

Summer Reading Assignment and Book List

12th 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.

12th Grade English Summer Reading Booklist

1. *Crime and Punishment* – Fyodor Dostoevsky

Amazon.com review: *Crime and Punishment*—the novel that heralded the author’s period of masterworks—tells the story of the poor and talented student Raskolnikov, a character of unparalleled psychological depth and complexity. Raskolnikov reasons that men like himself, by virtue of their intellectual superiority, can and must transcend societal law. To test his theory, he devises the perfect crime—the murder of a spiteful pawnbroker living in St. Petersburg.

In one of the most gripping crime stories of all time, Raskolnikov soon realizes the folly of his abstractions. Haunted by vivid hallucinations and the torments of his conscience, he seeks relief from his terror and moral isolation—first from Sonia, the pious streetwalker who urges him to confess, then in a tense game of cat and mouse with Porfiry, the brilliant magistrate assigned to the murder investigation. A *tour de force* of suspense, *Crime and Punishment* delineates the theories and motivations that underlie a bankrupt morality.

2. *The Case for a Creator* – Lee Strobel

Amazon.com review: During his academic years, Lee Strobel became convinced that God was outmoded, a belief that colored his ensuing career as an award-winning journalist at the Chicago Tribune. Science had made the idea of a Creator irrelevant or so Strobel thought. But today science is pointing in a different direction. In recent years, a diverse and impressive body of research has increasingly supported the conclusion that the universe was intelligently designed. At the same time, Darwinism has faltered in the face of concrete facts and hard reason.

Has science discovered God? At the very least, its giving faith an immense boost as new findings emerge about the incredible complexity of our universe. Join Strobel as he reexamines the theories that once led him away from God. Through his compelling and highly readable account, you’ll encounter the mind-stretching discoveries from cosmology, cellular biology, DNA research, astronomy, physics, and human consciousness that present astonishing evidence in *The Case for a Creator*.

3. *The Great Divorce* – C.S. Lewis

Amazon.com review: *The Great Divorce* is C.S. Lewis's *Divine Comedy*: the narrator bears strong resemblance to Lewis (by way of Dante); his Virgil is the fantasy writer [George MacDonald](#); and upon boarding a bus in a nondescript neighborhood, the narrator is taken to Heaven and Hell. The book's primary message is presented with almost oblique tidiness--"There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.'" However, the narrator's descriptions of sin and temptation will hit quite close to home for many readers. Lewis has a genius for describing the intricacies of vanity and self-deception, and this book is tremendously persistent in forcing its reader to consider the ultimate consequences of everyday pettiness. --*Michael Joseph Gross*

4. *Wuthering Heights* –Emily Bronte

From Amazon.com: "My greatest thought in living is Heathcliff. If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be... Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure... but as my own being." *Wuthering Heights* is the only novel of Emily Bronte, who died a year after its publication, at the age of thirty. A brooding Yorkshire tale of a love that is stronger than death, it is also a fierce vision of metaphysical passion, in which heaven and hell, nature and society, are powerfully juxtaposed. Unique, mystical, with a timeless appeal, it has become a classic of English literature.

5. *A Chance to Die* – Elizabeth Elliot

Be inspired by a woman who dared to follow God Amy Carmichael understood true discipleship and lived it out. At a very young age she felt called to the mission field, followed God's guidance, and eventually went to India, where she would spend fifty-three years without furlough. While there, Amy founded the Dohnavur Fellowship, a refuge for children in moral danger-children who were orphaned or unwanted and sold to the temple. Amy became a mother for these children, and so they called her "Amma." Even today, Amy's life of obedience and courage stands as a model for all Christians everywhere. We resonate with her desires and dreams, her faults and fears, her dedication and service. For former missionary and author Elizabeth Elliot, Amy became a role model. "She was my first spiritual mother," writes Elliot. "She showed me the shape of godliness." *A Chance to Die* is the life story of Amy Carmichael. In this reverent biography, Elizabeth Elliot brings "Amma" to life, providing a compelling, unforgettable narrative that will provoke you to examine the depths of your own faith and encourage you to reaffirm your life and commitment to Christ.

6. *A Tale of Two Cities* –Charles Dickens

With his sublime parting words, "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done..." Sidney Carton joins that exalted group of Dickensian characters who have earned a permanent place in the popular literary imagination. His dramatic story, set against the volcanic fury of the French Revolution and pervaded by the ominous rumble of the death carts trundling toward the guillotine, is the heart-stirring tale of a heroic soul in an age gone mad. A masterful pageant of idealism, love, and adventure -- in a Paris bursting with revolutionary frenzy, and a London alive with anxious anticipation -- *A Tale of Two Cities* is one of Dickens's most energetic and exciting works.

