

Senior English: Advanced Placement English
Summer Reading

Lord of the Flies by William Golding

This novel is noteworthy because of its central theme: that civilization is a veneer and that beneath humanity's outward appearance lies an essential savagery. The author's dark view of life is woven throughout the story of a group of inexperienced prep school boys stranded on a deserted island. Students will need to focus first on basic plot. Following discussions, the essay assessment will focus on literary devices and their impact on the novel as a whole. This, the first novel tested, begins with a reading quiz, followed by discussion, and ends with an in-class timed essay. (3-4 days)

Tess of the D'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy

This novel traces the life of Tess Durbeyfield, from her youth in Marlott to her final days at Stonehenge, in England. The novel focuses on her innocence, her troubled circumstances, and her difficulties in dealing with the double standards and the hypocrisy of Victorian life. The story is intriguing, especially the relationship between Tess and Angel Clare. The reading quiz tests students' understanding of the basic plot. Following discussions of setting and characterizations, students will write an in-class timed essay. This, the second novel assessed, begins with a reading quiz, followed by discussions, and ends with an in-class timed essay. (4 days)

Wise Blood by Flannery O'Connor

This is a Southern Gothic novel that, according to the author, is deeply religious. The story is of Hazel Motes, who returns from the army a changed man. He turns his back on his past and focuses on a new life. His resultant behavior is perverse and leads to the establishment of a Church Without Christ. This, too, is unfulfilling. As are most novels of this genre, the situation and characters are often comical but disturbing. Students should read first for basic plot, and then reassess their understanding of the odd characters and the causes of the main character's final epiphany. Directed questions will assist student understanding. The essay prompt (after the quiz and several discussions) will deal with Flannery O'Connor's characterizations.(4 days, perhaps 5)