

## AP Literature and Composition Summer Homework

Over the summer you have to read the following books:

- *A book of your choice that does not have to be considered “literature” but does have to be a novel and not a kid book. Feel free to contact me via email if you have questions.*
- *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

### ***The Book of your choice assignment:***

- For the book of your choice, read it, read the two articles on what makes a book a classic, and then create a presentation where you argue for or against the book you read being considered a work of literary merit. I have a more detailed explanation further in this packet.

### ***Their Eyes Were Watching God***

- You need to fill out the Novel Insights sheet. You also need to complete the Question 3 Free Response Essay for this book. If you notice both books are on the list you can choose from. However, I am telling you that you are going to write this essay on *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

### **Poetry FRQ & Prose FRQ from the 2018 Test**

- These are the other two essays on the AP test. I am providing you with sheets that give you some information on how to write them. Then you should write them. You may type or handwrite these. The test is timed. So I suggest you sit down and give yourself an hour to write an essay, obviously finish it, but do not take hours upon hours to do this. Obviously I will not know if you do, but know I am expecting you to just time yourself and write the essay in an hour.

**Time Estimate:** Not including reading time (since everyone reads at different rates) the amount of time the essays and presentation should take between 5-8 hours. So I suggest you not wait for the last weekend of the summer to start this. The books will take you a week or two to get through, if you read just a few chapters a day.

### **AP Lit Classroom Page**

If I can, I will add you to the AP Literature classroom page, I will post the work on there and you can ask questions over the summer. Feel free to email me as well: [rkauffman@mlsd.org](mailto:rkauffman@mlsd.org). I cannot guarantee that I will check weekly. Especially before August.

WEDNESDAY, JAN 29, 2014 08:00 PM PST

# What makes a book a classic

## Do Vonnegut and David Foster Wallace qualify, and if not, why not?

LAURA MILLER

TOPICS: [BOOKS](#), [BOOKSTORES](#), [DAVID FOSTER WALLACE](#), [FICTION](#), [ITALO CALVINO](#), [KURT VONNEGUT](#), [LITERARY CLASSICS](#), [P.G. WODEHOUSE](#), [READERS AND READING](#), [ENTERTAINMENT NEWS](#)  
Kurt Vonnegut, David Foster Wallace (Credit: AP/flickr/Steve Rhodes)

What makes a book a classic? That's one of the most acrimonious, endless and irresolvable discussions in the literary world. Like debates over which books are "great" (and why), it's also a mostly pointless question, fodder for overcaffeinated undergraduate bull sessions, feral comments threads and other milieus suffering under the delusion that we can arrive at an ironclad consensus on what constitutes literary merit.

But there are a few places where deciding whether a book is a classic or not has real consequences. One is, obviously, classrooms, but the other is bookstores, as Elizabeth Bluemle of the Flying Pig Bookstore in Vermont let on recently in the blog Shelf Talker. One of the store's staff members recently asked her if he should shelve Seamus Heaney's translation of "Beowulf" with poetry or classics. After some discussion, they went with classics, but as Bluemle explains, "Neither is wrong; like many bookstore decisions, it's booksellers' choice, which mainly boils down to thinking about where customers are most likely to go looking for a title."

The incident prompted Bluemle to observe that books by some authors seem to be "migrating" (presumably reshelfed by junior staffers or customers) from the fiction to the classics section, particularly books by P.G. Wodehouse and Kurt Vonnegut. She's not sure either one belongs there ("yet," in the case of Vonnegut), but she also finds herself wondering why "The Count of Monte Cristo" is shelved in classics while Daphne du Maurier's "Rebecca" remains in fiction. The comparison is subtle but shrewd, as both are well-written novels with potboiler and gothic elements and both were viewed primarily as entertainments when first published.

The cliché people most often cite when defining a classic is "the test of time." "The Count of Monte Cristo" (1844) is a lot older than "Rebecca" (1938), but my completely

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unempirical gut feeling is that they're of about the same literary quality. Why should the years between their publication dates be the defining factor? (I love them both, by the way.) Yet judging literary quality is hopelessly subjective. I think Wodehouse is a better stylist than Vonnegut, but Vonnegut is clearly the more serious writer, a novelist whose work has changed people's lives, not just whiled away a handful of their hours in a state of perfect bliss. On the other hand, perfect bliss is pretty hard to come by in this world

...

Impact and import, historic and artistic, is another quality often demanded of a book before it can be awarded classic status. "Uncle Tom's Cabin," a mediocre novel, sometimes makes it under the classics wire because it had such a profound effect on the conscience of the American public and is thought to have helped precipitate the Civil War. But what about Ayn Rand, whose novels sometimes turn up in the classics category when I'm browsing new releases on the Audible website? "The Fountainhead," however bad a novel, has undoubtedly changed many lives and would appear to have affected the course of the nation's economic history. And what about "On the Road" which to the same reader might seem like an incontestable classic at age 17 and sadly or sentimentally jejune at 45?

