

American Literature Summer Reading

Welcome to LaGrange Academy American Literature. The following books have been chosen to complement the novels and themes that you may cover in *American Literature*. I hope you will take the task seriously and choose books that truly interest you so that we can get off to a great start. If you have any questions at all regarding the assignment, please feel free to contact me at teresakrizay@lagrangeacademy.org.

Choosing the right books for you

Not all books are appropriate for all readers. Please note that some books may contain explicit language, sexual references, or mature subject matter. Thus, it is suggested that parents help their students make appropriate summer reading selections. To read descriptions and reviews of all the books, go to www.goodreads.com/book/explore. If you are unhappy with your choice, feel free to make another selection from the list provided.

Requirement #1 – Read one (1) or more books

You are required to read **1 or more** books by the first day of class. The number of pages read must exceed 300 pages. You may read one book that exceeds 300 pages or you may read multiple books that add cumulatively to 300 or more pages. You may select any piece of literature you wish as long as it is considered a quality piece of literature (no Nicholas Sparks or fluff books) and has been written by an American author. I have attached a list of suggested books. You may read one from the list or select your own. You may not read books that were a part of any previous year's curriculum. Suggestion: Read one book in June and one in July. Use a calendar to determine the number of pages you'll read each day or week, and then stick to your plan.

Do not assume that this requirement can be met by only watching a movie based on a book. Movies often vary from the actual book and you will not be able to complete your assignment using this method.

Requirement #2 – Complete the three steps outlined after the list of books

On the first day of school, submit your completed work. Follow the directions as outlined on the following page. The work will not be accepted after Friday of the first week. **If for some reason, you cannot fully meet this requirement, hand in the best work of which you are capable. Do not start the year with a zero or forfeit credit on a book which you have, in fact, read.**

American Literature Summer Reading List

*****You may select a book from this list or substitute a book of your choice, please see the instructions on the previous page for selection guidelines*****

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

When *The Grapes of Wrath* was published in 1939, America, still recovering from the Great Depression, came face-to-face with itself in a startling, lyrical way.

The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams

The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy is one of the funniest science fiction novels ever written. Adams spoofs many core science fiction tropes: space travel, aliens, interstellar war and repaint them as commonplace, even silly.

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

A black man's search for himself as an individual and as a member of his race and his society.

As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner

The Bundren family takes the ripening corpse of Addie, wife and mother, on a gruesomely comic journey.

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman by Ernest Gaines

In her 100 years, Miss Jane Pittman experiences it all, from slavery to the civil rights movement.

Catch-22 by Joseph Heller

A broad comedy about a WWII bombardier based in Italy and his efforts to avoid bombing missions.

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston

Janie repudiates many roles in her quest for self-fulfillment.

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

The desperate flight of tenant farmers from Oklahoma during the Depression.

Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut

Billy Pilgrim, an optometrist from Ilium, New York, shuttles between World War II Dresden and a luxurious zoo on the planet Tralfamadore.

The Color Purple by Alice Walker

A young woman sees herself as property until another woman teaches her to value herself.

11/22/63 by Stephen King

On November 22, 1963, three shots rang out in Dallas, President Kennedy died, and the world changed. What if you could change it back? King sweeps readers back in time to another moment – a real life moment – when everything went wrong.

In addition to reading the book, you will complete the following three steps for EACH BOOK:

1. Write out the introductory information as shown below (record the information in order)
 - Title of work and author
 - Genre (play, novel, epic poem, nonfiction text); sub-genre, if applicable
(example, not just novel for *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, but satirical comedy novel).
 - Historical context, such as the year published, the literary period, or any historical or literary connections worth noting
 - Protagonist(s) and description
 - Antagonist(s) and description
 - Key themes: the main two or three
2. Personal reflection: why you liked this book and are glad you read it OR why you didn't like it and why it should be stricken from the suggested reading list in future years. Use specifics from the text to back up your response. Don't just say: "it was really good" or "it was really boring." Explain specifically why.
(approx. 200 words).
3. Choose one of the following projects to complete and present in class (do this for only ONE BOOK):
 - **Create a Film Poster for Your Book:** Imagine that your book has been made into a movie. How would you create a poster that shows something significant about the plot, tone, and/or theme of the story while simultaneously attracting a big audience? What famous actors would best play the rolls? Who would direct it? On the back of your poster, you will include a fictional review from someone like Roger Ebert. Pick this project if you think of yourself as a film buff or pop culture know-it-all.
 - **Design a CD Cover and Burn a Playlist for Your Book:** If your book's characters and themes remind you of songs you love, go ahead and use that inspiration for your project. Design a cool looking CD cover that relates to your book, and in the CD booklet, include the reasons you chose each song (i.e. how they related to the story's characters, plot points, theme, or tone). This project works especially well for books about road trips, but can certainly be used for any kind of story. Choose this project if music is your life.
 - **Get Crafty With Cartography (That's Mapmaking, FYI):** Look back closely at the places that were important in your book, and illustrate a map that shows where they all are in relation to one another. Then create a key in which you explain why each place is so important to the story. This works well with books in which the location is really important, like Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, but can be adapted to all sorts of stories. Select this project if you're known for your close attention to detail.
 - **Build a Facebook Page or Twitter Account for a Character:** It's easy to set up a fictional Facebook or Twitter account for a character from your book. Fill up your profile with the kinds of things that your chosen character would be into. If you've got a friend who read the same summer reading book, you could really wow your teacher and each set up an account for a different character. If you read one of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes books, one of you could be Sherlock Holmes and the other

Watson. That way you could comment back and forth on each other's pages. Pick this project if you're into social media sites.

- **Make a Mini-Movie About Your Book:** If you're lucky enough to have advanced movie making software (like iMovie, for instance) on your computer, go make your masterpiece. If not, don't worry. If you have Windows, chances are you have Movie Maker without even knowing about it. Choose this project if you dream about being the next Steven Spielberg or M. Night Shyamalan.