metaphorical railroad into a literal one. Describe the many steps of the "underground railroad" that Cora uses to seek her freedom from slavery.

Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe, a novel of social protest and propaganda, is one of the most influential books ever written by an American. She declared that her object was to "hold up in the most lifelike and graphic manner possible, slavery . . . and the Negro character." "Stowe draws her moral by providing a grand panorama of American life," portraying the basic human emotions of the slaves and the brutality of some slave owners. The publication and overwhelming success of this book is often viewed as one of the events leading to the Civil War. (The Novel 100)

1. Examine the morals Stowe provides through the presentation of her characters.
2. Critic Kenneth Lynn calls this novel "the greatest tear-jerker of them all." Discuss the emotional impact of this novel on pre-civil war readers.

Angle of Repose by Wallace Stegner will be loved by outdoors enthusiasts. It is a "story of discovery – personal, historical, and geographical." Lyman Ward starts to write his grandparents' story of life on the frontier and ends by revealing a portrait of four generations in the life of an American family. (The Atlantic Monthly)

1. What is the "angle of repose" and how did it represent the lives of Susan Burling and Oliver Ward?
2. Explain the background and symbolism of the episode in which Oliver pulls up all the rose bushes from the house on the mesa.

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck is the story of itinerant farmers, the “Okies”, during the Depression. The Joad family travels to California only to discover they are worse off than they were in the dust bowl of Oklahoma. Although the subject matter, including its violence and passion, is controversial, this is a remarkable book.

1. Discuss the idea that *The Grapes of Wrath* exposes “glaring inequities in our social system.”
2. Although the subject matter of this novel is often violent and shocking, the characters can also be sympathetic. Discuss the accuracy of this statement with specific references to the story.

Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway is set in Italy during World War I. It is a story of lovers “silhouetted against the flame-streaked blackness of war, of a collapsing world . . . That story is the quest for meaning and certitude in a world that seems to offer nothing.” (Robert Penn Warren)

1. Hemingway’s greatest protagonists are those who must face the dilemmas of surviving with dignity, what he terms “grace under pressure.” Analyze Frederic Henry’s process of learning to live with the inevitable pain of the vulnerable.” (*The Novel 100*)
2. Gertrude Stein, one of Hemingway’s contemporary writers, made the famous remark, “You are all a lost generation.” Discuss how this novel presents the “lost generation” of the post World War I period.

The Jungle Upton Sinclair intended his novel to reveal the working conditions and rights of immigrants. When it was published, it was so shocking that it launched a government investigation of the meatpacking industry, eventually leading to new laws.

1. Discuss Sinclair’s statement . . . “there was no place in it where a man counted for anything against a dollar.”
2. Explain the symbolism, the significance of the title, *The Jungle*.

Snow Falling on Cedars by David Guterson follows a doomed love affair between a white boy and a Japanese girl set against a Japanese-American fisherman’s 1954 murder trial. The novel also explores the wartime internment of the Japanese residents. (1994 PEN/Faulkner award for fiction)

1. Explain how the setting, particularly the World War II passions against Japan, causes the major conflict in this novel.
2. Analyze the symbolic significance of the novel’s title.

A Bell For Adano by John Hersey is set in Italy during World War II. Adano’s 700-year-old bell has been melted down for Fascist guns and ammunition. When the Americans occupy the town, Major Joppolo must overcome huge obstacles to find a new bell. Hersey has written a “funny, serious, and deeply disturbing story.” (The New Yorker)

1. “It is possible to make your authority seem to spring from the very people over whom you have authority. And after a while, Tomasino, it actually does spring from them, and you are only the instrument of their will. That is the thing that the Americans want to teach you who have lived

under men who imagined that they themselves were authority.” (Ch.8) Explain how Major Joppolo through his actions in Adano exemplified this description of the American ideal leader.

2. Discuss Major Joppolo’s tragic flaw, and how it led to his downfall.

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay by Michael Chabon features two boy geniuses who collaborate to create a comic book. Set in the period before America enters World War II, the novel brilliantly reveals this period of history. “Super-colossal – smart, funny and a continual pleasure to read.” (The Washington Post)

1. Discuss how the actions of Nazi Germany determined the various stages of Joe Kavalier’s life.
2. Analyze Sammy Clay in terms of his relationships with Joe and Rosa as well as his comic book career.

The Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison won the National Book Award for fiction. The narrator from his basement coal-cellar says in the prologue, “I am an invisible man. . . . I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me.” The novel, through flashbacks, takes the reader through the experiences that have led to the coal-cellar. As he becomes the representative of America, white and black, the narrator asks at the end, “Who knows but that on the lower frequencies, I speak for you?”

1. Explain how the author uses the idea of invisibility in relation to his character’s search for identity. Include the imagery of blindness and being blindfolded.
2. Discuss whether the characters represent real persons or whether they are used as stereotypes to further the author’s ideas about the problems of the African Americans

All the President’s Men. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, reporters for the *Washington Post*, uncovered a scandal that helped bring about a constitutional crisis and eventually forced the President to resign. This book is their account of that investigation.

1. Explain the context of what happens during this period in light of the book’s allusion to the nursery rhyme about Humpty Dumpty. (“All the King’s horses and all the King’s men couldn’t put Humpty Dumpty together again.”)
2. Specifically who was “Deep Throat” and what did Woodward learn from his secret meetings with this source?

Silent Spring by Rachel Carson, a marine biologist, documented the effects on the environment of the indiscriminate use of pesticides, especially DDT. The book sounded a warning for the environment and led to a new reform movement.

1. “There was a strange stillness . . . It was a spring without voices. On the mornings that had once throbbed with the dawn chorus of robins, catbirds, doves, jays, wrens, and scores of other bird voices there was now no sound; only silence.” Describe the imagery Carson uses to dramatize her subject.
2. What are some of the legacies that have resulted from the publication of this book?

2026 Summer Reading and Assignments

AP United States History

Mr. Michael Cvetich

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Welcome to AP United States History. I'm excited to get to know you and to dive into a rigorous yet fascinating college-level history course. In anticipation of our in-depth analysis of roughly 500 years of history, I need you to complete the following tasks before the first day of school:

- Please read and take handwritten notes on the following materials. We will go over note-taking strategies during the first week of class, but I want you for now to just focus on the most critical information and to use whichever note-taking strategies have worked for you in the past. Notes should be handwritten and in a spiral or composition notebook. There will be a graded notebook check during the first week of class. Click the links below to access each reading:
 - [AMSCO, Chapter 1](#)
 - [Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, Chapter 1](#)
 - [Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People's History of the United States*, Chapter 1](#)
 - [Heimler's History, "APUSH Unit 1 Review"](#) [video]
- [APUSH Map Exercise](#): Print and complete.

These readings will help to lay the foundation for the work we do in APUSH. The first unit covers the years 1491-1607 and you will be doing the bulk of this work over the summer. There will be a graded **Unit 1 Exam** in the first week of class, so be sure that you have completed all of this work before the beginning of the school year. After that, we'll pick up with Unit 2, looking at the British colonial period in North America.

2026 Summer Reading and Assignments

AP Calculus AB & BC

Mr. Nicholas O'Brien

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Pick up a packet from Mr. O'Brien before you leave for summer. Or email him directly.

2026 Summer Reading and Assignments

AP Spanish

Mr. Steve Risser

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I am not assigning any mandatory assignments, however, you should work on your skills, as much as you can over the summer. Here are some movie/series/book suggestions that will not only help with your skills but will also be entertaining! These are just some examples, you can find your own of course.

Movies

Vivo

Pachamama

El camino de Xico

Maya y los tres

El libro de la vida

Zipi y Zape y la isla del capitán

Atlético San Pancho

Anina

Casi casi

Series

La casa de papel

Madre solo hay dos

Alta mar

La niña

El dragón: Return of a warrior

Books

Francisco Jiménez Cajas de carton

Horacio Quiroga Cuentos de la selva

Care Santos Mentira

Gary Soto (anything)

Laura Esquivel Como agua para chocolate

Sandra Cisneros La casa en Mango Street

2026 Summer Reading and Assignments

AP World History

Welcome to AP World History. I'm excited to get to know you and to dive into what I believe to be a rigorous yet fascinating college-level course. In anticipation of jumping into over 800 years of world history, I need you all to complete the following tasks before the first day of school.