It's here, around the borders of classics territory, that the distinctions get tricky. It would be hard to find anyone who'd deny that "War and Peace" and "Madame Bovary" are classics. But what about "1984" or "Invisible Man"? It seems to help if the author is dead, and even novels that receive the highest praise from the highest authorities — say, Toni Morrison's "Beloved" or Don DeLillo's "Underworld" — will still probably remain shelved in the fiction section during their authors' lifetimes.

A fascinating Goodreads discussion on this topic shows participants tossing out all the most common defining characteristics of a classic book. It has stood the test of time. It is filled with eternal verities. It captures the essence and flavor of its own age and had a significant effect on that age. It has something important to say. It achieves some form of aesthetic near-perfection. It is "challenging" or innovative in some respect. Scholars and other experts endorse it and study it. It has been included in prestigious series, like the Modern Library, Penguin Classics or the Library of America, and appears on lists of great books. And last but not least, some people define a classic by highly personal criteria. "Life of Pi," 'Extremely Loud and

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Incredibly Close,' 'What Is the What' and 'Disgrace' are all classics because I was profoundly moved by them," wrote one reader.

Perhaps the most eloquent consideration of this question is Italo Calvino's essay, "Why Read the Classics?," in which he defines a classic as "a book that has never finished saying what it has to say," among a list of other qualities. But as wondrous as that sounds, it could also describe some books we read today — "Infinite Jest," for example — books that most of our contemporaries would deem too recent for classic status. I also love Calvino's effort to capture the imaginative quality of a great literary work — "a book that takes the form of an equivalent to the universe, on a level with the ancient talismans" — but suspect that the following is more accurate: "The classics are the books that come down to us bearing upon them the traces of readings previous to ours, and bringing in their wake the traces they themselves have left on the culture or cultures they have passed through."

Later in the essay Calvino goes on to discuss "*Your* classic author," the one with whom you as a reader feel the most particular affinity, even when you disagree with him or her. While I agree that most readers have such an author (or several), it doesn't necessarily follow that the rest of the world regards that author's books as classics. Probably the most striking example of this is J.R.R. Tolkien, who means enough to his many, many devoted fans to rank as a classic in their minds, but whose work is never placed in classics shelves of bookstores.

This is why we will go on arguing about what constitutes a classic book for as long as we read books at all: While the label is bestowed by the culture at large and we tend to judge it by an unquantifiable impression we have of how much prestige has accumulated around a particular book, that prestige is still built from the idiosyncratic experiences of individual readers. The fact that many readers hate "The Scarlet Letter" can't disqualify it as a classic, but only because many more readers have loved it, or at least found it profound. Yet that doesn't mean the opinions of the rejecting readers don't count or that they can't at some point overbalance the novel's admirers and cause it to drift into obscurity. No wonder those Vonnegut novels keep migrating. Whatever a classic book may be, it doesn't ever seem to stand still.

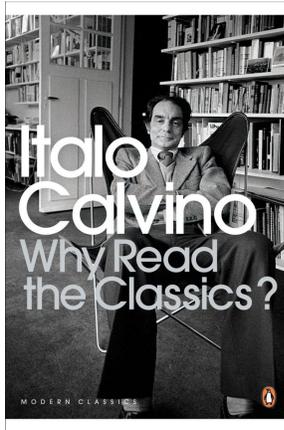
*Laura Miller* is a senior writer for Salon. She is the author of "*The Magician's Book: A Skeptic's Adventures in Narnia*" and has a Web site, [magiciansbook.com](http://magiciansbook.com).

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### Italo Calvino's 14 Criteria for What Makes a Classic

**“A classic is a work which constantly generates a pulviscular cloud of critical discourse around it, but which always shakes the particles off.”**

BY MARIA POPOVA



A reader recently wrote me to lightly criticize the fact that I [called](#) George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* “cult-classics,” suggesting that they instead merit the inferior term “required reading.” So what, exactly, is a classic, and why should we care? Richard J. Smith, in discussing the iconic ancient Chinese *Book of Changes*, offered a [four-point checklist definition](#) and Simon Critchley showed us [how to read them](#). But perhaps the most essential question is *why* the classics should be read. That's exactly what beloved Italian writer Italo Calvino (October 15, 1923–September 19, 1985) addresses in his 1991 book [Why Read the Classics?](#) ([public library](#)) — a sort of “classic” in its own right.

