HONORS/DUAL CREDIT/AP ENGLISH BOOK CHOICES

English 2 Honors (9th grade Honors):
SELECT ONE BOOK FROM THE FOLLOWING CHOICES:

Alas Babylon by Pat Frank
This true modern masterpiece is built around the two fateful words that make up the title and herald the end—“Alas, Babylon.” When a nuclear holocaust ravages the United States, a thousand years of civilization are stripped away overnight, and tens of millions of people are killed instantly.

But for one small town in Florida, miraculously spared, the struggle is just beginning, as men and women of all backgrounds join together to confront the darkness. The tale paints an ominous picture of the terrible possibilities of the nuclear age. The book, though, is not primarily about the military aspects, or science, or fighting back. It is about survival of the people after the attack has destroyed the infrastructure of society and anarchy reigns, and how they cope with it. Would you be able to survive after being cut off from the rest of the world? How would you cope?

The Lord of the Flies by William Golding
Are you familiar with the phrase “It’s all fun and games until someone gets hurt?” This book examines what could happen when you have unstructured, unsupervised time on your hands. What would you do if there were no adults? What if no one is watching you or enforcing rules? What is more important—keeping up a good camp with order and responsibility or having fun with no rules? How long could you live like this before things go bad? Which should come first, your wants or your needs? This is a journey that takes you back to man’s original need to hunt and slay the “beast,” but just who or what is the “beast”? Is it the wild boar that is a possible food source? Is it a dark mysterious force that lurks just outside the camp fire? Or . . . are you the “beast”?

English 3 British Literature Honors (10th grade Honors):
SELECT ONE BOOK FROM THE FOLLOWING CHOICES:

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë
Charlotte Bronte’s impassioned novel is the love story of Jane Eyre, a plain yet spirited governess, and her employer, the arrogant, brooding Mr. Rochester. Published in 1847 under the pseudonym of Currer Bell, the book heralded a new kind of heroine—one whose virtuous integrity, keen intellect and tireless perseverance broke through class barriers to win equal stature with the man she loved. Hailed by William Makepeace Thackeray as “the masterwork of a great genius,” Jane Eyre is still regarded, over a century later, as one of the finest novels in English literature.

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen
Austen trains her sights on a country village and a few families—in this case, the Bennets, the Philips, and the Lucases. Into their midst comes Mr. Bingley, a single man of good fortune, and his friend, Mr. Darcy, who is even richer. Mrs. Bennet, who married above her station, sees their arrival as an opportunity to marry off at least one of her five daughters. Bingley is complaisant and easily charmed by the eldest Bennet girl, Jane; Darcy, however, is harder to please. Put off by Mrs. Bennet’s vulgarity and the untoward behavior of the three younger daughters, he is unable to see the true worth of the older girls, Jane and Elizabeth. His excessive pride offends Lizzy, who is more than willing to believe the worst that other people have to say of him; when George Wickham, a soldier stationed in the village, does indeed have a discreditable tale to tell, his words fall on fertile ground.

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens
Classic novel of consuming passions, played out against the lonely moors of northern England, recounts
the turbulent and tempestuous love story of Cathy and Heathcliff. Heathcliff and Cathy, childhood playmates who grow into soulmates, believe they’re destined to love each other forever, but when cruelty and snobbery separate them, their untamed emotions literally consume them. Both poetic and incisive, this novel examines the dark depths of human psychology as the soul searches for love, understanding, and acceptance.

The storming of the Bastille . . . the death carts with their doomed human cargo . . . the swift drop of the guillotine blade—this is the French Revolution that Charles Dickens vividly captures in this famous work. With dramatic eloquence he brings to life a time of terror and treason, a starving people rising in frenzy and hate to overthrow a corrupt and decadent regime. With insight and compassion he casts his novel of unforgettable scenes with unforgettable characters.

Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë

English 4 American Literature Honors (11th grade Honors)
SELECT ONE BOOK FROM THE FOLLOWING CHOICES:

The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton
The Age of Innocence is the haunting story of the struggle between love and duty in Gilded Age New York told through the eyes of Newland Archer and his betrothed, May Welland. A young lawyer on the rise, Newland Archer needs only a society wife to solidify his position, but finds himself torn after he meets and falls deeply in love with May’s disgraced cousin, the Countess Olenska. This is an exclusive, stifling social world, which is the only world Newland has ever known and the "home" Ellen has longed for all her life, and the society is so established and rigid that both of these strong people find it overwhelming. Even though neither of them is happy here, what choice do they have? While the attraction between Archer Newland and Countess Olenska is undeniably strong, can Archer Newland deny the foundation of his upbringing? Can he defy the monster that is "society?" Can love truly conquer all?

A Streetcar Named Desire paired with Our Town (by Tennessee Williams, by Thornton Wilder, respectively)
A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams (paired with Our Town)
A powerful look at the culture clash between the Old South and the rising urban industrial class when fading southern belle Blanche Dubois moves in with her sister Stella and brother-in-law Stanley. Out of touch with reality and living in her own fantasies, Blanche is tormented by her brother-in-law as she struggles to cope in the new working class society of the New South.

Our Town (paired with A Streetcar Named Desire)
Do people really understand the significance of their lives while they are living or does it take death to make sense of it? Taking place between 1901 and 1913, this three-act drama focuses on the seemingly average lives of the citizens of Grover’s Corner. But are these lives really what they appear to be? The characters share flashbacks, monologues and events as they examine the milestones of life: birth, marriage, and inevitable death as part of the cycle of life.

