

Bearden High School Summer Reading for 2025-26

Parents and students:

Students enrolled in Honors and AP English courses at Bearden are expected to complete summer reading before the start of class. During the first few weeks of class each term, the students are required to complete exams, write essays, and participate in discussions on the selected texts. *Reading a summary of the text is not a substitute for this assignment.*

Tips:

When completing summer reading novels, the students should be active readers, ***thoroughly annotating*** each of the texts. AP and Honors teachers expect student annotations to provide evidence of critical reading, which may include the following:

- Take notes about the basic elements of literature in the reading selections (plot, setting, characterization, point of view, theme, conflict, climax, etc.)
- Highlight important segments of the selection, and reflect on why it is significant
- Ask questions about the selection

The BHS English Department suggests that these texts be purchased to make this process easier. Rising English II Honors and AP Literature students should pay close attention to the instructions about the required assignments. If necessary, we can make hard copies available for pickup this summer, and digital versions are available on the school website.

If you have questions or concerns, my email address is tim.vacek@knoxschools.org. I have also included a contact for each grade level for any questions you have about specific texts.

Thank you,
Tim Vacek
English Department Chair

Contacts

9th Grade – Kelley Davis (kelley.davis@knoxschools.org)

10th Grade – Rebecca Napreyeva (rebecca.napreyeva@knoxschools.org)

AP Lit – Nescha Lee (nescha.lee@knoxschools.org)

AP Lang & AP Seminar – Tim Vacek (tim.vacek@knoxschools.org)

NOTES ABOUT ANNOTATION (from the AP Central Website)

Why Annotate?

- Annotate any text that you must know well, in detail, and from which you might need to produce evidence that supports your knowledge or reading, such as a book on which you will be tested.
- Don't assume that you must annotate when you read for pleasure; if you're relaxing with a book, well, relax. Still, some people—let's call them "not-abnormal"—actually annotate for pleasure.

Don't annotate other people's property, which is almost always selfish, often destructive, rude, and possibly illegal. For a book that doesn't belong to you, use adhesive notes for your comments, removing them before you return the text.

Don't annotate your own book if it has intrinsic value as an art object or a rarity. Consider doing what teachers do: *buy an inexpensive copy of the text for class.*

Tools: Highlighter, Pencil, and Your Own Text

1. Yellow Highlighter: A yellow highlighter allows you to mark exactly what you feel is necessary. Equally important, the yellow line emphasizes without interfering. Highlighters in blue and pink and fluorescent colors are even more distracting. The idea is to see the important text more clearly, not give your eyes a psychedelic exercise. While you read, highlight whatever seems to be key information. At first, you will probably highlight too little or too much; with experience, you will choose more effectively which material to highlight.

2. Pencil: A pencil is better than a pen because you can make changes. Even geniuses make mistakes, temporary comments, and incomplete notes. While you read, use marginalia—marginal notes—to mark key material. Marginalia can include check marks, question marks, stars, arrows, brackets, and written words and phrases. Create your own system for marking what is important, interesting, quotable, questionable, and so forth.

3. Your Text: Inside the front cover of your book, keep an orderly, legible list of "key information" with page references. Key information in a novel might include themes; passages that relate to the book's title; characters' names; salient quotes; important scenes, passages, and chapters; and maybe key definitions or vocabulary. Remember that key information will vary according to genre and the reader's purpose, so make your own good plan.

As you read, section by section, chapter by chapter, **consider doing the following, if useful/necessary:**

- At the end of each chapter or section, **briefly** summarize the material.
- Title each chapter or section as soon as you finish it, especially if the text does not provide headings for chapters or sections.
- Make a list of vocabulary words on a back page or the inside back cover. Possible ideas for lists include the author's special jargon and new, unknown, or otherwise interesting words.
- Important plot happenings
- Supporting details or textual evidence to support a conclusion you are drawing
- Writer's craft to create effect, such as figurative language, imagery, characterization, etc.

Honors English – 9th Grade Summer Reading 2025

Read both novellas:

Anthem by Ayn Rand

Animal Farm by George Orwell

Synopsis of each work:

***Anthem*:** Ayn Rand’s dystopian novella is not just a story about the individual being swallowed by the collective. This book also deals with an identification of how that can happen and what ideas people must first accept before such a totalitarian society can take hold. *Anthem* is not merely a story about the horrible, depressing life of people in a collectivist society; it is also about the triumph of the individual’s independent spirit and the triumph of those who reject the ethics of collectivism. **(Annotations required.) Please annotate for literary devices (figurative language), plot points, character development, and thematic ideas (themes, symbols, and motifs).**

***Animal Farm*:** George Orwell’s allegorical satirical fable takes place on a country farm in England. The animals revolt against their owner, take over the farm, and run the farm with “communist” principles. What follows shocks the reader and unfolds the truth of Russia’s Bolshevik Revolution and its attempt to create a communist socialist society. Orwell’s novella creates memorable characters each representing a player in the Russian Revolution and illustrates the allure of socialism and the erosion of equal rights. **(Annotations required.) Please annotate for plot points, character development, and thematic ideas (themes, symbols, and motifs).**

Before jumping into annotation, please watch the video linked below. Watch how this AP student hones her annotation skills and simplifies the process through effective annotation.

What is annotation, and why do we do it?

- [Click here to watch an informative video on how to annotate effectively.](#)

Tools: Highlighter, Pen, Pencil, and Your Own Text

1. **Highlighter or Colored Pens:** While you read, highlight or underline key information. If you choose to put a key at the front of the book, you can easily use different colors to highlight for different things: figurative language, symbols, plot points, characterization, themes etc. *If you use only one highlighter color, make sure you annotate explaining why that particular passage is important.* **Do not simply highlight the text.**
2. **Pen or Pencil:** While you read, use marginalia—marginal notes—to mark key material. Marginalia can include check marks, question marks, stars, arrows, brackets, and written words

and phrases. *Create your own system for marking what is important, interesting, quotable, questionable, and so forth.*

3. Your Text:

- On the inside front and back cover of your book you may want to include the following:
 - List of main characters
 - Highlighter key and/or annotation key
 - Quotable quotes with page numbers
 - Make a list of vocabulary words on a back page or the inside back cover. Possible ideas for lists include the author's special jargon and new, unknown, or otherwise interesting words.
- As you read, section by section, chapter by chapter, consider doing the following:
 - At the end of each chapter or section, briefly summarize the material. (Sticky notes work well for this!)
 - Title each chapter or section as soon as you finish it, especially if the text does not provide headings for chapters or sections.

If you have any questions or concerns about specific texts, email one of the two freshmen Honors English teachers.

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