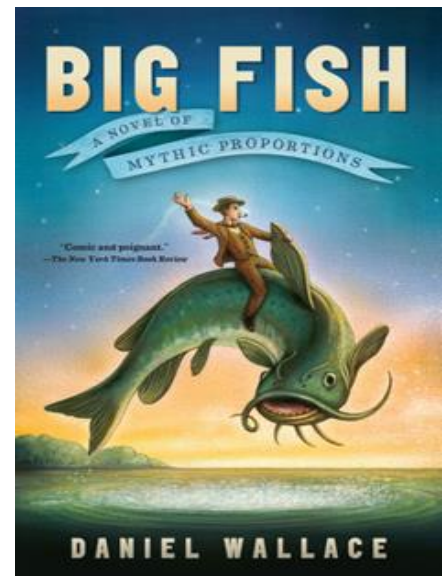


Upper School English Summer Reading Assignment

The mission of the English department is to teach students to read, write, listen, speak, and think with clarity and purpose. As part of this commitment, we require all students to participate in our summer reading program. Each year, the department seeks to engage and challenge our students by carefully selecting texts that align with our mission. In the beginning weeks of the new school year, we place significant emphasis on the summer reading material, where students engage in discussions, activities, and assessments. It is mandatory that all students diligently read and annotate the assigned texts to ensure active and successful participation in these tasks, further enriching their experience. By embracing this initiative, students not only expand their literary horizons but also cultivate essential skills and insight that will serve them well both inside and outside of the classroom.

9th Grade CP/Honors Summer Reading 2025

Big Fish by Daniel Wallace is a thoughtful and imaginative novel that beautifully aligns with both the Holy Innocents' Episcopal School mission and the English Department's goals for student growth. At its heart, *Big Fish* is a story about memory, identity, and the power of storytelling, an ideal foundation for developing skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking with clarity and purpose. As students explore the narrative structure, the blending of fantasy with realism, and the emotional complexity of the father-son relationship, they are invited to engage deeply with text and meaning, strengthening their analytical and expressive abilities.



The novel also speaks meaningfully to the school's mission by fostering a love of learning through its humorous, imaginative, and layered storytelling. Its themes encourage students to reflect on their own relationships, the ways we honor and understand others, and the role that narrative plays in shaping our lives, fostering respect for self and others. The story's emphasis on reconciliation, empathy, and legacy invites conversations about belief, forgiveness, and the intangible ways people impact one another, subtly supporting a faith-filled worldview. Finally, *Big Fish* encourages students to think beyond themselves, prompting questions about how we serve and connect with others through the stories we tell and the lives we lead.

Big Fish is an accessible, appropriate, and engaging novel that makes an excellent choice for 9th grade summer reading. At its core, the novel is about the healing element and power of stories, the difficult nature of family, and the fact that coming of age seems to be a lifelong battle. It's a reflection on the human experience that supports academic development and personal growth, making it a rich and mission-aligned choice for our 9th grade summer reading.

Upper School English Summer Reading Assignment

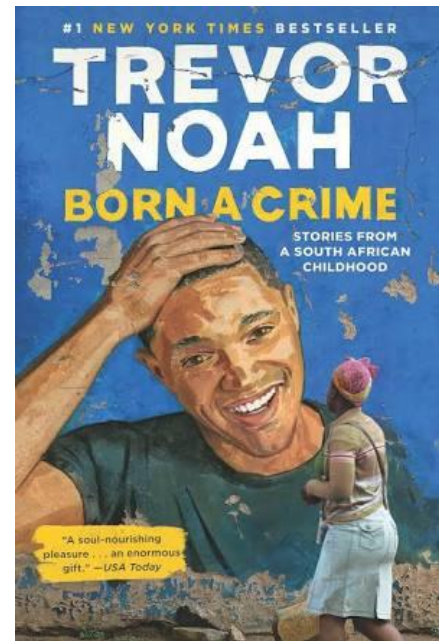
The mission of the English department is to teach students to read, write, listen, speak, and think with clarity and purpose. As part of this commitment, we require all students to participate in our summer reading program. Each year, the department seeks to engage and challenge our students by carefully selecting texts that align with our mission. In the beginning weeks of the new school year, we place significant emphasis on the summer reading material, where students engage in discussions, activities, and assessments. It is mandatory that all students diligently read and annotate the assigned texts to ensure active and successful participation in these tasks, further enriching their experience. By embracing this initiative, students not only expand their literary horizons but also cultivate essential skills and insight that will serve them well both inside and outside of the classroom.

