

ELA 3-4 Honors Summer Reading (Required)
2025-2026

Welcome readers and writers to ELA 3-4 Honors:

I look forward to working with you during the next school year. As part of this course, students will read and annotate a novel during the summer.

Reading over the summer helps keep students' minds "in the game," and it adds to the number of major literary works students will have read. Please review the "Steps to Success" to ensure a successful start to the year.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

STEP 1:

Read the following novel. This novel offers readers a unique opportunity to step into the shoes of another person and gain empathy and understanding for different experiences and perspectives. Literature provides insights into the human condition, exploring universal themes such as love, loss, resilience, and identity, while allowing readers to reflect on their own lives in meaningful ways.

***The Bean Trees* by Barbara Kingsolver**

Clear-eyed and spirited, Taylor Greer grew up poor in rural Kentucky with the goals of avoiding pregnancy and getting away. But when she heads west with high hopes and a barely functional car, she meets the human condition head-on. By the time Taylor arrives in Tucson, Arizona, she has acquired a completely unexpected child, a three-year-old Native American girl named Turtle, and must somehow come to terms with both motherhood and the necessity for putting down roots. Hers is a story about love and friendship, abandonment and belonging, and the discovery of surprising resources in apparently empty places.

STEP 2:

While reading, students are expected to **annotate** the novel to assist in their comprehension.

If a student is unable to mark up and make notes in their book, they may use sticky notes. If a student is reading a digital copy of the novel, most digital devices have annotation tools for marking up texts.

How do I annotate?

- Underline or highlight the major points.
- Circle keywords or phrases that are confusing or unknown to you.
- Important scenes or key sections of dialogue
- Character descriptions, key decisions, motivations, and flaws
- Questions and inferences that pop into your head as you are reading
- Connections you make to other texts, films, t.v. shows, or to your personal life
- Figurative language (allusions, alliteration, metaphors, similes, etc.) used effectively

STEP 3:

Students can expect a test/project during the second week of school. In addition, students are expected to participate in class or group discussions. If they do not read it, they will almost certainly struggle the first several weeks. Therefore, students must come to the first day of class having read the literature, complete their annotations, and be prepared to discuss their novel.

****Helpful Hint:** Don't wait until the week before school begins to try and read the novel and complete the annotations. Unexpected events may pop up that could get in the way of you completing your reading on time. Make a plan for the number of pages or chapters you are going to read per week and stick to it.