**Major Works Covered in AP Lit/Comp 2016-2017**

***Jane Eyre*** by Charlotte Bronte (1847) Gothic novel

**Style** – Concise, but not oversimplified, Bronte writes in the refined style of someone well-educated.

**Tone** – Bronte wrote it as a narrative autobiography and, thus, the voice reveals much of Bronte’s personal criticisms of Victorian life.

**Symbols** – The Red room (Hell, the womb), porridge (humility, degradation), fire (sexual desire, destruction), ice (Jane’s desire to be less passionate), the splintered tree (portends Jane and Rochester’s divide, can be compared to the new life Jane brings back to Rochester), “The Madwoman in the Attic” (the locking away of a woman’s passions or true feelings)

**Theme** – The struggle to find family, but remain independent

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***Candide*** by Voltaire (1755) Philosophical fiction, satire, Bildungsroman

**Style –** Simplistic style, straightforward

**Tone –** Ironic, understated, sarcastic, hilarious

**Symbols –** Gardens/gardening (Garden of Eden, sex, success, peace), Pangloss (blind optimism and baseless speculation), earthquake (God’s indifference), travel (the broadening of one’s horizons, the prejudices of man)

**Themes** – Optimism’s folly, the hypocrisy of religion, wealth corrupts, uselessness of philosophical speculation

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***Invisible Man*** by Ralph Ellison (1952) Bildungsroman, African-American literature, social commentary

**Style** **–** Like jazz, his writing changes from slow to fast-paced, includes quick switches and unusual repetition

**Tone** – the writing is honest and thoughtful, treating the world with realistic responses

**Symbols –** Liberty paint (perfect white, how white and black combine—leaving white the most prevalent color), vision and sight (too many to mention here, but suffice it to say, it is about being blind to the real world), Sambo doll (racism, stereotyping), briefcase (hanging onto childhood’s dreams, adulthood, meaninglessness of rewards)

**Themes –** Identity, race, ideology, memory (the past), lies/deceit, blind admiration, love, women, ambition, power

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***Great Expectations*** by Charles Dickens (1861) Novel

**Style** – Master of dialect and used “substandard” speech to add to the picture of his characters. He “filled space” because of writing *GE* in a 36-week serial. Dickens used repetition, lists, adjectives, metaphors, similes, and rhythmic word play.

**Tone** – Reflective, remorseful, nostalgic, comical, emotional

**Symbols** – Darkness (juxtaposition of dark/light—one not necessary always good or evil), Mist (the difficulty to see life/people clearly), Locks and keys (secrecy, criminal behavior, luck), Miss Havisham’s Garden (death, loss of innocence, abandonment), time and clocks (one cannot stop time, growing up)

**Themes –** Society and class, Dreams/hopes/plans, Wealth, Friendship, Love, Innocence, Lies

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***Grapes of Wrath*** by John Steinbeck (1939) Novel

**Style** – Steinbeck was dedicated to giving details and his descriptions in *GOW* are intensely precise. He was also poetic in his descriptions.

**Tone –** Angry, passionate, disheartened

**Symbols –** Rose of Sharon’s pregnancy (promise, hope, reality), Joad’s dog (hostility of the classes), road (journey, opportunity, home, hardship, the unknown), bugs (landowner’s treatment of farmers), music (survival, hope), the turtle (perseverance)

**Themes –** Man’s inhumanity to man, dignity, family, the collective good, working together

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***The Kite Runner*** by Khaled Hosseini (2003) Historical fiction, drama

**Style** – Tight (not flowery), cinematic

**Tone** – Tender, ironic, honest

**Symbols** – Kites/Flying kites/fighting kites (prophecy, fate, beauty and violence, the role switching, betrayal, redemption), Myth of Rostam and Sohrab (similarities/differences in Muslims, untimely death, heroes), Pomegranate tree (Amir and Hassan’s relationship), Amir’s scar (the harelip of Hassan, shared love/identity), Slingshot (childhood, importance of standing up for what is right)

**Themes –** Betrayal and redemption, forgiveness, love, social class/ethnicity, immigrant experience

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***Macbeth*** by Shakespeare (1606) Tragedy

**Style –** Poetic, blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter), prose

**Tone** – Foreboding, sinister, somber

**Symbols** – Light and darkness (light: good, dark: evil), Blood (the stain of guilt), Ghosts/apparitions (guilt, fate), Nature (the reflection of the evil violence, the connection between human and nature), Equivocator (the balance of life, the resolution of order)

**Themes** – Corruption power of ambition, the connection of masculinity with cruelty (or the perception of it), the connection of femininity with corrupted power (or the perception of it), the untamed power of the monarchy