- Purchase your textbook if you do not already have it. Please make sure it is the correct edition, specifically for AP World History Modern.
 - **Robert W. Strayer and Eric W. Nelson, *Ways of the World – A Global History With Sources*** (4th Edition for AP World History Modern)
- Please read and take handwritten notes on the following materials. We will go over note-taking strategies during the first week of class, but I want you for now to just focus on the most critical information and to use whichever note-taking strategies have worked for you in the past. Notes should be handwritten and in a spiral or composition notebook. There will be a graded notebook check during the first week of class. Click the links below to access each reading
 - [AMSCO, “Prologue: History Before 1200 C.E.](#)
 - [World History Project: “Overview of Belief Systems”](#)
 - [World History Project: “Empires Fall”](#)
 - [Heimler’s History, “World History Before 1200”](#) [video]
- World Geography Map Exercise: Print and complete.
 - [Map Instructions](#)
 - [Blank Maps](#)

These readings will help to lay the foundation for the work we do in APWH, which picks up in the year 1200 CE. There will be a graded **Unit 0 Exam** in the first week of class, so be sure that you have completed all of this work before the beginning of the school year.

2026 Summer Reading and Assignments

AP Statistics
Ms. Joli Ruby

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Welcome to AP Statistics!

1. Order the textbook

- a. **Textbook: UPDATED The Practice of Statistics - 6th Edition**
- b. To purchase the textbook visit the online store [here](#). A physical textbook is MANDATORY, digital is optional.

2. Assignment

- a. Read and take notes on chapters 5 and 6 of the textbook. Write down the new vocabulary words and their definitions. This assignment is meant to get you familiar with Unit 4 which discusses probability. This unit can be a confusing unit which is why it is important to get familiar with the content before we cover this unit in class.

This course moves fast and completing all this work will help ensure we complete the curriculum with time to review for the AP test in May. The assignment will take time to complete so I recommend that you break it up over multiple days. The notes will be collected on the first day of class.

2026 Summer Reading and Assignments

AP Seminar
Ms. Devyn Reynolds

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Welcome, AP Seminar students!

Enrolling in the AP Capstone program is the best decision of your high school career. This sequence of courses, more than any other, will have you engage in the kind of inquiry, critical analysis, writing, and research that are going to serve you extremely well in college. You will take on the habits of seeing connections between issues, of interpreting evidence through a variety of lenses, and of understanding trends from multiple perspectives.

QUEST Framework & Lenses

The AP Seminar course is built around the QUEST framework to investigate research questions of your own design. The QUEST framework is *recursive*, meaning that as we move forward, we also go back and refine previous steps of our work as we uncover new information.

Q - Question and Explore

Challenge and expand the boundaries of your current knowledge

U - Understand and Analyze

Contextualize arguments and comprehend authors' claims

E - Evaluate Multiple Perspectives

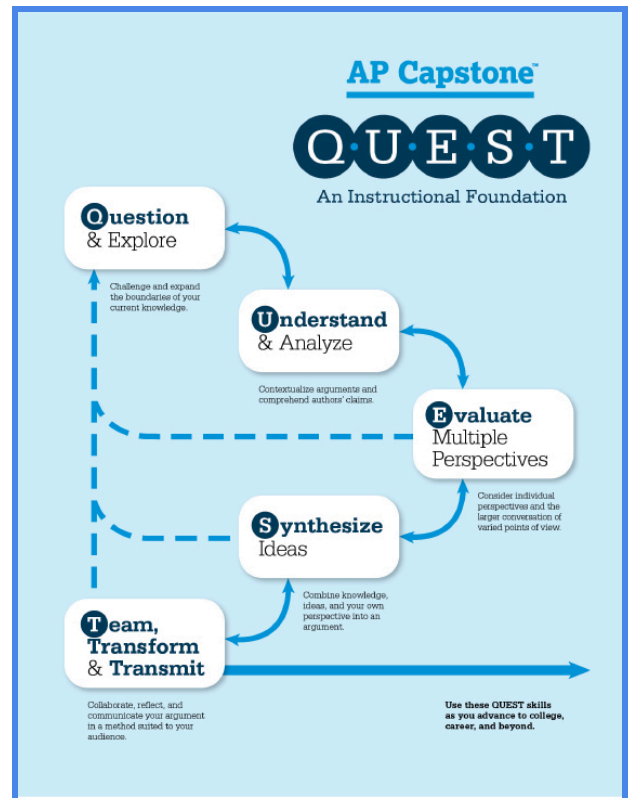
Consider individual perspectives and the larger conversation of varied points of view

S - Synthesize Ideas

Combine knowledge, ideas, and your own perspective into an argument

T - Team, Transform, and Transmit

Collaborate, reflect, and communicate your argument in a method suited to your audience



In addition to the QUEST framework, we use **eight investigative lenses** to explore our research questions. You will use these lenses to identify and compare different perspectives.