The Sun Also Rises by Ernest Hemingway
What does it mean to be a part of the “Lost Generation”? In his career-making novel, Hemingway provides a poignant look at the disillusionment and angst of the post-World War I generation. The story follows the flamboyant Lady Brett Ashley and the hapless Jake Barnes as they journey from the wild nightlife of 1920s Paris to the brutal bullfighting rings of Spain with a motley group of expatriates. It is an age of moral bankruptcy, spiritual dissolution, unrealized love and vanishing illusions. Every element of every great Hemingway book can be seen here - plenty of vivid descriptions; moments of strange, elegiac melancholy; the human spirit fighting against the world; loneliness, isolation, and endurance. They're all
here as Jake struggles to find his place in a world that is far less innocent now.

English 5 Honors (12th grade Honors): SELECT ONE BOOK FROM THE FOLLOWING CHOICES:

*Hard Times* by Charles Dickens  
The novel is set in a system whose schools eschew the arts and humanities. These are hard times, but not times without humor. School teacher Gradgrind makes it clear that feelings, art, decoration, are worthless distractions. Only facts have value. Gradgrind's own children, Tom and Louisa, prove early victims of this "just the facts" upbringing. By way of contrast, Sissy Jupe, perhaps Gradgrind's worst student, the indigent daughter of circus performers, channels her innate creativity to save Tom from jail and Louisa from an unwanted husband.

*A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving  
Owen Meany is a dwarfish boy with a strange voice who accidentally kills his best friend's mom with a baseball and believes--accurately--that he is an instrument of God, to be redeemed by martyrdom.

*The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy  
The novel opens with a poor workman named Michael Henchard, in a fit of drunken rage when he sells his wife and baby daughter to a stranger at a country fair. Stricken with remorse, Henchard forsakes alcohol and works hard to become a prosperous businessman and the respected mayor of Casterbridge. But he cannot erase his past. His wife ultimately returns to offer Henchard the choice of redemption or a further descent into his own self-destructive nature.

*To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Wolfe  
The three sections of the book take place between 1910 and 1920 and revolve around various members of the Ramsay family during visits to their summer residence on the Isle of Skye in Scotland. Mrs. Ramsay, with her emotional, poetic frame of mind, contrasts Mr. Ramsay, a self-centered philosopher, but both are flawed by their limited perspectives. A painter and friend of the family, Lily Briscoe, works on completing a painting throughout the novel.

AP English Language:

SELECT ONE BOOK FROM THE FOLLOWING CHOICES: (The Awakening and Ethan Frome are a paired assignment)

*The Awakening, Kate Chopin (paired with Ethan Frome below)*  
First published in 1899, this beautiful, brief novel so disturbed critics and the public that it was banished for decades afterward. Now widely read and admired, *The Awakening* has been hailed as an early vision of woman’s emancipation. This sensuous book tells of a woman’s abandonment of her family, her seduction, and her awakening to desires and passions that threaten to consume her. Originally entitled “A Solitary Soul,” this portrait of Edna Pontellier is a landmark in American fiction, rooted firmly in the romantic tradition of Herman Melville and Emily Dickinson. Here, a woman in search of self-discovery turns away from convention and society, and toward the primal, irresistibly attracted to nature and the senses.

*Ethan Frome, Edith Wharton (paired with The Awakening above)*  
Set against a bleak New England background, the novel tells of Frome, his ailing wife Zeena and her companion Mattie Silver, superbly delineating the characters of each as they are drawn relentlessly into a deep-rooted domestic struggle. Burdened by poverty and spiritually dulled by a loveless marriage to an older woman. Frome is emotionally stirred by the arrival of a youthful cousin who is employed as household help. Mattie's presence not only brightens a gloomy house but stirs long-dormant feelings in
Ethan. Their growing love for one another, discovered by an embittered wife, presages an ending to this grim tale that is both shocking and savagely ironic.

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**Invisible Man, Ralph Ellison**
First published in 1952 and immediately hailed as a masterpiece, *Invisible Man* is one of those rare novels that have changed the shape of American literature. For not only does Ralph Ellison’s nightmare journey across the racial divide tell unparalleled truths about the nature of bigotry and its effects on the minds of both victims and perpetrators, it gives us an entirely new model of what a novel can be. Ralph Ellison’s nameless protagonist ushers readers into a parallel universe that throws our own into harsh and even hilarious relief. Suspenseful and sardonic, narrated in a voice that takes in the range of the American language, black and white, *Invisible Man* is one of the most audacious and dazzling novels of our century. It has appeared in the Open Response Question on the A. P. exam more times than any other novel.

**The Poisonwood Bible, Barbara Kingslover**
When missionary Nathan Price takes his wife and four daughters off to Africa, salvation is the one thing they're not likely to find. The year is 1959 and the place is the Belgian Congo. Nathan, a Baptist preacher, has come to spread the Word in a remote village reachable only by airplane. To say that he and his family are woefully unprepared would be an understatement: "We came from Bethlehem, Georgia, bearing Betty Crocker cake mixes into the jungle," says Leah, one of Nathan's daughters. But of course it isn't long before they discover that the tremendous humidity has rendered the mixes unusable, their clothes are unsuitable, and they've arrived in the middle of political upheaval as the Congolese seek to wrest independence from Belgium. In addition to poisonous snakes, dangerous animals, and the hostility of the villagers to Nathan's fiery take-no-prisoners brand of Christianity, there are also rebels in the jungle and the threat of war in the air.

*AP Recommended (but not required) Purchase for Class Use:*
*Rhetorical Devices: A Handbook and Activities for Student Writers*
*Note: In the past, some students preferred to take notes in their own copies rather than borrow class copies.*