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AP ENGLISH LITERATURE · FREE RESOURCE

Full-Year Study Plan, 8-Week Plan, and 2-Week Cram Plan

Three ready-to-use schedules for AP English Literature, plus a self-study reading list of 40 poems and 20 prose works (all in the public domain) and a list of Question 3 works to prepare.

How the plans fit together

PLAN	USE IT WHEN	CORE IDEA
Full-year plan	You are starting in the fall	Build reading skills by genre, add timed writing early, use practice exams as checkpoints
8-week plan	You have two months	Compress the skills, write all three essays weekly, take two full exams
2-week cram plan	The exam is close	Fix your weakest skill, drill pacing, take one full exam

You will need: the five practice exams in folder 01, the Big Idea skills guides in folder 03, the step-by-step guides in folder 04, the vocabulary documents in folder 05, and the error log and calendar in folder 07.

Weekly routines for every plan

ROUTINE	TIME	WHAT TO DO
Read	20 minutes, 3–5 days a week	Read one poem or a short prose passage from the lists below. Annotate with the code system.
Vocabulary	10 minutes, daily	Study one list from the 300-word document or review the tone-word bank.
MCQ set	20–30 minutes, twice a week	Complete one passage set (10–12 questions). Log every miss.

ROUTINE	TIME	WHAT TO DO
Timed writing	40 minutes, once a week	Write one essay, rotating poetry, prose, and literary argument.
Reflect	15 minutes, weekly	Score the essay, fill the reflection sheet, update the error log.

Plan A: Full-year study plan (about 36 weeks)

WEEKS	FOCUS	KEY DOCUMENTS	CHECKPOINT
1-4	Close reading basics: speaker, situation, tone. Learn TPCASTT and the annotation code.	Analysis Frameworks; Poetry MCQ guide	One timed poetry essay
5-8	Character (CHR). How characters are built, how they change, and what they want.	Character guide; Prose and Drama MCQ guide	Prose MCQ set
9-12	Setting (SET) and Structure (STR). How place and organization shape meaning.	Setting and Structure guides	One timed prose essay
13-16	Narration (NAR). Point of view, reliability, distance.	Narration guide	Poetry MCQ set
17-20	Figurative language (FIG). Imagery, metaphor, irony, and word choice.	Figurative Language guide; tone-word bank	Timed poetry essay
21-24	Literary argumentation (LAN). Build a thesis, use evidence, add sophistication.	LAN guide; Q3 guide	Timed Q3 essay
25-27	Build your Q3 works: prepare three novels or plays with data sheets.	Major Works Data Sheet; Q3 guide	Q3 essay on a new prompt
28-30	Practice Exam 1 (full), then review the error log.	Practice Exam 1 and key	Record the score
31-33	Targeted review, then Practice Exam 2 .	Error log; relevant guides	Compare to Exam 1
34	Practice Exam 3 , full timing.	Practice Exam 3	Full exam
35	Light review: vocabulary, rubric rows, pacing.	Test-Day Playbook	One short essay

WEEKS	FOCUS	KEY DOCUMENTS	CHECKPOINT
36	Exam week: no new material. Rest.	Test-Day Playbook	None

Plan B: 8-week plan

WEEK	FOCUS	TASKS
1	Diagnostic and foundations	Take a half-length diagnostic (one poem set, one prose set, one essay). Read the AP Lit Exam Explained and the Rubrics Decoded. Start the error log.
2	Poetry	Poetry MCQ guide; Figurative Language guide; one timed poetry essay.
3	Prose	Prose and Drama MCQ guide; Character and Narration guides; one timed prose essay.
4	Literary argument	Q3 guide; build data sheets for three works; one timed Q3 essay.
5	Practice Exam 1 (full)	Review every miss. Find your two weakest skills.
6	Targeted repair	Read the guides for your two weakest skills; do the skill builders; one timed essay of your weakest type.
7	Practice Exam 2 (full)	Compare to Exam 1. Rewrite your lowest-scoring essay.
8	Taper	One more timed essay, the pacing plan, vocabulary review, and rest.

Plan C: 2-week cram plan

DAY	TASK
1	Take a full practice exam (Exam 1). Score it with the calculator.
2	Review every miss and fill the error log. Identify your two weakest skills.
3	Read the guides for those skills. Do 15 related MCQs.

DAY	TASK
4	Study the Rubrics Decoded. Write a poetry essay in 40 minutes. Score it.
5	Write a prose essay in 40 minutes. Score it.
6	Write a Q3 essay on a prepared work in 40 minutes. Score it.
7	Rest or light review: tone words, key terms, thesis templates.
8	Take a second full practice exam (Exam 2).
9	Update the error log. Fix the top two error codes.
10	Skill builder drills for your weakest skill. Rewrite your weakest essay.
11	Timed essay of your weakest type. Review the commentary templates.
12	30 minutes of MCQs. Reread the Test-Day Playbook.
13	Light review only. Prepare your materials.
14	Exam day or the day before: no cramming. Sleep.

Free sources for reading

- [Poetry Foundation](#)
- [Poets.org](#)
- [Project Gutenberg](#)
- [Standard Ebooks](#)
- [Folger Shakespeare](#) (free texts of all plays)
- [Owl Eyes](#) (annotated public-domain texts)
- [LibriVox](#) (free audiobooks)

Self-study reading list: 40 poems

All of these are in the public domain. Search by title and author. Read each poem three times, using the annotation guide.