The lenses are:

Environmental	Scientific	Economic	Political and Historical
Artistic and Philosophical	Cultural and Social	Ethical	Futuristic

Assignment: Two-Lens Inquiry

DUE: August 31, 2026 (first day of school)

This assignment will give you practice with examining issues through different lenses in AP Seminar, as well as forming critical approaches to finding, evaluating, and using credible sources of information.

Your assignment is to examine an issue related to **Sustainability**. This issue can be anything that interests you, but it must be something *current* - something that is happening and relevant to today's society. Once you have determined your issue, you will write a **600-word** examination of it using **two lenses** listed on the chart above (max. 300 words per lens). This examination is a **report**; you are not making or defending an argument.

For example, you may examine the issue of **deforestation**. You may investigate this through a **political lens** by examining what authority the US government has over issues related to forestry, or international law. You may also examine the issue through a **scientific lens**, in terms of how tree loss is impacting air quality or species and habitat loss.

In order to write an informed examination, you will find **eight sources (four for each lens)** from among the following sources:

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> BBC<input type="checkbox"/> New York Times<input type="checkbox"/> Reuters<input type="checkbox"/> Bloomberg<input type="checkbox"/> Associated Press<input type="checkbox"/> Al Jazeera<input type="checkbox"/> NPR<input type="checkbox"/> Washington Post<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Times<input type="checkbox"/> Wall Street Journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> The Economist<input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Policy<input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Affairs<input type="checkbox"/> The New Yorker<input type="checkbox"/> Atlantic Monthly<input type="checkbox"/> National Review<input type="checkbox"/> The New Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> CATO Institute<input type="checkbox"/> Center for Strategic and International Studies<input type="checkbox"/> Council on Foreign Relations<input type="checkbox"/> Chicago Council on Global Affairs<input type="checkbox"/> Brookings Institution<input type="checkbox"/> Hoover Institution<input type="checkbox"/> American Enterprise Institute<input type="checkbox"/> Peterson Institute for International Economics<input type="checkbox"/> The Heritage Foundation<input type="checkbox"/> RAND Corporation	<p>A <u>peer-reviewed academic journal</u> of your choice. Examples would include such publications as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Nature<input type="checkbox"/> Journal of the American Medical Association<input type="checkbox"/> Journal of Public Policy<input type="checkbox"/> Journal of Economic Literature<input type="checkbox"/> International Journal of Art and Art History<input type="checkbox"/> The Journal of Technology Studies

Submission

You will submit your work by **August 31, 2026**

- Submit your work as a single report
- Include your name and topic/title
- Submit your report via google docs and share with dreynolds@ovs.org
- Include a bibliography or works cited page
- Use MLA citation for you in text citations
- Include page numbers

If you have any questions about the AP Seminar summer assignment, email Ms. Reynolds at dreynolds@ovs.org

Evaluation

	High (100%)	Medium (90%)	Low (80%)	Incomplete
Report	<p>The report examines the complexities of a problem or issue using research that draws upon a variety of relevant, credible sources.</p> <p>The report discusses a range of sources and draws explicit and relevant connections among them.</p> <p>The report attributes and accurately cites the sources used.</p> <p>The report communicates clearly to the reader (although may not be free of errors in grammar and style). The written style is consistently appropriate for an academic audience.</p>	<p>The report identifies an adequately focused area of investigation in the research and shows some variety in source selection.</p> <p>The report summarizes information somewhat effectively from a narrow range of perspectives.</p> <p>The report attributes or cites sources used but not always accurately.</p> <p>The report is generally clear but contains some flaws in grammar that occasionally interfere with communication to the reader. The written style is inconsistent and not always appropriate for an academic audience.</p>	<p>The report identifies an overly broad or simplistic area of investigation and/or shows little evidence of research.</p> <p>The report identifies evidence from chosen sources. Information is misstated, oversimplified, or illogically tied to the inquiry.</p> <p>The report includes many errors in attribution and citation</p> <p>The report contains many flaws in grammar that often interfere with communication to the reader. The written style is not appropriate for an academic audience.</p>	<p>The report is below the minimum level of acceptability in completion and/or quality.</p>

2026 Summer Reading and Assignments

AP Chemistry
Mr. Owen Driscoll

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Welcome to AP Chemistry!