10th Grade CP/Honors Summer Reading 2025

Born a Crime by Trevor Noah is a powerful memoir that deeply supports both the mission of Holy Innocents' Episcopal School and the English Department's commitment to helping students read, write, listen, speak, and think with clarity and purpose. Through Noah's compelling storytelling, students engage with complex issues such as injustice, identity, and the influence of language and culture while analyzing the structure and rhetorical power of memoir. His use of humor, honesty, and insight allows students to explore and discuss challenging topics in ways that are both intellectually rigorous and emotionally resonant, sharpening their communication and critical thinking skills.

The memoir also aligns meaningfully with the school's mission. Noah's journey fosters empathy and understanding across cultural and personal divides, helping students grow in their respect for self and others. His story encourages a love of learning, as students are introduced to a different cultural and historical context that broadens their global perspective. *Born a Crime* also speaks to the role of personal belief and inner strength in navigating adversity. Ultimately, the memoir prompts reflection on identity, resilience, and community, inspiring students to think about how they might contribute to the world around them with thoughtfulness and compassion.

While *Born a Crime* contains mature subject matter, including domestic violence and systemic oppression, which may be difficult for some readers, Noah presents these serious topics with a blend of humor and honesty, framed within the broader themes of survival, resilience, and hope, making them both accessible and engaging for high school readers while still honoring the weight of the issues. The memoir serves as a powerful academic tool that encourages students to engage with global perspectives, build empathy, and reflect on their own identities and experiences. It provides a meaningful and appropriate platform for exploring justice, cultural identity, and personal growth, making it a strong addition to a high school curriculum. By reading *Born a Crime*, students are not only building essential academic skills but also engaging in meaningful conversations about character, growth, and purpose, making it a vital and mission-aligned component of the 10th grade curriculum.



Upper School English Summer Reading Assignment

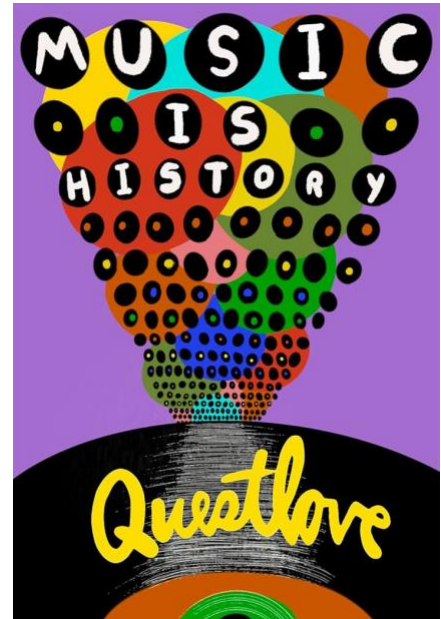
The mission of the English department is to teach students to read, write, listen, speak, and think with clarity and purpose. As part of this commitment, we require all students to participate in our summer reading program. Each year, the department seeks to engage and challenge our students by carefully selecting texts that align with our mission. In the beginning weeks of the new school year, we place significant emphasis on the summer reading material, where students engage in discussions, activities, and assessments. It is mandatory that all students diligently read and annotate the assigned texts to ensure active and successful participation in these tasks, further enriching their experience. By embracing this initiative, students not only expand their literary horizons but also cultivate essential skills and insight that will serve them well both inside and outside of the classroom.

11th Grade CP/Honors Summer Reading 2025

Music Is History by Questlove is a dynamic and thought-provoking nonfiction text that powerfully supports the mission of both the Holy Innocents' Episcopal School and the English Department. Blending personal reflection with cultural commentary, Questlove uses popular music as a lens to explore key moments in American history. Through this approach, students learn to analyze how music not only reflects but also shapes national identity, social movements, and cultural values. The text challenges students to read closely, think critically, and make connections between artistic expression and historical context—core components of our department's goal to help students read, write, speak, listen, and think with clarity and purpose.

In addition to fostering academic skills, *Music Is History* aligns with the broader goals of the school's mission. The book cultivates a love of learning by inviting students to explore history through a medium that is both accessible and engaging: music. Questlove's reflections encourage respect for self and others by illuminating diverse perspectives and the lived experiences behind the music. His thoughtful analysis encourages students to consider how people respond to challenges through creativity and expression, inspiring a sense of service to the world community through understanding and empathy. While rooted in music, the book ultimately asks students to consider deeper questions about identity, justice, and cultural legacy.

By engaging with *Music Is History*, students are not only exposed to the intersections of history, culture, and art, but they are also encouraged to think purposefully about their own voices and roles within society. It introduces critical topics such as systemic injustice, cultural resistance, and political activism, but these are presented thoughtfully and accessibly. The text lays a strong foundation for the junior-year study of American literature by framing music as both a reflection of and a response to the American experience, encouraging students to examine how art and narrative shape national identity. It is an ideal and mission-aligned introduction to the critical thinking and inquiry that defines the 11th-grade study of American literature.



Upper School English Summer Reading Assignment

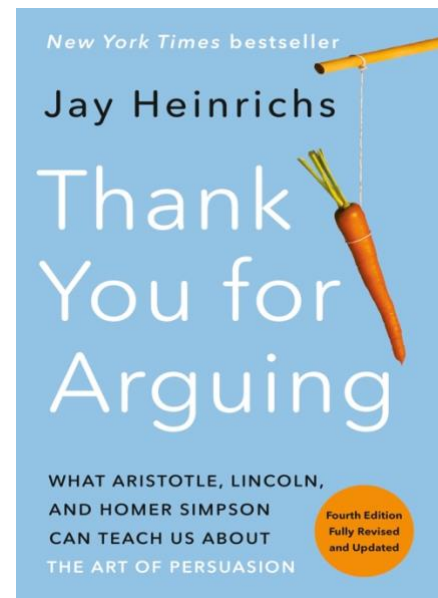
The mission of the English department is to teach students to read, write, listen, speak, and think with clarity and purpose. As part of this commitment, we require all students to participate in our summer reading program. Each year, the department seeks to engage and challenge our students by carefully selecting texts that align with our mission. In the beginning weeks of the new school year, we place significant emphasis on the summer reading material, where students engage in discussions, activities, and assessments. It is mandatory that all students diligently read and annotate the assigned texts to ensure active and successful participation in these tasks, further enriching their experience. By embracing this initiative, students not only expand their literary horizons but also cultivate essential skills and insight that will serve them well both inside and outside of the classroom.

11th Grade AP Language and Composition Summer Reading 2025

Thank You for Arguing (Fourth Edition) by Jay Heinrichs is a lively, accessible, and intellectually rich text that strongly supports the goals of both the English Department and Holy Innocents' Episcopal School. As students begin their AP Language and Composition journey, this book provides a solid foundation in rhetorical analysis and argumentation. Through examples ranging from Aristotle to modern media, Heinrichs teaches students how language shapes thought, how arguments are built, and how persuasion operates in everyday life. The text challenges students to read closely, write purposefully, listen critically, speak effectively, and think analytically, directly supporting our departmental mission.

The engaging and often humorous tone of *Thank You for Arguing* helps students discover a love of learning by demystifying classical rhetoric and showing how it applies to the real world, from political speeches to family conversations. It encourages respect for self and others by teaching students to understand opposing viewpoints, construct thoughtful arguments, and communicate with both reason and empathy. In a world increasingly shaped by the power of language, this text also cultivates a sense of service to the world community, empowering students to use their voices ethically and effectively for the common good.

Thank You for Arguing serves as an engaging introduction to rhetorical concepts, including how arguments are structured, how language persuades, and how rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos) operate in everyday life—from advertising to political speeches to conversations at the dinner table. Heinrichs uses humor and real-world examples to make classical rhetorical strategies understandable and relevant to high school students. By introducing key rhetorical strategies and encouraging students to analyze persuasive language across contexts, *Thank You for Arguing* sets the tone for a year of critical inquiry and purposeful communication, hallmarks of both the AP Language course and a Holy Innocents' education.



Upper School English Summer Reading Assignment

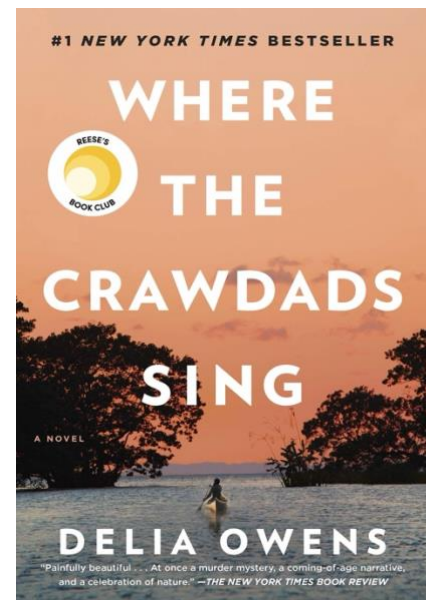
The mission of the English department is to teach students to read, write, listen, speak, and think with clarity and purpose. As part of this commitment, we require all students to participate in our summer reading program. Each year, the department seeks to engage and challenge our students by carefully selecting texts that align with our mission. In the beginning weeks of the new school year, we place significant emphasis on the summer reading material, where students engage in discussions, activities, and assessments. It is mandatory that all students diligently read and annotate the assigned texts to ensure active and successful participation in these tasks, further enriching their experience. By embracing this initiative, students not only expand their literary horizons but also cultivate essential skills and insight that will serve them well both inside and outside of the classroom.

12th Grade Honors Literature as a Social Discourse Summer Reading 2025

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens is a rich and resonant text that deeply aligns with the mission of the Holy Innocents' English Department as well as the overarching goals of Holy Innocents' Episcopal School. As a novel grounded in themes of justice, belonging, and resilience, it offers seniors a meaningful platform to explore how literature reflects and interrogates social structures. Through its dual narrative—one a coming-of-age story, the other a murder investigation—the novel invites students to read critically, write thoughtfully, speak insightfully, listen actively, and think with purpose as they unpack issues such as social isolation, prejudice, gender dynamics, and environmental identity.

In addition to reinforcing academic rigor and communication skills, *Where the Crawdads Sing* supports the school's mission in several important ways. The novel encourages a love of learning through its suspenseful storytelling and lyrical prose, drawing students into both narrative and analysis. It fosters respect for self and others by portraying a protagonist who must navigate abandonment, loss, and societal judgment, prompting empathy and discussion about equity and human dignity. The novel also contributes to a sense of service to the world community by raising questions about fairness, accountability, and the power of the natural world to shape personal and communal identity.

Where the Crawdads Sing provides a meaningful and age-appropriate platform for students to analyze how literature can both reflect and challenge societal norms, while encouraging empathy, critical thinking, and thoughtful discussion. While the book contains mature subject matter, including child neglect, domestic abuse, implied sexual situations, and a morally complex resolution to a murder investigation, these topics are addressed with thoughtfulness and framed within larger conversations about resilience, bias, and survival. As students consider the novel through the lens of social discourse, they are invited to engage deeply with both the human condition and the social forces that influence it, making *Where the Crawdads Sing* an ideal capstone for the department's mission and a meaningful literary experience that reflects the values of Holy Innocents' Episcopal School.



