

**HONORS BRITISH LITERATURE & COMPOSITION
SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT & ESSAY—2025
Mr. Beck**

DRAMA:

Because tragedy will figure so prominently in Honors British Literature, you are being asked to read **TWO** of the following comedies to balance out the year:

Gammer Gurton's Needle: a pre-Shakespearean comedy **OR** *Blithe Spirit*: a modern comedy by Noel Coward
Much Ado about Nothing: a Shakespearean comedy
She Stoops to Conquer: an 18th century Restoration comedy by Oliver Goldsmith **OR** *The Importance of Being Earnest*—a later Victorian comedy by Oscar Wilde
Blithe Spirit—a modern comedy by Noel Coward

You will notice that these plays provide an overview of British comic drama from the pre-Renaissance to the modern era. Although you may find differences in subject, language, and dramatic conventions, you may also note trends and similarities in style and presentation.

ESSAY:

Consider the following statements:

- *Whereas tragedy shows us our strength of character, comedy reveals our weaknesses.*
- *Whereas tragedy focuses on an individual in society, comedy observes the society of individuals.*
- *Whereas tragedy suggests that man can change his condition, comedy implies that we can only learn to live with it.*
- *Whereas tragedy mourns what is lost, comedy celebrates what survives.*
- *Whereas tragedy honors wisdom in life, comedy elevates its folly.*

Based on your reading of the assigned, chosen plays, examine the validity of ONE of these comments about comedy. Substantiate your argument in a unified essay, using specific examples **from each** of the plays you have read. Do not repeat the statement as your thesis. **Develop your own thesis which expresses the essence of the statement and clarifies it from your point of view.**

Keep your response focused on comedy; this is not to be a comparison/contrast between comedy and tragedy. You may, however, as a point of reference, refer to a tragedy of literary merit that you have read / studied.

The organization of your paper is up to you, but if you can combine concepts inherent in the question rather than organize it by play, you may do so (and frankly, it is much more interesting to write and to read!).

Avoid plot summary! Assume that your reader is familiar with the works. Provide sufficient information to direct your reader's attention to the scene, character, or line to which you refer. **DO NOT RETELL THE STORIES!**

Your paper must be submitted to turnitin.com by 11:59 P.M. on the first day of school. Follow these instructions to connect to turnitin.com. To set up an account with turnitin.com:

1. Sign on to www.turnitin.com
2. In the upper right-hand corner, click on CREATE A USER PROFILE.
3. Follow instructions as given. You will need your CLASS ID & CLASS ENROLLMENT PASSWORD as listed below.
4. Follow instructions from there

CLASS – PER	CLASS ID	ENROLLMENT KEY
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PLEASE NOTE: Do not wait until the last minute to find the works, or to begin reading or writing the paper. Doing so invites the possibility of disaster. And now, have a pleasant summer and enjoy your reading! I hope that you are looking forward to a stimulating year in Seniors Honors!

NOTE: ANY indication of plagiarism including the use of AI, will result in a zero on the assignment. This includes but is not limited to: ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Quillbot.