

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
St. Joseph's Preparatory School  
1733 Girard Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19130

215-978-1996

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the community of summer readers. Of course we want you to read over the summer vacation.

We want to focus on the joy of reading, rather than the "assignment" nature of it that you may have experienced in the past. Prep English teachers encourage all of our students and their parents to take advantage of the free time available during this period of vacation and relaxation to explore areas of interest outside the realm of requirements and assignments. We would like you to read for entertainment and enlightenment in any area that strikes you as worthy of your time. Perhaps parents and sons could read and discuss a book together.

On one level, you may just read current escape fiction-popular thrillers, pot boilers, horror novels, or mysteries. Certainly there is value in all reading and we encourage you to lose yourself in almost any book that grabs your attention.

On another level, we encourage you to stretch yourself somewhat: read some books that may be outside your comfort zone. Members of the English Department have put together lists of books, some classics, some contemporary classics, some just good reading. You might pick a work you've heard talked about in class but never had a chance to read during the regular school year. Perhaps you may want to read one of the major classics of world literature-works whose title is familiar but whose contents remain a mystery.

Great literature changes those who actively read it. Seek to find something of yourself and for yourself in the literature you read. Often the works which seem most inaccessible or remote from our own experiences become, with an effort to appreciate the experiences of others and to see ourselves in those experiences, the most rewarding works of all.

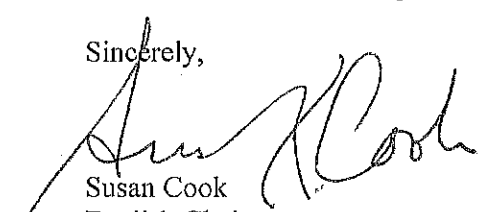
If you would like to write about your reading experience, we encourage you to do so. In fact, your English teachers will give you extra credit if you complete one (or more) of the enclosed activities. All extra credit activities must be submitted on the first day of class in September. Please see attached document of writing options.

The English Department is strongly recommending that you read several books during the summer hiatus. Read something; read many things. Ultimately, you are responsible for your own education, and that education will be richer and more impressive the more widely and intensively you read.

AP English IV students please note that reading and writing is a prerequisite for this course. See enclosed information.

On behalf of the entire English Department, I wish you a relaxing and enriching summer reading experience.

Sincerely,



Susan Cook  
English Chairperson

Any questions regarding Summer Reading may be addressed to me at [scCook@sjprep.org](mailto:scCook@sjprep.org)

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Recommended Summer Reading for Freshmen

Adams, Douglas	The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
Anderson, Laurie Halse	Speak
Baldwin, James	Go Tell It On the Mountain
Burdick and Hall	Fail Safe
Card, Orson Scott	Ender's Game
Cervantes, Miguel de	Don Quixote
Crane, Stephen	The Red Badge of Courage
Crutcher, Chris	Whale Talk, Staying Fat for Sara Byrnes
Defoe, Daniel	Robinson Crusoe
Doctorow, E.L.	World's Fair
Doyle, Arthur Conan	The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes
	The Hound of the Baskervilles
Frank, Anne	The Diary of a Young Girl
Gaines, Ernest	The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman
Kingsolver, Barbara	Animal Dreams, The Bean Trees, Poisonwood Bible
Kovic, Ron	Born on the Fourth of July
Lee, Gus	China Boy
London, Jack	Call of the Wild, The Sea-Wolfe
Mathabane, Mark	Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa
McCullers, Carson	The Member of the Wedding
Myers, Walter Dean	Fallen Angels, Monster
Paton, Alan	Cry, the Beloved Country
Poe, Edgar Alan	Selected Tales
Potok, Chaim	The Chosen
Roberts, Kenneth	The Northwest Passage
Robinson, Henry	The Cardinal
Scott, Sir Walter	Ivanhoe
Smith, Betty	A Tree Grows in Brooklyn
Stevenson, Robert Louis	The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
Twain, Mark	The Prince and the Pauper

**Please read attached Documents:  
Letter to Parents and Students  
Optional Writing Opportunities**

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If you would like to write about your reading experience, we encourage you to do so. In fact, your English teachers will give you extra credit if you complete one (or more) of the enclosed activities. Please identify author and title of your book.

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All extra credit activities must be submitted on the first day of class in September.  
All extra credit writing projects must be typed double-spaced on letter sized paper.

1. Select a major or central character from one of the novels read this summer and do the following activities:
  - a. Prepare a Character Sketch written in the **FIRST PERSON VOICE**.  
Approximate length: 2 typed pages.

In this sketch elaborate on the following items:

- 1: All about me: In addition to a general description of the character have the character discuss locations that are special in his/her life. You should also include any special activities, either of work or relaxation, that your character does.
- 2: Significant Relationships: Explain and describe significant relationships which your character has with two or three other people in the novel.
- 3: Problems in Life: Spend a paragraph discussing the problems and conflicts the character faces in life and how he/she copes with them (or fails to cope with them).
- 4: My Future?: Spend a paragraph speculating what the future holds for this character. Base your speculations upon evidence built from your reading of the novel. Where is this character likely to go next? What will happen to him/her?

\*Special option. If by chance your character was deceased by the end of the novel, use this paragraph to describe how he/she will be remembered by those surviving.

What legacy did he leave behind for others to learn from or model after?  
How will those left continue without him?

2. What would the "movie version" of one of your summer reading books look like? Write a piece in which you script a section of your version. Choose the kind of movie you will film: for example, the "big Hollywood blockbuster" version, the "Disney" version, the "PBS/Ivory Merchant" version, or the "made-for-TV version. Choose actors, settings, and so forth.
3. Write a newspaper/magazine report of the events that occurred in one of your readings. You choose the newspaper/magazine in which your piece will appear and the time period in which you are writing. Obviously there are differences between a newspaper report on the events in *The Scarlet Letter* today and those that would have been included in the report written in a newspaper at the time. Please identify the newspaper or magazine and the time in which you are writing.

4. Write a letter to the author of one of your books or to a character in the book. If you are writing to the author perhaps you could discuss what you admired about the work and/or how you think the story might have been different. If you are writing to the character, you might give the character advice about his/her situation, decisions, etc. You decide what you'd like to say.
5. Consider the gender of the characters in your novel. How are male and female characters portrayed? How does the work portray their roles in society: How does gender influence the choices that are available to the characters and the decisions that they make? Write a paper that explores how gender affect the plot and character development in the novel.

Alternate Topics: Discuss how the novel would be different if the genders of the main characters were reversed **OR**, discuss how the novel would change if the events were to take place today. Compare the influence of gender on the choices and decisions that the characters make in the world of the novel to the influence that gender would have if these characters were here today.

6. In the novel that you've read, some of the characters are given positive, sympathetic portrayals. Others have negative, perhaps even villainous portrayals. Still others may begin with negative qualities and gradually become more and more positive. Rarely does an author rely on the reader's personal sense of morality to determine which characters are positive and which are negative. Instead, there are details, actions, and characteristics that help define who is "good" and who is "bad". It's easy to know the difference in old westerns – good guys were white hats: bad guys were black hats. But even then, there are other details that help you know what is going on, details that help you know what is going on, details that even help you construct hierarchies (e.g., slightly bad to full evil). Think about your novel. How does the author indicate which characters are positive and which are negative? In your essay, explain how you can tell the difference.