7. *The Great Gatsby* – F. Scott Fitzgerald

From Amazon.com: *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's third book, stands as the supreme achievement of his career. This exemplary novel of the Jazz Age has been acclaimed by generations of readers. The story of the fabulously wealthy Jay Gatsby and his love for the beautiful Daisy Buchanan, of lavish parties on Long Island at a time when *The New York Times* noted "gin was the national drink and sex the national obsession," it is an exquisitely crafted tale of America in the 1920s. *The Great Gatsby* is one of the great classics of twentieth-century literature.

8. *The House of Mirth* – Edith Wharton

From Amazon.com: Lily Bart has no fortune, but she possesses everything else she needs to make an excellent marriage: beauty, intelligence, a love of luxury, and an elegant skill in negotiating the hidden traps and false friends of New York's high society. But time and again Lily cannot bring herself to make the final decisive move: to abandon her sense of self and a chance of love for the final soulless leap into a mercenary union. Her time is running out, and degradation awaits. Edith Wharton's masterful novel is a tragedy of money, morality, and missed opportunity.

9. *All Creatures Great and Small* – James Herriot

From Amazon.com: Delve into the magical, unforgettable world of James Herriot, the world's most beloved veterinarian, and his menagerie of heartwarming, funny, and tragic animal patients. For over thirty years, generations of readers have thrilled to Herriot's marvelous tales, deep love of life, and extraordinary storytelling abilities. For decades, Herriot roamed the remote, beautiful Yorkshire Dales, treating every patient that came his way from smallest to largest, and observing animals and humans alike with his keen, loving eye.

In *All Creatures Great and Small*, we meet the young Herriot as he takes up his calling and discovers that the realities of veterinary practice in rural Yorkshire are very different from the sterile setting of veterinary school. From caring for his patients in the depths of winter on the remotest homesteads to dealing with uncooperative owners and critically ill animals, Herriot discovers the wondrous variety and never-ending challenges of veterinary practice as his humor, compassion, and love of the animal world shine forth.

10. *The Prince and The Pauper* – Mark Twain

From Amazon.com: After the young Prince Edward VI of England and a peasant boy switch places, the "little king" tries to escape from a world in which he must beg for food, sleep with rodents, face ridicule, and avoid assassination. Meanwhile, the peasant, who is now the prince, dreads exposure and possible execution; members of the Court believe he has gone mad. As a result of the swap, both boys learn that social class, like so much of life, is determined by chance and random circumstance. Originally published in 1881, *The Prince and the Pauper* is one of Mark Twain's earliest social satires. With his caustic wit and biting irony, Twain satirizes the power of the monarchy, unjust laws and barbaric punishments, superstitions, and religious intolerance. Although usually viewed as a child's story, *The Prince and the Pauper* offers adults critical insight into a people and time period not really all that different from our own.

11. *Cry, The Beloved Country* – Alan Paton

From Britannica.com: Hailed as one of the greatest South African novels, *Cry, the Beloved Country* was first published in the United States, bringing international attention to South Africa's tragic history. It tells the story of a father's journey from rural South Africa to and through the city of Johannesburg in search of his son. The reader cannot help but feel deeply for the central character, a Zulu pastor, Stephen Kumalo, and the tortuous discoveries he makes in Johannesburg. It is in a prison cell that Kumalo eventually finds his son, Absalom, who is facing trial for the murder of a white man—a man who ironically cared deeply about the plight of the native South African population and had been a voice for change until his untimely death. Here we meet another father, that of the victim, whose own journey to understand his son eventually leads to his life and grief becoming strangely entwined with Kumalo's.

The novel captures the extremes of human emotion, and Alan Paton's faith in human dignity in the worst of circumstances is both poignant and uplifting. The novel shows the brutality of apartheid, but despite its unflinching portrayal of darkness and despair in South Africa, it still offers hope for a better future. The novel itself is a cry for South Africa, which we learn is beloved in spite of everything; a cry for its people, its land, and the tentative hope for its freedom from hatred, poverty, and fear.

12. *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* – Laura Hillenbrand

From Amazon.com: In boyhood, Louis Zamperini was an incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when World War II began, the athlete became an airman, embarking on a journey that led to a doomed flight on a May afternoon in 1943. When his Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean, against all odds, Zamperini survived, adrift on a foundering life raft. Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would be suspended on the fraying wire of his will.

SUMMER READING SIGN-OFF FORM

I have read at least two books from Miss Burke's & Mrs. Hanley'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:
