

## SENIOR ENGLISH SUMMER READING INFORMATION

TEACHER: Mrs. Benfer

BOOK CHOICES: Choose at least one book from the following list to read.

- **1984 by George Orwell\*** – Many pop-culture references, including “Big Brother is watching” and the title of the reality show *Big Brother* allude to this book. Although the year 1984 has come and gone without many of Orwell’s dire predictions becoming reality, his futuristic vision of a world where the government controls all aspects of life and monitors even in the most private moments, is chilling.
- ***Dracula* by Bram Stoker** – Before Team Edward and Team Jacob, Bram Stoker wrote about Count Dracula, the genre’s defining vampire. Count Dracula, too often parodied as a ridiculous character with large teeth and a funny accent, is actually the center of this creepy, mysterious story.
- ***Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley** – Although familiar in pop culture, this novel, framed by letters from brother to sister, tells the story of Victor Frankenstein and his creation. Considered by some to be the first sci-fi novel, the story explores the ideas of isolation utilizing traditional gothic elements. Readers are often surprised by how different this story is than the Halloween idea with which they may be familiar.
- ***Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë** – Jane, orphaned, abused, and then neglected, exemplifies Brontë’s personal ideals of a strong-willed woman living Victorian society. Through her experiences living with her aunt, attending boarding school, and becoming a governess, she remains strong and questions commonly accepted ideas of her time as she searches for love and acceptance.
- ***Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens** – Orphaned at a young age and living at a workhouse for the first nine years of his life, young Oliver Twist escapes a harsh apprenticeship only to find nineteenth-century England to be a dark place of cruelty, pickpocketing, and desperation. After a series of mix-ups and coincidences, Oliver finds that there is more to his life than might be expected of a runaway orphan.
- ***Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen** – In one of her best-known and most popular novels, Jane Austen presents the character of Elizabeth Bennet, the second of five daughters of a country gentleman living in a small village near London in the early nineteenth century. Through the stories of the five girls, particularly Elizabeth who is unusually assertive and independent for girls of that time, Austen explores the issues of class distinctions and the limitations of opportunities open to women of the era.
- ***The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne** – *The Scarlet Letter* is the story of Hester Prynne, a young woman who has borne a child out of wedlock in a small village in Puritan New England. As punishment for her adultery, Hester is forced to wear the scarlet letter A on her dress, publicly shaming her. After her supposedly-dead husband returns incognito and begins searching for the father of Hester’s child, the novel explores the meanings/consequences of sin, guilt, revenge, punishment, confession, love, and self-worth.
- ***Silas Marner* by George Eliot** – Wrongly accused of crimes and perhaps framed by his friend, Silas Marner, the nineteenth-century weaver of Raveloe, loses his home and the woman he was to marry. As he starts a new life, bitterly isolated and highly materialistic, his circumstances continue to change. As the novel continues, the author explores the needs for belonging, love, and companionship as well as commenting on the industrialization, religion, and classism of her time.
- ***Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë** – *Wuthering Heights*, a story of passionate love and revenge, centers on the mysterious young man Heathcliff. It follows him from childhood to young adulthood, as he falls in love with his benefactor’s daughter, Catherine, who despite her love for Heathcliff, is engaged to another man; Heathcliff, too, marries another, and misery ensues. This story of star-crossed lovers is a true classic of the Victorian era.

\*Books marked with an asterisk contain references or language that some might find offensive. For more information, please contact Sharon Bryant at [sbryant@fwc.org](mailto:sbryant@fwc.org).

INSTRUCTIONS: You will use your book as the topic for your senior research paper.

Be sure to choose and read carefully so that you will be prepared.

**Annotate as you read:**

- Characters and setting:
  - Mark character names and setting as they first appear
  - Make notes in the margins about characters, including each new character trait
- Literary Elements: Mark literary elements that you notice – allusions, symbols, figurative language, metaphors, similes, motifs, etc.
- Style: Underline or highlight sentences that stand out to you.
- Questions: In the margins, note anything that seems unclear or that you don't understand.
- Theme: Write notes about theme (the message the author is trying to present) in the margins or at the ends of chapters. What does the author want you to get from this book?
- Plot: Write notes at the tops of pages that indicate important events or thematic elements covered. Mark plot elements like exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
- Summaries: As you finish each chapter, write a few bullet points that will remind you of the important elements of that chapter. You will find it extremely helpful to have a summary of each chapter when you begin your research paper.

FIRST DAYS OF SCHOOL: We will not be wasting a moment of your senior year in English. Come prepared!

- You should have completely and thoroughly read and annotated your book. Do not start the year behind.
- Bring your book with you. **I will look at your book to check that you have annotated adequately and effectively. This will be a grade.**
- Bring your computer with you. You will begin working on your research paper the first week.
- Expect a **quiz**, discussion, and other activities in the first few days of school.

SUPPLIES: You will need to **turn in** the following supplies the first Monday of school:

- 1 box Kleenex **OR** 1 package pens/pencils/highlighters **OR** 1 package notebook paper
- 1 folder with pockets – brads optional (for research only)
- \$15 to purchase your copy of *Hamlet* and *Brave New World*.  
(We get a discounted price by purchasing in bulk from the publisher)