

Summer Reading Assignment and Book List

11th Grade College Prep/Honors English

Written Assignment –

Choose at least **two** of the following books to read that you have not read before. You must complete the writing assignment based on an essay prompt for only one of the books.

- Essay Prompt:
 - o 2-3 pages typed, 12 font, double spaced
 - o Introduction, focused thesis, body paragraphs (at least 3) and a thoughtful conclusion

***If you are taking A.P. U.S. History, you must read a third book, be a nineteenth or twentieth century biography/autobiography of an American figure.** *Your essay should not be written on this work.

Some suggestions: an American president, a missionary, pastor or evangelist, a politician, an author, or artist

Essay Prompt Options –

- Novels and plays often depict characters caught between colliding cultures –national, regional, ethnic, religious, institutional. Such collisions can call a character’s sense of identity into question. Choose a novel in which a character responds to such a cultural collision. Write a well-organized essay in which you describe the character’s response and explain its relevance to the work as a whole.
- One of the strongest human drives seems to be a desire for power. Write an essay in which you discuss how a character in the novel struggles to free him or herself from the power of others or seeks to gain power over others. Be sure to demonstrate in your essay how the author uses this power struggle to enhance the meaning of the work.
- A reoccurring theme in literature is “the classic war between passion and responsibility”. For instance, perhaps a personal cause, a love, a desire for revenge, a determination or redress wrong, or some other emotion may conflict with moral duty. Choose a literary work in which a character confronts the demands of a private passion that conflicts with his/her responsibilities. In your essay, show clearly the nature of the conflict, its effects upon the character and its significance to the work.
- Write a well-organized essay analyzing how the author uses language to explore and represent his or her identity (or the identities of his or her characters).
- Write a carefully reasoned essay evaluating the author’s argument. Then, defend, challenge, or qualify the author’s argument using solid evidence from the text to support your thesis.
- Analyze some of the ways in which the author recreates his or her experiences (or represents those of his or her characters). You might consider such devices as contrast, repetition, pacing, diction, and imagery.
- The meaning of some literary works is often enhanced by sustained allusion to myths, the Bible, or other works of literature. Select a literary work that makes use of such a sustained reference. Then, write a well-organized essay in which you explain the allusion that predominates in the work and analyze how it enhances the work’s meaning.
- Some novels seem to advocate changes in social or political attitudes, or in traditions. Choose a novel and note briefly the particular attitudes or traditions that the author apparently wishes to modify. Then analyze the techniques the author uses to influence the reader’s or audience’s views.

***REMEMBER: AVOID PLOT SUMMARY AT ALL COSTS!**

The written assignment is due the first day of school.

11th Grade English Summer Reading Booklist

1. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* – Neil Postman

From Publishers Weekly: From the author of *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* comes a sustained, withering and thought-provoking attack on television and what it is doing to us. Postman's theme is the decline of the printed word and the ascendancy of the "tube" with its tendency to present everything, murder, mayhem, politics, weather, as entertainment. The ultimate effect, as Postman sees it, is the shriveling of public discourse as TV degrades our conception of what constitutes news, political debate, art, even religious thought. Early chapters trace America's one-time love affair with the printed word, from colonial pamphlets to the publication of the Lincoln-Douglas debates. There's a biting analysis of TV commercials as a form of "instant therapy" based on the assumption that human problems are easily solvable. Postman goes further than other critics in demonstrating that television represents a hostile attack on literate culture.

2. *Jane Eyre* – Charlotte Bronte

Product Description: An orphan girl's progress from custody of cruel relatives to an oppressive boarding school culminates in a troubled career as a governess. Jane's first assignment at Thornfield, where the proud and cynical master harbors a scandalous secret, draws readers ever deeper into a compelling exploration of the mysteries of the human heart.

3. *The Republic* – Plato

Amazon.com review: What does it mean to be good? What enables us to distinguish right from wrong? And how should human virtues be translated into a just society? These are the questions that Plato sought to answer in this monumental work of moral and political philosophy, a book surpassed only by the Bible in its formative influence on two thousand years of Western thought. In the course of its tautly reasoned Socratic dialogues, *The Republic* accomplishes nothing less than an anatomy of the soul and an exhaustive description of a State that both mirrors and enforces the soul's ideal harmony. The resulting text is at once mystical and elegantly logical and may be read as a template for the societies in which most of us live today.

4. *1984* – George Orwell

Amazon.com review: The year is 1984; the scene is London, largest population center of Airstrip One. Airstrip One is part of the vast political entity Oceania, which is eternally at war with one of two other vast entities, Eurasia and Eastasia. At any moment, depending upon current alignments, all existing records show either that Oceania has always been at war with Eurasia and allied with Eastasia, or that it has always been at war with Eastasia and allied with Eurasia. Winston Smith knows this, because his work at the Ministry of Truth involves the constant "correction" of such records. "'Who controls the past,' ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.'"

In a grim city and a terrifying country, where Big Brother is always Watching You and the Thought Police can practically read your mind, Winston is a man in grave danger for the simple reason that his memory still functions. He knows the Party's official image of the world is a fluid fiction. He knows the Party controls the people by feeding them lies and narrowing their imaginations through a process of bewilderment and brutalization that alienates each individual from his fellows and deprives him of every liberating human pursuit from reasoned inquiry to sexual passion. Drawn into a forbidden love affair,

Winston finds the courage to join a secret revolutionary organization called The Brotherhood, dedicated to the destruction of the Party. Together with his beloved Julia, he hazards his life in a deadly match against the powers that be.

5. *Oliver Twist* – Charles Dickens

Amazon.com: Set in Victorian London, this is a tale of a spirited young innocent's unwilling but inevitable recruitment into a scabrous gang of thieves. Masterminded by the loathsome Fagin, the underworld crew features some of Dickens' most memorable characters, including the vicious Bill Sikes, gentle Nancy, and the juvenile pickpocket known as the Artful Dodger.