#	POEM	POET	WHY READ IT
1	Sonnet 18 ("Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?")	William Shakespeare	The Shakespearean sonnet and its turn
2	Sonnet 29 ("When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes")	William Shakespeare	A turn from despair to consolation

#	POEM	POET	WHY READ IT
3	Sonnet 73 ("That time of year thou mayst in me behold")	William Shakespeare	Extended metaphor
4	"Death, be not proud"	John Donne	Direct address and paradox
5	"A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning"	John Donne	The extended conceit
6	"To His Coy Mistress"	Andrew Marvell	Argument in verse
7	"When I Consider How My Light Is Spent"	John Milton	The Petrarchan sonnet
8	"The Tyger"	William Blake	Questions and symbol
9	"London"	William Blake	Repetition and social critique
10	"The Sick Rose"	William Blake	Compression and symbol
11	"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"	William Wordsworth	Nature and memory
12	"The World Is Too Much with Us"	William Wordsworth	The turn and critique
13	"Kubla Khan"	Samuel Taylor Coleridge	Imagery and the fragment
14	"Ozymandias"	Percy Bysshe Shelley	Irony and the frame
15	"Ode to the West Wind"	Percy Bysshe Shelley	Apostrophe and structure
16	"To Autumn"	John Keats	Imagery and personification
17	"When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be"	John Keats	The sonnet and the turn
18	"Ode on a Grecian Urn"	John Keats	Paradox and permanence
19	"She Walks in Beauty"	Lord Byron	Praise and figurative language
20	"Ulysses"	Alfred, Lord Tennyson	The dramatic monologue
21	"My Last Duchess"	Robert Browning	The unreliable speaker
22	"Dover Beach"	Matthew Arnold	Structure and tone
23	"Remember"	Christina Rossetti	The sonnet and tone
24	"Goblin Market" (excerpt)	Christina Rossetti	Narrative poem
25	"Pied Beauty"	Gerard Manley Hopkins	Sprung rhythm and praise
26	"Spring and Fall"	Gerard Manley Hopkins	Address and mortality

#	POEM	POET	WHY READ IT
27	"The Darkling Thrush"	Thomas Hardy	Tone and a late turn
28	"To an Athlete Dying Young"	A. E. Housman	Irony and consolation
29	"I felt a Funeral, in my Brain"	Emily Dickinson	Metaphor and sound
30	"Because I could not stop for Death"	Emily Dickinson	Personification and narrative
31	"Hope is the thing with feathers"	Emily Dickinson	Extended metaphor
32	"I Hear America Singing"	Walt Whitman	Catalog and democratic voice
33	"A Noiseless Patient Spider"	Walt Whitman	Analogy
34	"We Wear the Mask"	Paul Laurence Dunbar	Concealment and irony
35	"Sympathy"	Paul Laurence Dunbar	Imagery and symbol
36	"Mending Wall"	Robert Frost	Dialogue and ambiguity
37	"Nothing Gold Can Stay"	Robert Frost	Compression
38	"The Road Not Taken"	Robert Frost	Irony and tone
39	"The Second Coming"	William Butler Yeats	Imagery and prophecy
40	"If We Must Die"	Claude McKay	The sonnet as protest

Self-study reading list: 20 prose works

#	WORK	AUTHOR	NOTES
1	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> (1813)	Jane Austen	Irony and social comedy
2	<i>Frankenstein</i> (1818)	Mary Shelley	Frame narrative and responsibility
3	<i>Jane Eyre</i> (1847)	Charlotte Brontë	First-person narrative and independence
4	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> (1847)	Emily Brontë	Nested narration and obsession
5	<i>Great Expectations</i> (1861)	Charles Dickens	Retrospective narration
6	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i> (1850)	Nathaniel Hawthorne	Symbol and guilt
7	"Bartleby, the Scrivener" (1853)	Herman Melville	Ambiguity and the observer
8	<i>Heart of Darkness</i> (1899)	Joseph Conrad	Frame narrative and irony

#	WORK	AUTHOR	NOTES
9	<i>The Awakening</i> (1899)	Kate Chopin	Setting and selfhood
10	"The Story of an Hour" (1894)	Kate Chopin	Compression and irony
11	<i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i> (1892)	Charlotte Perkins Gilman	Unreliable narration
12	<i>Dubliners</i> (1914), "Araby" and "The Dead"	James Joyce	Epiphany
13	<i>Ethan Frome</i> (1911)	Edith Wharton	Framing and setting
14	<i>My Ántonia</i> (1918)	Willa Cather	Memory and landscape
15	<i>The Great Gatsby</i> (1925)	F. Scott Fitzgerald	Narrator and symbol (check public-domain status in your country)
16	<i>The Metamorphosis</i> (1915)	Franz Kafka	Alienation and allegory
17	<i>Hamlet</i> (c. 1600)	William Shakespeare	Soliloquy and doubt
18	<i>Macbeth</i> (c. 1606)	William Shakespeare	Ambition and imagery
19	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> (1895)	Oscar Wilde	Satire and wit
20	<i>A Doll's House</i> (1879)	Henrik Ibsen	Realism and the closing choice

Question 3: works to prepare

Prepare **three** works you know well and can use for many prompts. A good set combines different periods and different kinds of conflict.

CHOOSE	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	EXAMPLE SETS
One older work	A rich plot, central symbol, and clear themes	<i>Frankenstein</i> , <i>Jane Eyre</i> , <i>Hamlet</i> , <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>
One twentieth-century work	A distinctive narrative approach	<i>The Great Gatsby</i> , <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (check availability in your country), <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>
One work from a different tradition	A different cultural or formal perspective	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> , <i>Beloved</i> , <i>The House on Mango Street</i>

For each, complete a Major Works Data Sheet. Practice using one work against five different prompts. A strong prepared work lets you write on conflict, identity, place, secrets, family, power, and social critique with accurate evidence.

Note on copyright: several twentieth-century works above remain under copyright in some countries. Borrow them from a library rather than seeking unauthorized copies.

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