

# Incoming 11th Grade AICE Summer Writing Assignment

Ms. Todd

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Welcome to 11th Grade AICE English Literature! To help prepare you for the course, you will complete the following **summer assignment**, which is due to me Friday, August 15, 2025 before the end of day.

The assignment needs to be typed in 12pt Times New Roman black font, double spaced in a Google Doc. This needs to be submitted on Canvas. In the top left corner please include your first and last name, class period, assignment title (11th Grade AICE Summer 2025 Assignment), and date submitted.

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## **Part 1 Read & Complete Author Research:**

You will need to purchase and read [The Underground Railroad](#) by Colson Whitehead

[Amazon](#)

[Books-a-Million](#)

[Barnes and Noble](#)

In AICE English Literature, we always begin by researching the author for background knowledge. It is important to build context and connections. When researching Colson Whitehead, you will focus on the following questions:

- Where is he from?
- What time period did he write this piece of text?
- What are some of his other credits? Does he write poetry, plays, or novels?
- What are the common themes present in his works?

*\*This information should be written at the start of your Google Doc labeled Part 1.*

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## **Part 2: Journal Passages**

**You will complete a dialectical journal as you read *The Underground Railroad*.**

After you have read, select five important passages from the novel. Choose passages that have had a strong impact on you as a reader. Select passages from the beginning, the middle, and the end of the novel. Each passage should comprise **no more than one full page of the novel**. These passages may represent major themes, character development, or other significant elements of the text.

For each of your five (5) selected passages type a short analytical paragraph (150-250 words).

Include the following in each paragraph:

- o Write the page or chapter number(s) and set up the context- What is happening in the novel when the passage takes place? A brief sentence or two should accomplish this purpose.
  - o Explain why you think this passage is significant to the novel (major plot or character development, thematic significance, striking use of language, tone shift, etc.) **Do not summarize the plot.** Analyze **WHY** the author included this passage in the novel or **WHY** it stood out to you as a reader.
  - o Use details (quotes) from the text and cite page numbers.
  - o **DO NOT USE OUTSIDE SOURCES TO HELP YOU COMPLETE THIS TASK.**
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### Part 3: Characterization

Identify the following characters from the prose, assign 3 adjectives to each, and explain why you associated those with each character:

Cora (aka Bessie)  
Caesar  
Ajarry  
Mabel  
Lovey  
Terrance Randall  
James Randall  
Arnold Ridgeway  
Sam  
Martin Wells  
Ethel Wells  
Royal

Consider the following points about your character when choosing your adjectives:

- Personality
  - Appearance and mannerisms
  - Thoughts and motivations
  - Dialogue that allows a character's words to reveal something important about his or her nature
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## **Journal Format & Tips**

Create your journal by dividing the pages vertically into two columns (like Cornell Notes). In the left-hand column, record passages from the assigned text and corresponding page numbers. You can title this column “**Readings**” or “**Passages**.” The column subheads can include the specific title and author of the work if reading more than one book. In the right-hand column, which you can label “**Responses**,” record your personal reactions and insights to the text so they correspond with each selected passage on the left-hand side. In a true dialectic fashion, the journal should mirror your back-and-forth reasoning process.

### **Don't Fear the Informal**

While injecting your own thoughts and opinions into a writing assignment often is dangerous territory, using first-person point of view and describing personal reactions are key components of journal responses. Don't be afraid to discuss your emotional responses to the reading, personal experiences that mirror its ideas or ways you can apply its message to your own life and education. If you're responding to a short story, for example, you might compare and contrast yourself with the main character and show how your personal experiences helped you understand him better. The more honest you are in your reflection, the most useful the assignment will be.

### **Be Observant, Not Opinionated**

While journal responses are more informal than most writing assignments, they don't give you license to spout your views without backing them up. Your journal response should reveal your thought process of engaging with the text more than just showcase your personal emotions and thoughts. Avoid stating how much you “liked” or “hated” the reading; instead, delve deeper by determining what specific aspects were powerful or unsettling. To take your reflections to a higher level, try examining how your opinions changed as you analyzed specific passages or researched the topic on your own.

### **Critique the Craft**

Whether you're reading fiction or nonfiction, putting the author's writing style under a microscope can help you examine how the main theme or argument develops throughout the piece. Tone, description and persuasive techniques are all worth studying as you delve into the text. If you're reading a short story, for example, you might choose to analyze the story's setting and how the author uses imagery to bring it to life, while a journal response on an editorial might explore the author's strategies for getting readers to consider his position on an issue.

### **Ask Questions**

While some reading assignments may present clear topics for journal responses, it may be harder to crack the surface of others. If an aspect of the reading confuses you, try using your journal response as a tool for answering your questions. You might pose your question in the introduction, then search the text for direct quotes that demonstrate how you think the author responds, creating a conversation between you and the text over the issue. As a result, your response can become not just a reading reflection, but documentation of your attempts to resolve your uncertainty.

## Set texts for examination in 2026

The set texts listed below are for examination in **2026**.

Set texts regularly rotate on the syllabus and may change from one year of examination to the next. Before you begin teaching, check the set text list for the year in which your candidates will take their examinations.

### Paper 1 Drama and Poetry

Learners study **two** set texts, **one** from Section A and **one** from Section B.

Candidates answer **two** questions, **one** from each section.

#### Section A Drama

Edward Albee	<i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i>
Errol John	<i>Moon on a Rainbow Shawl</i>
William Shakespeare	<i>The Tempest</i>
John Webster	<i>The Duchess of Malfi</i>

#### Section B Poetry

Maya Angelou	<i>And Still I Rise</i>
William Blake	Selected Poems from <i>Songs of Innocence and of Experience</i>
Sylvia Plath	Selected Poems from <i>Ariel</i> (1965)
<i>Songs of Ourselves, Volume 2</i>	Selected Poems (new selection for 2026)

### Paper 2 Prose and Unseen

Learners study **one** set text from Section A. For Section B, learners prepare to respond to an unseen text that may be poetry, prose or drama.

Candidates answer **two** questions, **one** from each section.

#### Section A Prose

Kiran Desai	<i>The Inheritance of Loss</i>
<i>Stories of Ourselves, Volume 1</i>	Selected Stories (new selection from Volume 1 for 2024, 2025 and 2026)
Evelyn Waugh	<i>A Handful of Dust</i>
Colson Whitehead	<i>The Underground Railroad</i>

#### Section B Unseen

Unseen text