



Benilde-St. Margaret's

A Catholic, college preparatory school

Dear Honors English 10 Student,

Soon you will be part of a demanding but fulfilling class that will expand your understanding of our complex and ever-changing world. We look forward to beginning a conversation that will last all school year and challenge and change all of us.

As you read, discuss, and work with the literature in Honors English 10, you will:

- read literature by authors from varied cultures and written about diverse characters
- be exposed to different styles of fiction and nonfiction, explore a play and a musical, study poetry, read graphic novels, and participate in a research unit
- increase your critical thinking skills
- engage with the subject matter and with your classmates
- develop an understanding that reading, writing, discussing, and project creation are ways to explore, learn, and grow as a person
- create meaning from the works we study and apply what you learn to your life and our world
- promote change in our school, community, and world

Summer reading is required as you prepare for Honors English 10. See the following page for this assignment. Evaluate the book choices carefully and choose ones that intrigue you. A link is provided for each book that gives a snapshot about each story to help you make your choices.

It is recommended to read the novels and complete the assignment close to the start of school so the material is fresh in your mind when you begin class. Expect an exam and essay within the first couple weeks of class to demonstrate your understanding of the novels and effectiveness of your reading strategies.

Feel free to email . . . over the summer if you have questions or concerns. We are excited to begin the journey of this class with you. You bring a needed voice to an important conversation.

Sincerely,
The Honors English 10 Teachers

2026 Summer Reading Assignment for Honors English 10

Each student reads:

[Lord of the Flies](#) by William Golding

Each student chooses to read one of the following:

[Dear Martin](#) by Nic Stone

[The Silence That Binds Us](#) by Joanna Ho

[The Poet X](#) by Elizabeth Acevedo

[I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter](#) by Erika A. Sánchez

[The Nickel Boys](#) by Colson Whitehead

[The Secret Side of Empty](#) by Maria A. Andreu

[Firekeeper's Daughter](#) by Angeline Boulley – do not choose this novel if you read it for the Lit Circle Unit in Honors English 9

*All books are available at your local library or you may purchase a copy of your own.

Summer Reading Assignment Due on the First Day of School

1. Read both *Lord of the Flies* and one choice book.
2. For each novel, annotate six passages (*2 pages from the beginning, 2 pages from the middle, and 2 pages from the end*) marked with questions and comment on themes, character development, or figurative language (symbols, similes, metaphors, etc.) If borrowing a book, photocopy selected pages from the text and annotate those. Passages should be a half to a whole page in length. Although the optimal way to interact with this text is to read a print version, you may search the internet for a pdf full text version of the novel and print pages from that source to annotate as well.
3. Select ONE character from each novel that you see sharing some similarities with each other, and complete the Character Comparison Chart (attached below). Use specific details and quotations from the text. Cite pages numbers too. Please be sure your writing is legible so your insight can be recognized and given full credit.
4. On the first day of school, please have each part of the assignment completed, printed on paper, and stapled with the character chart on top and the annotated pages on the bottom.

The exam on the summer reading will assess the following:

- student's ability to organize details and provide logical reasoning to support their interpretation of a quotation from the text
- student's ability to interpret meaning from basic literary devices (metaphor, symbolism, personification, and irony) and types of character development
- student's recall and comprehension through active reading strategies (e.g., annotation, understanding words in context, using inference to glean knowledge from what is written in the text and unwritten in the text, questioning ideas in the text, summarizing chapters, etc.)
- This exam will be given the week after Labor Day weekend.

Annotation Tips: Mark Up That Text with Your Observations and Thoughts!

As you thoughtfully read and focus on key passages of the novel, identify important or striking features, notice patterns, predict meanings, and annotate, or “mark up”, the text to show your observations and thoughts.

This kind of practice will help you read more closely and with greater thought and understanding! As you get more practice, you'll develop your own system. Until then (that means for your summer reading and classroom readings), use the following system. Mark features of the text with a:



or ! for important events, decisions, or thoughts expressed by the author or a character



to highlight confusing or puzzling ideas or events



or ○ to identify a literary technique used by the author.

In the margins, write brief comments. If the margins are narrow, you may want to use Post-It notes. When writing comments, you might ...

