

Dear incoming 10th graders:

Congratulations on completing your first year of high school! I hope that this finds you well, enjoying the first few days of summer. I'd like to take this moment to offer a few words on summer reading.

For summer reading, you will be expected to read *The Odyssey*. You should finish the story by the first day of school.

Brief context: The Trojan War was waged for ten long years. With the war over, Odysseus struggles to return to Ithaca, where greedy suitors threaten his wife and home.

Please note: ***The Odyssey* is one of the most foundational stories of all time.** For this reason, at times you will find the story challenging, dense, and even boring. You will also find other parts exciting, creative, and fun.

Consider: why would the most foundational stories of all time be easy to understand? What would it mean if it were easy to understand?

Do your best to work through the story, and remember that Homer is working on a higher level than what we might be used to. The more you imagine what Homer is describing, the more you will get out of the text. It's filled with nuance.

Focus particularly on the following books: 4-5, 9-10, 12, 17-19, 21-23. Still read the other books, because they're wonderful, but you don't need to read them as carefully.

Finally, **please make sure you have the Robert Fitzgerald translation.** Translation is an impossible task, and no translation is perfect. However, I have found this translation to be the most clear in terms of the poetry and the characters. It can be challenging to understand what makes *The Odyssey* so great with a lesser translation.

The other texts you will need (**please make sure that you get the proper translations**):

- *The Epic of Gilgamesh* translated by **Stephen Mitchell**
- *Beowulf* translated by **Burton Raffel**
- *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* by Matsuo Basho trans. **Nobuyuki Yuasa**
- *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare
- *The Stranger* by Albert Camus trans. **Matthew Ward**
- *Seagull Reader: Stories* edited by Joseph Kelly

See you in the fall,
Mr. Freda & Mr. Kelly