In this collection of essays on classical literature, Calvino also produces these 14 definitions of a “classic”:

1. The classics are those books about which you usually hear people saying: 'I'm rereading...', never 'I'm reading....'
2. The Classics are those books which constitute a treasured experience for those who have read and loved them; but they

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- remain just as rich an experience for those who reserve the chance to read them for when they are in the best condition to enjoy them.
3. The classics are books which exercise a particular influence, both when they imprint themselves on our imagination as unforgettable, and when they hide in the layers of memory disguised as the individual's or the collective unconscious.
  4. A classic is a book which with each rereading offers as much of a sense of discovery as the first reading.
  5. A classic is a book which even when we read it for the first time gives the sense of rereading something we have read before.
  6. A classic is a book which has never exhausted all it has to say to its readers.
  7. The classics are those books which come to us bearing the aura of previous interpretations, and trailing behind them the traces they have left in the culture or cultures (or just in the languages and customs) through which they have passed.
  8. A classic is a work which constantly generates a pulverulent cloud of critical discourse around it, but which always shakes the particles off.
  9. Classics are books which, the more we think we know them through hearsay, the more original, unexpected, and innovative we find them when we actually read them.
  10. A classic is the term given to any book which comes to represent the whole universe, a book on a par with ancient talismans.
  11. 'Your' classic is a book to which you cannot remain indifferent, and which helps you define yourself in relation or even in opposition to it.

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12. A classic is a work that comes before other classics; but those who have read other classics first immediately recognize its place in the genealogy of classic works.
13. A classic is a work which relegates the noise of the present to a background hum, which at the same time the classics cannot exist without.
14. A classic is a work which persists as a background noise even when a present that is totally incompatible with it holds sway.

Perhaps most poetic is Calvino's 11th definition, bespeaking the idea that there is room for subjectivity even in a term as deterministically universal as a "classic," and offering a witty answer to the nitpicky reader: *"Your' classic is a book to which you cannot remain indifferent, and which helps you define yourself in relation or even in opposition to it."*

Complement with Calvino on [civil rights](#), [the two types of writers](#), [photography and the art of presence](#), and [how to assert yourself and live with integrity](#).

## **The Book of Choice**

**The Book of Choice Presentation:** College Board uses novel that are considered to be classics or have Literary Merit. After reading the articles and the novel create a presentation on whether or not the book you choose could be considered a classic, or a novel of Literary Merit. You should have a minimum of 10 slides, and more than 5 reasons for your choice. If you use sources outside of the novel and two articles you need to have a works cited slide. Your slide show should include visuals. You may share the presentation with me via my email [rkauffman@mlsd.org](mailto:rkauffman@mlsd.org) or on our AP Literature google classroom page.

**Due Dates:** The first week of school, everything will be turned in. Also, there may be a quiz/test over the book.

2017

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# **AP English Literature and Composition**

## **Free-Response Questions**

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ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

Question 1

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

The following poem is by Rachel M. Harper. Read the poem carefully. Then, considering such elements as imagery, form, and tone, write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the relationship between music and the speaker’s complex memories of her family.

**The Myth of Music**

*for my father*

If music can be passed on  
 like brown eyes or a strong  
 left hook, this melody  
 is my inheritance, lineage traced  
 5 through a title track,  
 displayed on an album cover  
 that you pin to the wall  
 as art, oral history taught  
 on a record player, the lessons  
 10 sealed into the grooves like fact.  
 This is the only myth I know.  
 I sit on the hardwood  
 floors of a damp November,  
 my brother dealing cards  
 15 from an incomplete deck,  
 and I don’t realize that this  
 moment is the definition  
 of family, collective memory  
 cut in rough-textured tones,  
 20 the voice of a horn so familiar  
 I don’t know I’m listening,  
 Don’t know I’m singing,  
 a child’s improvisation  
 of Giant Steps or Impressions:<sup>1</sup>  
 25 songs without lyrics  
 can still be sung.

of a radiator on my back and you  
 present in the sound of typing  
 35 your own accompaniment,  
 multiphonics disguised as chords  
 in a distant room, speakers set  
 on high to fill the whole house  
 with your spirit, your call  
 40 as a declaration of love.

But the music will remain.  
 The timeless notes of jazz  
 too personal to play out loud,  
 stay locked in the rhythm  
 45 of my childhood, memories fading  
 like the words of a lullaby,  
 come to life in a saxophone’s blow.  
 They lie when they say  
 music is universal—this is my song,  
 50 the notes like fingerprints  
 as delicate as breath.  
 I will not share this air  
 with anyone  
 but you.

<sup>1</sup>*Giant Steps* is a jazz album (1960) by John Coltrane. *Impressions* (1963) is another album by Coltrane.

