

HONORS ENGLISH SUMMER READING PACKET

9th Grade

Statement of Purpose

“Why do we have this required summer reading?”

This question is often asked. The answers are multiple but begin with the nature of our school – a college preparatory high school. One of our academic goals is to prepare students to succeed beyond the walls of Ridgecroft.

Colleges and universities expect students to arrive having already read a significant amount and variety of literary works. That goal cannot be achieved exclusively during the school year.

Additionally, we believe that a summer reading program will:

1. Maintain and improve reading proficiency. Educational studies have shown that reading skills deteriorate when students fail to read during the summer months.
2. Increase fluency and vocabulary skills as students are introduced to new themes and vocabulary in their selected books.
3. Develop a wider range of reading interests as students are exposed to subjects and authors outside of their usual choices

Some Strategies for Planning Your Summer Reading

The first and most important tip is:

DON'T LEAVE IT ALL UNTIL THE WEEK BEFORE SCHOOL!

This may be obvious, but it needs to be said.

1. Buy your books early.
2. Once you have your books, the following system seems to work well for some people:
 - a. Add up all the pages that need to be read.
 - b. Add up all the days of summer vacation.
 - c. Subtract days you will need for writing assignments and days that it will not be possible for you to read.
 - d. The total number of days you have left are “reading days.”
 - e. Divide the total reading days by the total number of pages. That is how much you need to read each day to stay on track. Find a system that works for you.

Required summer work for all students entering Honors English I

Note: No outside sources, such as Spark Notes or Internet sites, (like shmoop), may be used. This also includes classmates and former students. Honors English is designed to prepare you for the rigorous analysis and writing that are required on the AP exam. Get used to coming up with and supporting your own ideas.

1. How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster

Purchase a new copy of this nonfiction book. I would suggest you read this book before *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. As you read the book, annotate it. This involves underlining important points that you want to remember, writing comments and questions in the margins, and writing a brief summary in bullet points at the end of each chapter. This sometimes feels odd to many of my new students because they are not used to writing in their text books. In time you will become quite comfortable with this process as it is not only expected in my class but encouraged. Do a thorough job as this will be a grade. You will turn in your annotated book on the first day of school. Your grade will depend on how well you annotated it. This book will take some time to get through, so start early.

2. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

The novel is a staple of American literature and, in its own right, of American history too. This fact alone however, is not what recommends the novel to the modern curriculum. *Huck Finn* is that rare classic which grabs modern students' attention and elicits a genuine response.

While you are reading this novel you will be expected to complete 10 journal assignments. This is due August 16. This assignment is designed to encourage good reading habits. Because this is a journal assignment, less emphasis is placed on whether your responses are "right" or "wrong," and more emphasis is placed on how much you authentically engage with the text. Below you will find instructions for each journal assignment. You do not have to work on these in order. Remember that effort will be recognized as will last minute weekend products. Take your time. Start early!!!

Journal Assignments

1. Comment on the author's style, referring to particular words, phrases, passages. What do you notice about the author's writing that sets him apart?

2. Pick a passage which contains a specific literary device and make a comment as to the effect that device has on the passage as a whole.

3. Comment on a character. What traits does he/she have that are getting in the way or contributing to his/her success? Does this character remind you of someone you know? Yourself, perhaps? Talk about more than his/her surface characteristics.

4. Comment on your reaction to the story itself. How do you respond to the action? If you are not enjoying it, why not? If you are, why?

5. Write about how you fit into the story. Can you relate to some of the struggles? Do you see yourself in the story or how people are reacting? How is your life journey similar?

6. Write and answer four interpretive, (between the lines), questions.

7. Select a quotation that either seems important or just strikes you as interesting. Comment on your selection.

8. Describe the tone, (attitude the speaker or sometimes the author has towards her/his subject), of the section by listing 10-12 words from the section. Discuss the overall effect these words have on the section.

9. Use a creative writing approach. This one is wide open - anything goes.

10. Talk to a character. Ask the character a question, scold them, advise them, yell at them, beg them to change...whatever. Pretend like the character is someone who will listen to you.

TURNING IN WORK

ALL ASSIGNMENTS and your pledge statements ARE DUE ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL (AUGUST 16).

STUDENTS WHO DO NOT HAVE THEIR SUMMER WORK COMPLETED AND TURNED IN BY AUGUST 16 WILL BE RESCHEDULED INTO A REGULAR LITERATURE CLASS.

Summer Reading Pledge Statement

I have read the following assignments in their entirety and have not consulted any outside sources. All the opinions in the written material are solely my own.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

Signature

Date

How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster

Signature

Date