6. *The Count of Monte Cristo* – Alexandre Dumas

Amazon.com review: Set against the turbulent years of the Napoleonic era, Alexandre Dumas's thrilling adventure story is one of the most widely read romantic novels of all time. In it the dashing young hero, Edmond Dantès, is betrayed by his enemies and thrown into a secret dungeon in the Chateau d'If -- doomed to spend his life in a dank prison cell. The story of his long, intolerable years in captivity, his miraculous escape, and his carefully wrought revenge creates a dramatic tale of mystery and intrigue and paints a vision of France -- a dazzling, dueling, exuberant France -- that has become immortal.

7. *The Jungle* – Upton Sinclair

Amazon.com Review: In this powerful book we enter the world of Jurgis Rudkus, a young Lithuanian immigrant who arrives in America fired with dreams of wealth, freedom, and opportunity. And we discover with him the astonishing truth about "packingtown", the busy, flourishing, filthy Chicago stockyards, where new world visions perish in a jungle of human suffering. Upton Sinclair, master of the "muckraking" novel, here explores the workingman's lot at the turn of the century: the backbreaking labor, the injustices of "wage-slavery," the bewildering chaos of urban life. *The Jungle*, a story so shocking that it launched a government investigation, recreates this startling chapter of our history in unflinching detail. Always a vigorous champion on political reform, Sinclair is also a gripping storyteller, and his 1906 novel stands as one of the most important -- and moving -- works in the literature of social change.

8. *All Quiet on the Western Front* – Erich Maria Remarque

New York Times Book Review: Paul Baumer enlisted with his classmates in the German army of World War I. Youthful, enthusiastic, they become soldiers. But despite what they have learned, they break into pieces under the first bombardment in the trenches. And as horrible war plods on year after year, Paul holds fast to a single vow: to fight against the principles of hate that meaninglessly pits young men of the same generation but different uniforms against each other--if only he can come out of the war alive.

9. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* – Harriet Beecher Stowe

Amazon.com review: This is one of those books that everybody has heard about but few people these days have actually read. It deserves to be read - not simply because it is the basis for symbols so deeply ingrained in American culture that we no longer realize their source, nor because it is one of the best-selling books of all time. This is a book that changed history. Harriet Beecher Stowe was appalled by slavery, and she took one of the few options open to nineteenth century women who wanted to affect public opinion: she wrote a novel, a huge, enthralling narrative that claimed the heart, soul, and politics of pre-Civil War Americans. It is unabashed propaganda and overtly moralistic, an attempt to make whites -

North and South - see slaves as mothers, fathers, and people with (Christian) souls. In a time when women might see the majority of their children die, Harriet Beecher Stowe portrays beautiful Eliza fleeing slavery to protect her son. In a time when many whites claimed slavery had "good effects" on blacks, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* paints pictures of three plantations, each worse than the other, where even the best plantation leaves a slave at the mercy of fate or debt. By twentieth-century standards, her propaganda verges on melodrama, and it is clear that even while arguing for the abolition of slavery she did not rise above her own racism. Yet her questions remain penetrating even today: "Is man ever a creature to be trusted with wholly irresponsible power?"

10. *Hamlet* – William Shakespeare

Amazon.com review: Many consider the tragedy of "Hamlet" to be Shakespeare's masterpiece and one of the greatest plays of all time. It has entertained audiences for centuries and the role of Hamlet is one of the most sought after by actors. It is the story of Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark who learns of the death of his father at the hands of his uncle, Claudius. Claudius murders Hamlet's father, his own brother, to take the throne of Denmark and to marry Hamlet's widowed mother. Hamlet is sunk into a state of great despair as a result of discovering the murder of his father and the infidelity of his mother. Hamlet is torn between his great sadness and his desire for the revenge of his father's murder. "Hamlet" is a work of great complexity and as such has drawn many different critical interpretations. Hamlet has been seen as a victim of circumstance, as an impractical idealist, as the sufferer of an Oedipus complex, as an opportunist wishing to kill his Uncle not for revenge but to ascend to the throne, as the sufferer of a great melancholy, and as a man blinded by his desire for revenge. The true motivations of Hamlet are complex and enigmatic and have been debated for centuries. Read this classic tragedy and decide for yourself where Hamlet's true motivations lie and how they influence his ultimate demise.

11. *Three Cups of Tea* – Greg Mortenson

Amazon.com review: Some failures lead to phenomenal successes, and this American nurse's unsuccessful attempt to climb K2, the world's second tallest mountain, is one of them. Dangerously ill when he finished his climb in 1993, Mortenson was sheltered for seven weeks by the small Pakistani village of Korphe; in return, he promised to build the impoverished town's first school, a project that grew into the Central Asia Institute, which has since constructed more than 50 schools across rural Pakistan and Afghanistan. Coauthor Relin recounts Mortenson's efforts in fascinating detail, presenting compelling portraits of the village elders, con artists, philanthropists, mujahideen, Taliban officials, ambitious school girls and upright Muslims Mortenson met along the way. As the book moves into the post-9/11 world, Mortenson and Relin argue that the United States must fight Islamic extremism in the region through collaborative efforts to alleviate poverty and improve access to education, especially for girls. Captivating and suspenseful, with engrossing accounts of both hostilities and unlikely friendships, this book will win many readers' hearts.

SUMMER READING SIGN-OFF FORM

I have read at least two books from Mrs. Hanley's/Mr. Roaf's summer reading list and have completed the book reporting activity to the best of my ability.

Student Signature:

My child has read at least two books from the summer reading list and I have seen a completed (typed) book reporting activity.

Parent Signature:
