

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.

AP Literature

REQUIRED: Read *The Kite Runner* by **Khaled Hosseini** and **complete the dialectical journal*** according to the instructions. Published in 2003, this is an unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant. Caught in the tragic sweep of history, the global settings transport readers to Afghanistan at a tense and crucial moment of change and destruction. A powerful story of friendship and the burdens of guilt, it is also about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption. Family relationships are also explored through the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, their lies. Previous AP students have labeled this book as the most moving text they've ever read. Mrs. Fine has several copies if you want one.

(Some content may be objectionable; an alternate text is available; email nescha.lee@knoxschools.org)

REQUIRED: Read *The Great Gatsby* and **PREPARE A LITERARY ONE-PAGER***: Set in the Jazz Age where “anything can happen once [you've] slid over the bridge” and into the corrupt city, Fitzgerald's novel manages to capture the decadence and hedonism of the 1920s while exposing some themes that are still relevant today. It is a multi-layered novel about a young man's obsessive quest for the love of one girl. Review the requirements for the one-pager and then actively read and annotate your copy. Be careful! The movies are not aligned with the book. We highly recommend that you skip the movie until after the AP exam.

EXTRA-CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES: YOU MAY READ ANY OF THESE AND SEE YOUR INSTRUCTOR IN AUGUST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

***The Island of Sea Women*, (Lisa See):** Published in 2019, this text is an evocative tale of two best friends whose bonds are both strengthened and tested over decades by forces beyond their control. Two girls from strikingly different backgrounds bond over their shared love of the sea. Working in their village's all-female diving collective, the two friends come of age in a community where gender roles are anything but typical. Here, women are the primary breadwinners, the heads of household in all but name, and yet, as Mi-ja and Young-sook come to realize, there are limits to their control that can prove devastating. If you're looking for an epic tale of historical fiction where the female characters rock, this is for you!

***The Picture of Dorian Gray*, (Oscar Wilde):** Published in 1890, is a Gothic and philosophical tale that is an all-time favorite of AP students. As the young man who purchases eternal youth at the tragic expense of his soul, Dorian Gray will be the archetypal character you will love to hate. Themes of youth, mortality, and the choices of good versus evil are woven throughout. See or email your instructor for a copy if you need one.

The Road, (Cormac McCarthy): Touted as McCarthy's most harrowing yet deeply personal work, this book is a journey that will not be forgotten. Some unnamed catastrophe has scourged the world to a burnt-out cinder, inhabited by the last remnants of mankind. The sky is perpetually shrouded by dust as a man and a boy struggle to find safety and hope. If you like post-apocalyptic stories, you will enjoy and be moved by this story. You can grab a copy from Mrs. Fine in room 323.

Extra-credit study questions: Students can request a reading guide for *The Kite Runner* from Mrs. Lee (nescha.lee@knoxschools.org) if they wish. Completed reading guides are due on the first day of classes and will be counted as extra-credit during the semester.

***NOTE:** Students can obtain instructions for the **dialectical journal** (*The Kite Runner*) and **literary one-pager** (your choice read) from Mrs. Nescha Lee or Mrs. Anne Fine before the end of the year or via the email address below. **The instructions are also available on the school website.**

Due dates: Both the journal and the literary one-pager are due on the first full day of school. A summer reading essay will be assigned during the first two weeks of the semester.

***If you are a rising 11th grader who registered for yearlong AP Seminar/Language Combined instead of AP Literature, please continue to the next page.**