Upper School English Summer Reading Assignment

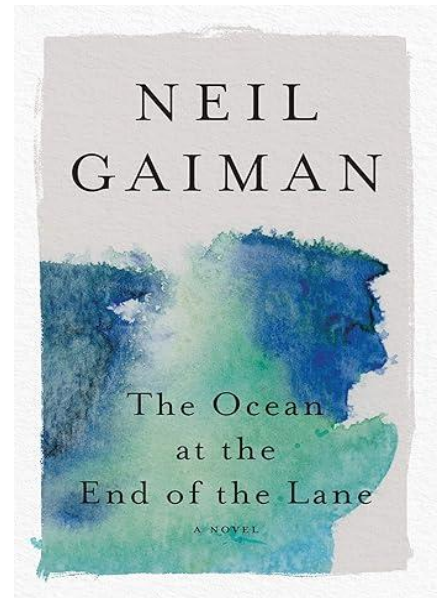
The mission of the English department is to teach students to read, write, listen, speak, and think with clarity and purpose. As part of this commitment, we require all students to participate in our summer reading program. Each year, the department seeks to engage and challenge our students by carefully selecting texts that align with our mission. In the beginning weeks of the new school year, we place significant emphasis on the summer reading material, where students engage in discussions, activities, and assessments. It is mandatory that all students diligently read and annotate the assigned texts to ensure active and successful participation in these tasks, further enriching their experience. By embracing this initiative, students not only expand their literary horizons but also cultivate essential skills and insight that will serve them well both inside and outside of the classroom.

12th Grade Honors Monsters in Literature Summer Reading 2025

Neil Gaiman's *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* is a genre-blurring novel that offers an ideal literary foundation for the 12th Grade Honors course Monsters in Literature. Blending fantasy with psychological realism, the novel invites students to examine the blurred lines between imagination and reality, innocence and knowledge, and fear and understanding—all central themes in the study of “monsters.” The text challenges students to read with discernment, write with depth, speak with insight, listen with empathy, and think with clarity and purpose, aligning seamlessly with the mission of the English Department.

At the same time, Gaiman's novel reflects the values of Holy Innocents' Episcopal School. Its deeply human story, told through the lens of memory and myth, fosters a love of learning by engaging students' imaginations and analytical skills. Through the narrator's journey of confronting fear, loss, and truth, the novel cultivates respect for self and others by encouraging readers to explore emotional complexity, vulnerability, and moral ambiguity. The story's underlying message that empathy, sacrifice, and memory are powerful tools for healing supports the school's emphasis on faith, reflection, and a sense of service to the greater good.

Ultimately, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* offers more than a fantastical escape; it serves as a mirror for students to explore the “monsters” within and around them, prompting rich discussions about identity, transformation, and the human experience, key components of both academic development and ethical growth. *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* is a contemporary work whose style, short length, and exploration of relatable coming-of-age themes makes it one that students will both enjoy reading and feel comfortable referencing in class discussions throughout the year. It serves as a perfect introduction to the ideas and concepts students will examine in the 12th grade Monsters in British Literature course.



