

## A.P. English Literature and Composition

- In-class response essay (first week of school)

**Step 1:** Choose and obtain one book from the list below to read over the summer.

**Step 2:** As you read, consider the book's structure/plot, characters, narration, figurative language, and settings to prepare for an in-class essay during the first week of classes. The in-class writing assignment will give you the opportunity to analyze the literary elements, complexities, and meaning of the work as a whole. You must be ready to write about the book during the first week of classes to earn full credit for the assignment.

### *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin



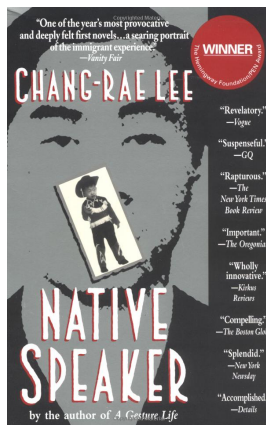
Set in New Orleans and on the Louisiana Gulf coast at the end of the 19th century, the plot centers on Edna Pontellier and her struggle to reconcile her increasingly unorthodox views on femininity and motherhood with the prevailing social attitudes of the turn-of-the-century American South. It is one of the earliest American novels that focuses on women's issues without condescension. It is also widely seen as a landmark work of early feminism, generating a mixed reaction from contemporary readers and critics. The novel's blend of realistic narrative, incisive social commentary, and psychological complexity makes *The Awakening* a precursor of American modernist literature; it prefigures the works of American novelists such as William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway and echoes the works of contemporaries such as Edith Wharton and Henry James.

## *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko



Thirty years since its original publication, *Ceremony* remains one of the most profound and moving works of Native American literature, a novel that is itself a ceremony of healing. Tayo, a World War II veteran of mixed ancestry, returns to the Laguna Pueblo Reservation. He is deeply scarred by his experience as a prisoner of the Japanese and further wounded by the rejection he encounters from his people. Only by immersing himself in the Indian past can he begin to regain the peace that was taken from him. Masterfully written, filled with the somber majesty of Pueblo myth, *Ceremony* is a work of enduring power.

## *Native Speaker* by Chang-Rae Lee



In *Native Speaker*, author Chang-Rae Lee introduces readers to Henry Park. Park has spent his entire life trying to become a true American—a native speaker. But even as the essence of his adopted country continues to elude him, his Korean heritage seems to drift further and further away. Park's harsh Korean upbringing has taught him to hide his emotions, to remember everything he learns, and most of all to feel an overwhelming sense of alienation. In other words, it has shaped him as a natural spy. But the very attributes that help him to excel in his profession put a strain on his marriage to his American wife and stand in the way of his coming to terms with his young son's death. When he is assigned to spy on a rising Korean-American politician, his very identity is tested, and he must figure out who he is amid not only the conflicts within himself but also within the ethnic and political tensions of the New York City streets.