

Seacrest Upper School Students and Parents,

I hope this note finds you well in the early part of your summer vacations. When it comes to doing what I believe is one of my primary jobs as an English teacher, inspiring our youth to want to read, I am always on the lookout for the best ways to go about doing that. To this day I can still remember when my love of reading began. I was 14 years old, and my mother introduced me to a series by Stephen King called *The Dark Tower*. I begrudgingly told her something like “Fine, I’ll take a look at it,” and went back to my Sega Genesis. However, after I actually began to read through the first pages, I found myself unable to put the book down. This was the first time in my life I experienced this feeling. The “canon” parts of *The Dark Tower* series comprises 4,250 pages. I have read it twice, and I am currently, albeit slowly this time, going through my third trip. While this experience seems to be more associated with the cliffhangers on Netflix shows these days, I still very much notice and very much love when this feeling comes to me with a new read. So to that end I will enlist a few folks you may or may not have heard to hopefully help inspire you:

“I don’t believe in the kind of magic in my books. But I do believe something very magical can happen when you read a good book.” — J.K. Rowling

“A mind needs books as a sword needs a whetstone, if it is to keep its edge.” — George R.R. Martin

“If you hide your ignorance...you'll never learn.” — Ray Bradbury

“Please, no matter how we advance technologically, please don’t abandon the book. There is nothing in our material world more beautiful than the book.”— Patti Smith

As part of a student’s preparation for the upcoming school year, Seacrest asks that students complete one required summer reading book and then choose a second book from a list of options. (Unless you are in AP Literature, then you get 3!!!)

Upon the return to school, students can expect to address these summer reads through conversations, various lessons, an essay, and a project. Each grade level has book choices that are relevant to the course of study.

Enjoy your summer, but as Mr. Martin suggests, please keep your edge.

- Mr. Diapella, English Chair

9th Grade

Required:

Long Way Down, Reynolds

Choose one:

Into the Wild, Krakauer

The Book Thief, Zusak

Unbroken, Hillenbrand

Their Eyes Were Watching God, Hurston

Of Mice and Men, Steinbeck

The Lord of the Flies, Golding

10th Grade

Required:

Lincoln Highway, Towles

Choose one:

Oedipus Rex, Sophocles

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Stevenson

A Streetcar Named Desire, Williams

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Twain

Dracula, Stoker

11th Grade

Required:

The Red Bandanna, Rinaldi (young adult version)

Choose one:

The Firm, Grisham

All my Rage, Tahir

The Namesake, Lahiri

Winter's Bone, Woodrell

The Age of Innocence, Wharton

The Joy Luck Club, Tan

AP Language and Composition

Required:

No Country for Old Men, McCarthy

Choose one:

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, Dillard

Friday Night Lights, Bissinger

In Cold Blood, Capote

Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil, Berendt
Into Thin Air, Krakauer
The Hate U Give, Thomas
The Stranger, Camus

12th Grade

Required:

1984, Orwell

Choose One:

The Catcher in the Rye, Salinger

The Fountainhead, Rand

Mansfield Park, Austen

Rebecca, Maurier

The Kite Runner, Hosseini

Curtain, Christie

The Bluest Eye, Morrison

AP Literature and Composition

Required:

Great Expectations, Dickens

The Wasteland, Eliot

Choose One:

Medea, Euripides

Pride and Prejudice, Austen

Little Women, Alcott

Jude the Obscure, Hardy

As I Lay Dying, Faulkner

Catch-22, Heller

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Kesey

Jane Eyre, Bronte

Crime and Punishment, Dostoyevsky

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, Stoppard

FAQs about Summer Reading

FAQ: How can I remember in August details from a novel I read in June?

Answer: You should take detailed notes from the beginning to the end of each book. Good note taking is a skill that will be critical to your ability to learn and then to retain information throughout high school and later in college and graduate school.

- Be an active reader. If you own the book, read with a pen in hand and mark it up. If you are using a book that belongs to a library or a friend, you can use sticky notes to mark pages and passages. Write down your reactions, reflections, questions, and predictions.
- Get a notebook for your notes on summer reading. Be organized and purposeful because you want your notebook to prove a useful tool when it's time to review before the tests.
- Make notes either as you read or at the end of each chapter. You should write pages and pages and pages of notes.

FAQ: What should I write in these pages and pages and pages of notes?

Answer:

- Before you start reading, write down answers to the following questions: Who wrote the book? Where did the author live? When was the book first published? Is the subject of the book connected to important events happening in that time and place?
- If reading a work of fiction, you should make note of the story's setting in time and place as soon as possible. If the setting changes, make note of that, too.
- Write detailed notes about each of the main characters. Questions you might consider: Age? Gender? Race? Class? Profession? Value system? Important or interesting physical traits? Relationship to the other main characters? Strengths and weaknesses of character? Successes and failures? Moral and mental growth or deterioration? Conflicts and the resolution of them?
- Make a list of the minor characters and their relationships to the main characters and story. Consider the questions above.
- Keep a running list of significant plot points (fiction) or events (non-fiction). Keep track of the passing of time in this list.
- Circle words that you don't know and look them up. Make sure you've found the definition that makes sense in context.
- If reading a work of non-fiction, you should also think about the occasion that prompted the author to write about this subject and his purpose in addressing an audience about it. What should his intended reader feel, think, and do about the subject? What kind of authority does the writer bring to this topic?