

POMFRET

Dear Families,

I can still vividly recall those steamy, mid-June days in high school when the English Department would reveal the summer reading book on the final day of classes. Usually it was a lengthy canonical text designed to dovetail with the fall curriculum, and the text seldom felt enjoyable because there was no choice and it felt too much like school work! Let's face it, as great as Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* is, it's not an ideal summer reading book. Moreover, students wanted to choose from a list of great books!

The Pomfret English Department has elected to provide each form with ten book choices, and while these texts will connect thematically, they are not extensions of our curriculum. Students are asked to choose one text from their form list, and the choices range from graphic novels to young adult fiction to memoirs to collections of poetry. Each title is linked to bookshop.org so you can quickly find a summary of the book to see if it's for you. No need to annotate; just enjoy. It is our hope that the texts on this list help maintain or instill a love of reading.

The Pomfret faculty will be reading books from these lists in addition to our yearly faculty read: *The Emotional Lives of Teenagers*, by Lisa Damour. This *New York Times* bestseller focuses on raising "connected, capable, and compassionate adolescents," so given our in loco parentis role, this book seems like a fitting choice!

Happy summer, and happy reading!



Sincerely,

Todd Matthew
English Department Head

Reading Guide

What does reading look like at Pomfret?

For starters, reading is essential to what we do. It's also essential that we engage with the reading on multiple levels so that we are really able to get the most out of that experience. So, when you are reading for class, you must annotate. Quality annotations in the margins can be simple notations, big themes, questions, ideas you notice, favorite passages or quotes, or anything else you find important or relevant. If you prefer, you can also do all of this in a writing journal, but whatever your method, read with a pen or pencil in your hand!

Your teachers will require that you annotate everything you read for class, but don't feel compelled to annotate your summer reading selection. Of course you can, if you choose, start this summer by actively engaging with your text by annotating in the margins or keeping a reading journal.

[Here](#) is a very helpful video from an AP English Literature student on annotating that might give you some ideas!

On the first day of class, your teacher will provide you with your books for English class, and remember that it is not sacrilege to write in them! Writing in your book shows engagement, and when it comes time to write an essay on that text, a thoroughly annotated text is what you want to make the process easier.

Summer Reading Requirements by Form

Third Form

Students entering ninth grade

Welcome to Humanities I: English at Pomfret! We are excited to meet you this September when we will begin a challenging and fun year that will, most importantly, allow you to grow as a student of English. In preparation for this class, you are required to read one of the texts listed below.

These texts will introduce you to some of the themes that will be explored both in this class and in your Humanities I: Global Studies class. The texts the English Department selected are designed to be enjoyable summer reads that hopefully allow you to (re)discover the joy in reading.

Please be sure to bring your selected book with you on the first day of class as you will be asked to speak and write on this text during the first week of school.

- *[The Hate U Give](#)*, Angie Thomas
- *[Lord of the Flies](#)*, William Golding
- *[The House on Mango Street](#)*, Sandra Cisneros
- *[Maus](#)*, Art Spiegelman
- *[The Poet X](#)*, Elizabeth Acevedo
- *[Funny Boy](#)*, Shyam Selvadurai
- *[The Alchemist](#)*, Paulo Coelho
- *[The Old Man and the Sea](#)*, Ernest Hemingway
- *[The Kite Runner](#)*, Khaled Hosseini
- *[The Boys in the Boat](#)*, Daniel James Brown

Fourth Form

Students entering tenth grade

Welcome to Humanities II: English at Pomfret! We are excited to see you this September when we will begin a challenging and fun year that will not only build on the skills acquired last year but expose you to literary voices that you might not be comfortable with just yet. Hearing these voices will allow you to grow as a student of English. In preparation for this class, you are required to read one of the texts listed below.

These texts will introduce you to some of the themes that will be explored both in this class and in your Humanities II: American Studies class. The texts the English Department selected are designed to be enjoyable summer reads that hopefully allow you to (re)discover the joy in reading.

Please be sure to bring your selected book with you on the first day of class as you will be asked to speak and write on this text during the first week of school.

- *A Lost Lady*, Willa Cather
- *The Other Wes Moore*, Wes Moore
- *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*, Maryse Condé
- *Born to Run*, Christopher McDougall
- *I am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*, Erika L. Sánchez
- *The Nickel Boys*, Colson Whitehead
- *The Joy Luck Club*, Amy Tan
- *When I was Puerto Rican*, Esmeralda Santiago
- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou
- *Old School*, Tobias Wolff

Fifth Form

Students entering eleventh grade

Following the two-year Humanities sequence, robust electives await you in your fifth form year where you will follow your interests with unique electives offered by the English Department. In preparation for these classes, you are required to read one of the texts listed below.

The texts the English Department selected are not related to any specific course or courses but rather are designed to be enjoyable summer reads that hopefully allow you to see the joy in reading.

Please be sure to bring your selected book with you on the first day of class as you will be asked to speak and write on this text during the first week of school.

- *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, Annie Dillard
- *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*, Julia Alvarez
- *Born a Crime*, Trevor Noah
- *There There*, Tommy Orange
- *The Parade*, Dave Eggers
- *The Illustrated Man*, Ray Bradbury
- *A Good Man is Hard to Find*, Flannery O'Connor
- *Under the Feet of Jesus*, Helena Maria Viramontes
- *Interpreter of Maladies*, Jhumpa Lahiri
- *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*, Cheryl Strayed

Sixth Form

Students entering twelfth grade and post-graduates

The sixth form year is again elective based, and you can use your three terms to choose English electives that cater to your interests. In preparation for these classes, you are required to read one of the texts listed below.

The texts the English Department selected are not related to any specific course or courses but rather are designed to be enjoyable summer reads that hopefully allow you to see the joy in reading.

Please be sure to bring your selected book with you on the first day of class as you will be asked to speak and write on this text during the first week of school.

- *The Best of It: New and Selected Poems*, Kay Ryan
- *Bread Givers*, Anzia Yezierska
- *Song of Achilles*, Madeline Miller
- *The Sports Gene*, David Epstein
- *The Glass Castle*, Jeannette Walls
- *The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien
- *Zed: A Novel*, Joanna Kavenna
- *They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us*, Hanif Abdurraqib
- *Beartown*, Fredrik Backman
- *The Stranger in the Woods*, Michael Finkel