Upper School English Summer Reading Assignment

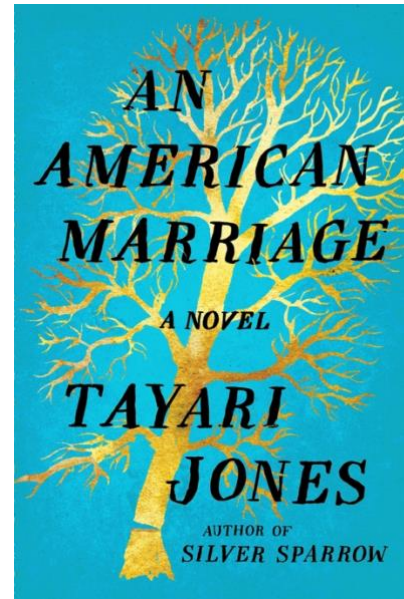
The mission of the English department is to teach students to read, write, listen, speak, and think with clarity and purpose. As part of this commitment, we require all students to participate in our summer reading program. Each year, the department seeks to engage and challenge our students by carefully selecting texts that align with our mission. In the beginning weeks of the new school year, we place significant emphasis on the summer reading material, where students engage in discussions, activities, assignments, and assessments. It is mandatory that all students diligently read and annotate the assigned texts to ensure active and successful participation in these tasks, further enriching their experience. By embracing this initiative, students not only expand their literary horizons but also cultivate essential skills and insight that will serve them well both inside and outside of the classroom.

12th Grade AP Literature Summer Reading 2025

Tayari Jones's *An American Marriage* is a powerful and timely novel that serves as an ideal text for 12th Grade AP Literature. With its layered narrative structure, rich character development, and exploration of complex themes such as love, loyalty, justice, identity, and the fragility of relationships, the novel offers students the opportunity to engage deeply with literature that reflects the human condition in all its nuance. The story, told through alternating points of view and epistolary passages, pushes students to read critically, write with sophistication, speak and listen with intention, and think analytically and empathetically, core goals of the English Department's mission.

Beyond academic rigor, *An American Marriage* aligns closely with Holy Innocents' Episcopal School's mission. The novel nurtures a love of learning by immersing students in a contemporary narrative that resonates with their social awareness and emotional intelligence. It prompts respect for self and others as students examine how external forces such as inequality, personal history, and circumstance shape human behavior and relationships. Through its exploration of injustice and the moral complexities of loyalty and forgiveness, the novel fosters a sense of service and responsibility to the world community, encouraging students to consider how literature can cultivate empathy and a broader understanding of societal systems and personal agency.

As a work of literature, *An American Marriage* gives students the opportunity to analyze the use of point of view, storytelling, and characterization as well as Jones' use of diction, syntax, and description, all of which serve as a first-class introduction to the kind of work we will do in AP Literature. The book contains mature subject matter, including imprisonment, infidelity, implied sexual situations, some violence, and racism, but all are treated thoughtfully and in age-appropriate ways for a 12th-grade audience. As students prepare for college-level analysis and discussion, this text challenges them to interpret layered prose, evaluate differing perspectives, and analyze how craft choices create meaning. In doing so, the novel exemplifies the kind of literature that not only prepares students for the AP exam, but also shapes them into thoughtful, purposeful, and compassionate readers and citizens.



Upper School English Summer Reading Assignment

The mission of the English department is to teach students to read, write, listen, speak, and think with clarity and purpose. As part of this commitment, we require all students to participate in our summer reading program. Each year, the department seeks to engage and challenge our students by carefully selecting texts that align with our mission. In the beginning weeks of the new school year, we place significant emphasis on the summer reading material, where students engage in discussions, activities, and assessments. It is mandatory that all students diligently read and annotate the assigned texts to ensure active and successful participation in these tasks, further enriching their experience. By embracing this initiative, students not only expand their literary horizons but also cultivate essential skills and insight that will serve them well both inside and outside of the classroom.