It is important to review the basics before starting AP Chemistry. Summer work will involve working through several PowerPoint presentations and answering practice questions associated with them. All of this work is online at <http://www.sciencegeek.net/>

Once you are at sciencegeek.net, to access the PowerPoint presentations, click on Chemistry (not AP Chemistry) at the top of the page. This will take you to a page titled General Chemistry. Click on **PowerPoint presentations**. To access the interactive practice questions, click on **Interactive Practice Activities**.

INSTRUCTIONS

Write down all answers to the interactive practice. If the question involves mathematical problem solving, **show your work**. You will be given immediate feedback on all practice questions. Make corrections as you go through the problems. You will not be penalized for incorrect answers. I just want to see that you have completed the work. This work is due on the first day of class. You will be tested on this summer work on the third day of class.

PowerPoints: Unit 0: All 8 PowerPoints: start with Lab Equipment and end with Significant Figures
Interactive Practice: Lab Apparatus Review

PowerPoint: Unit 1: Atomic Structure
Interactive Practice: Atomic Structure Review

PowerPoints: Unit 2: Element classes, Valence Electrons
Interactive Practice: Element classes review, Periodic Patterns Review, Unit 2 Review

PowerPoints: Unit 3 Chemical Bonding - All PowerPoints except Intermolecular Forces and Polymers
Interactive Practice: Unit 3 - all except Unit 3 test free response (the last one)

PowerPoint: Unit 4 The Mole - all 4 PowerPoints
Interactive Practice: Unit 4 - Mole conversions, Equation balancing, Unit 4 Review

PowerPoint: Unit 8 Gas Laws - all 5 PowerPoints
Interactive Practice: Unit 8 Gases - the first 4 practice sets: Gas Temperature, Pressure, and Volume; Gas Laws involving P, V, and T; Kinetic Molecular Theory, and Unit 8 Review

2026 Summer Reading and Assignments

AP Physics 1

Dr. Allyson Shepherd

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Welcome to AP Physics! This mandatory summer assignment has two parts:

1. Devise and build a series of motions that can be used to time exactly ten (10) seconds.
2. Write about the experience in a lab report.

Students that fail to complete the summer assignment may be dismissed from the class.

Lab Timer Contest

You must design and execute the following lab over the summer and bring it to school on **Day 1(August 31)** of class. The objective here is to build something and have a good time with it, but the assignment is to build, trouble-shoot and optimize a device that can time an interval of EXACTLY ten seconds, using whatever materials you can find around your home. You will bring your mechanical timer to school, where you will compete against your classmates to see whose timer comes closest to exactly ten seconds. You will also be required to turn in a **handwritten lab report** describing the design, construction, and operation of your timer.

The requirements for the timer contest are:

1. Your timer may not use electricity or any kind of clock mechanism, including mechanical or electrical.
2. Your timer must perform a minimum of two separate and distinct “actions.” A transfer of energy from one physical object to another must occur between one “action” and another. **For example**, a marble that rolls down a ramp and pushes a lever, which rings a bell would count as two distinct actions:
 - a. Marble rolls down the ramp and hits the lever.
 - b. Lever swings and hits the bell.
3. Your timer may not be an unmodified “off-the-shelf” item. If you use a pre-made device or object as part of your timer, you need to modify it in some substantial way that affects how you use it to measure ten seconds.
4. If your timer does something repetitive, you may count a specific number of repetitions. For example, if the final action of your timer is a ball on a string that winds around a pole, you may measure ten seconds by how long it takes the ball to go around the pole a specific number of times.
5. Your timer may not require human interaction after it has started (except for counting repetitions of some action, as described in rule #4 above).
6. You must declare in advance how your timer will indicate when ten seconds has elapsed. For example, having a gadget that flops around on the floor randomly while you count in your head “one-Mississippi, two-Mississippi...” is not acceptable.
7. You have a maximum of three (3) minutes to set up your timer. You should rehearse this.

8. Students may help each other construct and/or setup, but each student must have his/her own timer and completed write-up.
9. I will measure elapsed time using my cell phone. Because of the limits of human reaction time, results within 0.1 s of each other are equivalent.
10. If your timer completes all of its actions in less than eight (8.0) seconds, or greater than twelve (12.0) seconds, you will lose points on the project. This is because some people fail to do the assignment in advance and cobble together whatever they can at the last minute. If you do this, you should expect to receive a lower grade.

