LAGUNA BLANCA SCHOOL
SUMMER READING 2019 FOR STUDENTS ENTERING
AP ENGLISH LITERATURE & COMPOSITION

All Laguna Blanca students entering grades 5-12 in the fall are required to read at least two books this summer. Because these works will form the basis for class discussion and writing assignments in English classes during the opening weeks of school, we ask that students use post-its or a pen/pencil to mark passages that they think are important. You do not need to annotate (in other words, you don’t need to write notes in the margins). Please buy only new books or used books that have no marking in them at all. The required books can be purchased at Chaucer’s Bookstore, 3321 State Street, Loreto Plaza, Santa Barbara, CA.

TWO REQUIRED READINGS:

Charlotte Brontë’s most beloved novel describes the passionate love between the courageous orphan Jane Eyre and the brilliant, brooding, and domineering Rochester. The loneliness and cruelty of Jane’s childhood strengthens her natural independence and spirit, which prove invaluable when she takes a position as a governess at Thornfield Hall. But after she falls in love with her sardonic employer, her discovery of his terrible secret forces her to make a heart-wrenching choice. Ever since its publication in 1847 in England, Jane Eyre has enthralled every kind of reader, from the most critical and cultivated to the youngest and most unabashedly romantic. It lives as one of the great triumphs of storytelling and as a moving and unforgettable portrayal of a woman’s quest for self-respect.

Heart of Darkness (1899) is a novella by Polish-British novelist Joseph Conrad, written as a frame narrative, about Charles Marlow's experience as an ivory transporter down the Congo River in Central Africa. The river is "a mighty big river, that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land". In the course of his travel in central Africa, Marlow becomes obsessed with Mr. Kurtz. The story is a complex exploration of the attitudes people hold on what constitutes a barbarian versus a civilized society and the attitudes on colonialism and racism that were part of European imperialism.

IN ADDITION, please read at least one of the books listed below. This list includes the titles which have appeared on the AP English Literature Exam. The more AP-level works of literature you read, the greater your cultural literacy and the better your preparation for the AP Exam (and for college!) will be.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE Jane Austen (British)
Jane Austen’s witty comedy of manners is one of the most universally loved and admired English novels of all time. Spirited Elizabeth Bennet is one of five daughters, and with no male heir, the Bennet estate must someday pass to their priggish cousin William Collins. Therefore, the girls must marry well—and thus is launched the story of Elizabeth and the arrogant bachelor Mr. Darcy. Pride and Prejudice is Jane Austen’s masterwork, an entertaining portrait of matrimonial rites and rivalries, timeless in its social satire.
THE AWAKENING Kate Chopin (American)
A wake-up call to women all over the country, this landmark novel of early American feminism tells of a Louisiana wife who discovers the strength of her own sexuality and tries to wrench it from the hands of a patriarchal society. And just as Edna Pontellier is ostracized for trying to master her own sexual fate, so did Chopin's reputation suffer after she wrote this book. Today The Awakening is considered a masterpiece and, along with Chopin's short stories, has set a standard for younger generations of women who have learned to value their independence and authenticity.

CATCH-22 Joseph Heller (American)
The novel is set during World War II, from 1942 to 1944. It follows the life of Captain John Yossarian, a U.S. Army Air Forces B-25 bombardier. Most of the events in the book occur while the fictional 256th Squadron is based on the island of Pianosa, in the Mediterranean Sea, west of Italy. The novel looks into the experiences of Yossarian and the other airmen in the camp, who attempt to maintain their sanity while fulfilling their service requirements so that they may return home.

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS Ernest Hemingway (American)
In 1937 Ernest Hemingway traveled to Spain to cover the civil war there for the North American Newspaper Alliance. Three years later he completed the greatest novel to emerge from "the good fight," For Whom the Bell Tolls. The story of Robert Jordan, a young American in the International Brigades attached to an antifascist guerilla unit in the mountains of Spain, it tells of loyalty and courage, love and defeat, and the tragic death of an ideal. In his portrayal of Jordan's love for the beautiful Maria and his superb account of El Sordo's last stand, in his brilliant travesty of La Pasionaria and his unwillingness to believe in blind faith, Hemingway creates a work at once rare and beautiful, strong and brutal, compassionate, moving, and wise.

SIDDHARTHA Hermann Hesse (German)
This classic of twentieth-century literature chronicles the spiritual evolution of a man living in India at the time of the Buddha—a tale that has inspired generations of readers. We are invited along on Siddhartha’s journey, experiencing his highs, lows, loves, and disappointments along with the beauty and intricacies of the mind, the natural world, and everything he encounters on the path to enlightenment.

FOCUS Arthur Miller (American)
Written in 1945, Focus was Arthur Miller’s first novel and one of the first books to directly confront American anti-Semitism. It remains as chilling and incisive today as it was at the time of its controversial debut. As World War II draws to a close, anti-Semitism is alive and well in Brooklyn, New York. Here, Newman, an American of English descent, floats through a world of multiethnic neighborhoods indifferent to the racism around him. That is, until he begins to wear glasses that render him “Jewish” in the eyes of others, making him the target of anti-Semitic prosecution. As he and his wife find friendship and support from a Jewish immigrant, Newman slowly begins to understand the racial hatreds that surround him.

THE DEATH OF IVAN ILYICH Leo Tolstoy (Russian)
Tolstoy’s most famous novella translated is an intense and moving examination of death and the possibilities of redemption. Ivan Ilyich is a middle-aged man who has spent his life focused on his career as a bureaucrat and emotionally detached from his wife and children. After an
accident, he finds himself on the brink of an untimely death, which he sees as a terrible injustice. Face to face with his mortality, Ivan begins to question everything he has believed about the meaning of life. *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* is a masterpiece of psychological realism and philosophical profundity that has inspired generations of readers.

**RECOMMENDED READING:**

*HOW TO READ LIKE A PROFESSOR* (2014) by Thomas C. Foster ISBN-10: 0062301675
Harper Perennial; Revised edition (Feb. 25, 2014)
A lively introduction to literature and literary basics, including symbols, themes, and contexts. An excellent preparatory text for the AP Exam.