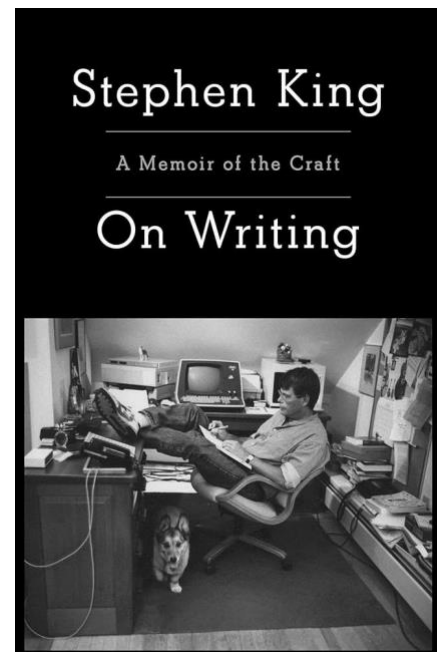
12th Grade Honors Creative Writing Summer Reading 2025

Stephen King's *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* is an insightful, accessible, and inspiring guide for aspiring writers. Blending memoir with practical instruction, King offers students an authentic look into the life and discipline of a working writer. His conversational tone, personal anecdotes, and no-nonsense advice encourage students to write with purpose, read with discernment, speak and listen with curiosity, and think creatively and critically, skills at the heart of the English Department's mission.

King emphasizes clarity in writing, the importance of revision, and the role of reading in a writer's development. These lessons support students as they cultivate their own voices and approach writing not only as a craft, but as a meaningful form of self-expression. The book's focus on perseverance, observation, and honesty challenges students to reflect on their experiences and transform them into art, fueling their growth as confident and purposeful writers.

At the same time, *On Writing* aligns beautifully with Holy Innocents' Episcopal School's mission. The text inspires a love of learning by demystifying the writing process and empowering students to take creative risks. King's personal narrative, marked by failure, resilience, and ultimate success, models respect for self and others and highlights the value of dedication and humility. His story also serves as a reminder that every person's voice has worth, reinforcing the school's commitment to helping students develop faith in their own potential and a sense of purpose within a broader community.

On Writing is an introduction to writing from one of the preeminent storytellers of our time. It is less an instructional manual for how to write and more a guide to how to approach the craft of writing stories and how to build a life around writing. Ultimately, *On Writing* is a reflection on why writing matters. It encourages students to explore storytelling as both a personal and universal act, one that deepens empathy, strengthens communication, and connects us across experiences and perspectives. It is a perfect introduction to a class in creative writing.



Summer Reading General Annotation Guide

HIES Upper School English Department

Annotation is the process of adding notes, comments, or highlights directly to a text as you read. It helps readers interact with the material by identifying important ideas, asking questions, and making connections. Annotation is important because it deepens understanding, supports memory, and prepares students for thoughtful discussions and analysis. This annotation guide is designed to help students actively engage with their summer reading texts, whether fiction or nonfiction. By using the strategies outlined here, such as marking important ideas, asking questions, making connections, and tracking key points, students will better understand and remember what they read. Thoughtful annotation supports deeper comprehension, critical thinking, and meaningful classroom discussions when school resumes.

1. Mark Important Ideas

- **Highlight or underline** key points, main arguments, or important events.
- In fiction, focus on plot twists, themes, or character development.
- In nonfiction, mark central claims, evidence, and conclusions.

2. Ask Questions

- Write questions in the margins about things you don't understand or are curious about.
- Example: "Why did the character react this way?" or "What evidence supports this claim?"

3. Make Connections

- Connect the text to your own life, other texts, or current events.
- Example: "This reminds me of ___ because ___."

4. Note Author's Craft

- In fiction: Note figurative language, imagery, symbolism, or tone.
- In nonfiction: Notice the author's style, use of evidence, or persuasive techniques.

5. Summarize Key Points

- Briefly summarize sections or chapters in the margins.
- This helps you track the main ideas as you read.

6. Identify Vocabulary

- Circle or highlight unfamiliar words.
- Write definitions or synonyms in the margins after looking them up.

7. React and Reflect

- Record your thoughts, feelings, or opinions.
- Example: "I agree with this," or "This surprised me because..."

8. Track Characters or Arguments

- In fiction: Jot down character traits or relationships.
- In nonfiction: Outline the main arguments and supporting details.