Your handwritten write-up should include the following sections, and is also due on **Day 1 (August 31)**:

- 1) Title & Objective: a descriptive title and the objective (purpose) of the experiment;
- 2) Background: your experimental objective and your overall approach to meeting it;
- 3) Procedure: a detailed description of how you built your timer and how you operate it; Someone else in this class must be able to follow your procedure and replicate what you did.
- 4) Data & Observations: list the time for each of your trial runs (you need a minimum of eight separate data points), and a description of any adjustments/changes you made after each one;
- 5) Analysis: calculations, quantitative (description) and qualitative (numerical) error analysis;
- 6) Conclusion: a 1–2 sentence summary of whether or not you achieved your objective.
- 7) A minimum of one or a maximum of two photographs of the working of your timer.

2026 Summer Reading and Assignments

AP Biology

Dr. Allyson Shepherd

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Welcome to AP Biology! It is assumed that you are taking this course because you are interested in the world of biology. To foster and grow that interest, you will be reading and analyzing “Everything is Tuberculosis” by John Green. Your reading of the book and analysis of the text must be completed before **8 am on Day 1 of the school year (August 31)**. Students that fail to complete the summer assignment may be dismissed from the class.

1. Task 1: Acquire a physical copy of *Everything is Tuberculosis* by John Green. Join Google Classroom for this class. The join code is: tz2lwnho.

2. Task 2: Answer the following questions via handwritten paper. You do not need to rewrite the questions, just label your answers to correspond to the letters listed by each prompt below:

- a. How does Green support the claim that TB is a disease shaped by injustice and inequity? What specific examples from the book are most compelling?
- b. How does the historical romanticization of TB, as described by Green, illuminate current issues surrounding health and social justice?
- c. What role does stigma play in shaping the experiences of TB patients, historically and today?
- d. Explain the phrase "TB anywhere is a threat everywhere." How does this shape your view on global health as a shared responsibility?

3. Task 3 (to be completed before we return from All-School Camping, Sept. 11):

This course will also require you to purchase the Biozone for AP Bio workbook. You need the one with the cougar on the cover, it covers the full school year. You may purchase the workbook directly from the [manufacturer](#) or from [Amazon](#). You must have the book before we return from All-School Camping.

2026 Summer Reading and Assignments

AP Environmental Science

Dr. Allyson Shepherd

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Welcome to AP Environmental Science! After reading *The Sixth Extinction* by Elizabeth Kolbert, please complete the following *three* tasks and share them **by 8am on August 31, 2026**. Your responses to the first task must be submitted as a handwritten analysis. Also, please join Google Classroom (join code: rlzfnxj) to complete Task 2. If you have any questions please contact me by email (ashepherd@ovs.org). Students that fail to complete the summer assignment may be dismissed from the class.

- PART 1:** **To be handwritten and turned in on August 31.** In each chapter of Kolbert's book, the author discusses either an historical or an ongoing extinction, the factors that contributed to it, and the research or science that has been (or is being) conducted to evaluate the species. In each chapter, the author presents **evidence** that **justifies** the claims she is reviewing. *Please choose any TWO chapters in the book (except Chapters 1 and 13!) and respond to the following:*
 - Describe**, as clearly and as simply as you can, the **extinction** that is being addressed in the chapter. If there are multiple extinctions, **describe** them as best as you can.
 - Explain** the major factors or conditions contributing to the **extinction event**.
 - Describe** how the factors or conditions contributing to the extinction came about (i.e., are they biologic in origin? Anthropogenic? Biochemical? Climate-related?).
 - Evaluate** whether you think the **evidence** cited for the cause of the extinction is plausible. Use the Notes and Bibliography sections in the back of the book.
- PART 2:** **To be completed on Google Classroom by August 31.** For any one chapter of the book (*except Chapters 1 and 13!*), create a Google Slides ONE SLIDE SUMMARY of that chapter and attach to the shared slideshow on Google Classroom.

Your ONE SLIDE SUMMARY must have the *minimum* 5 components (see the slideshow for Ch. 1 example):

- Chapter number, chapter title, and YOUR NAME;
 - One (1) picture/photo summarizing the chapter;
 - One (1) weblink to a reputable source of information about the subject (non-Wikipedia!);
 - Two bullets of text (your words) summarizing the extinction or event;
 - One additional bullet regarding current species status, on-going research, or new data.
- PART 3:** Listen to the following Ted Talk by environmentalist Stewart Brand:

[The Dawn of De-Extinction](#) We will discuss this Ted Talk along with *Chapters 12 and 13 of Kolbert's book* during the first week of school.