From “The Myth of Music” in *Mending the World: Stories of Family by Contemporary Black Writers* by Rachel M. Harper, copyright ©1999. Reprinted by permission of Basic Civitas Books, a member of The Perseus Books Group.

In six months, when my mother  
 is 2,000 miles away, deciding  
 if she wants to come home,  
 30 I will have forgotten  
 this moment, the security  
 of her footsteps, the warmth

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

In the passage below, from *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751) by Tobias Smollett, Mr. Pickle encounters Godfrey Gauntlet, the brother of his beloved Emilia. Consider how the two men confront their own uncontrolled emotions and yet attempt to abide by their social norms. In a well-developed essay, analyze how the author explores the complex interplay between emotions and social propriety in the passage. You may wish to consider such literary techniques as dialogue, narrative pace, and tone.

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“Mr. Pickle, you have carried on a correspondence with my sister for some time, and I should be glad to know the nature of it.” To this question our lover replied, “Sir, I should be glad to know what title you have to demand that satisfaction?”—“Sir,” answered the other, “I demand it in the capacity of a brother, jealous of his own honour, as well as of his sister’s reputation; and if your intentions are honourable, you will not refuse it.”—“Sir,” said Peregrine, “I am not at present disposed to appeal to your opinion for the rectitude of my intentions: and I think you assume a little too much importance, in pretending to judge my conduct.”—“Sir,” replied the soldier, “I pretend to judge the conduct of every man who interferes with my concerns, and even to chastise him, if I think he acts amiss.”—“Chastise!” cried the youth, with indignation in his looks, “sure you dare not apply that term to me?”—“You are mistaken,” said Godfrey; “I dare do anything that becomes the character of a gentleman.”—“Gentleman, God wot!” replied the other, looking contemptuously at his equipage,\* which was none of the most superb, “a very pretty gentleman, truly!”

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The soldier’s wrath was inflamed by this ironical repetition, the contempt of which his conscious poverty made him feel; and he called his antagonist presumptuous boy, insolent upstart, and with other epithets, which Perry retorted with great bitterness. A formal challenge having passed between them, they alighted at the first inn, and walked into the next field, in order to decide their quarrel by the sword. Having pitched upon the spot, helped to pull off each other’s boots, and laid aside their coats and waistcoats, Mr. Gauntlet told his opponent, that he himself was

35 looked upon in the army as an expert swordsman, and that if Mr. Pickle had not made that science his particular study, they should be upon a more equal footing in using pistols. Peregrine was too much incensed to thank him for his plain dealing, and too confident of his own skill to relish the other’s proposal, which he accordingly rejected: then, drawing his sword, he observed, that were he to treat Mr. Gauntlet according to his deserts, he would order his man to punish his audacity with a horsewhip. Exasperated at this expression, which he considered an indelible affront, he made no reply, but attacked his adversary with equal ferocity and address. The youth parried his first and second thrust, but received the third in the outside of his sword-arm. Though the wound was superficial, he was transported with rage at the sight of his own blood, and returned the assault with such fury and precipitation, that Gauntlet, loath to take advantage of his unguarded heat, stood upon the defensive. In the second lunge, Peregrine’s weapon entering a kind of network in the shell of Godfrey’s sword, the blade snapped in two, and left him at the mercy of the soldier, who, far from making an insolent use of the victory he had gained, put up his Toledo with great deliberation, like a man who had been used to that kind of rencounters, and observed that such a blade as Peregrine’s was not to be trusted with a man’s life: then advising the owner to treat a gentleman in distress with more respect for the future, he slipped on his boots, and with sullen dignity of demeanour stalked back to the inn.

\*carriage and horse

**Question 3**

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

Select a novel, play, or epic poem that features a character whose origins are unusual or mysterious. Then write an essay in which you analyze how these origins shape the character and that character’s relationships, and how the origins contribute to the meaning of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or one of comparable literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

*Beloved*

*Brave New World*

*Dracula*

*The English Patient*

*Frankenstein*

*Great Expectations*

*Grendel*

*The Iliad*

*The Importance of Being Earnest*

*Jane Eyre*

*Light in August*

*Macbeth*

*The Mayor of Casterbridge*

*The Metamorphosis*

*Middlemarch*

*No Country for Old Men*

*The Odyssey*

*Oedipus Rex*

*Orlando*

*Oryx and Crake*

*The Playboy of the Western World*

*A Prayer for Owen Meany*

*Their Eyes Were Watching God*

*Tom Jones*

*Twelfth Night*

*Waiting for Godot*

*Wuthering Heights*

**STOP**

**END OF EXAM**