- | | |
|---|---|
| ● Observe what is being said or done | ● Identify a literary technique |
| ● Define unfamiliar words | ● Infer a character quality |
| ● Identify a theme being developed | ● Ask a thoughtful question or predict an outcome |
| ● Paraphrase or summarize a difficult phrase, sentence or passage | |
| ● Describe the effect of an image, sound, or word | |

Below are examples of text that have been annotated. Your observations and thoughts will be different, but the examples will help you see how useful and easy it is to mark-up text as you observe and think while reading.

Four Skinny Trees *repetition in this section*

isolated don't fit in misunderstood

They are the only ones who understand me. I am the only one who understands them. Four skinny trees with skinny necks and pointy elbows like mine. Four who do not belong here but are here. Four raggedy excuses planted by the city. From our room we can hear them, but Nenny just sleeps and doesn't appreciate these things.)? Why is Nenny mentioned here?

"Four" repeated 3x
The trees are
• skinny
• don't belong where they are
• raggedy excuses put there by someone

fierce angry determined

Their strength is secret. They send ferocious roots beneath the ground. They grow up and they grow down and grab the earth between their hairy toes and bite the sky with violent teeth and never quit their anger. This is how they keep. *Very visual! First and last sentence are simple and direct. Strong adjectives and verbs.*

simile

Let one forget his reason for being, they'd all droop like tulips in a glass, each with their arms around the other. Keep, keep, keep, trees say when I sleep. They teach. —Pow!

each keeps the others strong
repetition & rhyme

Here's the "so what" I can picture that wall!

When I am too sad and too skinny to keep keeping, when I am a tiny thing against so many bricks, then it is I look at trees. When there is nothing left to look at on this street. Four who grew to despise concrete. Four who reach and do not forget to reach. Four whose only reason is to be and be.

"Four" repeated 3x
The trees
• grow to despise concrete
• reach
• know their reason

Excerpt taken from *The House on Mango Street* (1983)

concrete = barriers, limits, all the things that box us in

The trees are a symbol to the author.

Lord of the Flies
by William Golding

Shadows and Tall Trees

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Ralph heard the mockery and hated Jack. The sting of ashes in his eyes, tiredness, fear, enraged him.

"Go on then! We'll wait here."

There was silence.

"Why don't you go? Are you frightened?"

A stain in the darkness, a stain that was Jack, detached itself and began to draw away.

"All right. So long."

The stain vanished. Another took its place.

Ralph felt his knee against something hard and rocked a charred trunk that was edgy to the touch. He felt the sharp cinders that had been bark push against the back of his knee and knew that Roger had sat down. He felt with his hands and lowered himself beside Roger, while the trunk rocked among invisible ashes. Roger, uncommuni-
cative by nature, said nothing. He offered no opinion on the beast nor told Ralph why he had chosen to come on this mad expedition. He simply sat and rocked the trunk gently. Ralph noticed a rapid and infuriating tapping noise and realized that Roger was banging his silly wooden stick against something.

So they sat, the rocking, tapping, impervious Roger and Ralph, fuming; round them the close sky was loaded with stars, save where the mountain punched up a hole of blackness.

There was a slithering noise high above them, the sound of someone taking giant and dangerous strides on rock or ash. Then Jack found them, and was shivering and croaking in a voice they could just recognize as his.

"I saw a thing on top."

They heard him blunder against the trunk which rocked violently. He lay silent for a moment, then muttered.

"Keep a good lookout. It may be following."

A shower of ash pattered round them. Jack sat up.

"I saw a thing bulge on the mountain."

"You only imagined it," said Ralph shakily, "because nothing would bulge. Not any sort of creature."

Roger spoke; they jumped, for they had forgotten him.

"A frog."

Jack giggled and shuddered.

metaphor
stain = Jack =
darkness = evil

somebody
scraped the
bark? That's
how Ralph knew
Roger sat down?

rocking
tapping
impervious
even sounds
annoying!

SSS...
like a snake
(alliteration)

? or what
who is the other
stain?

Roger

shows Ralph
is irritated
with Roger

the mountain is
a living thing!
a dark thing!
the close sky
feels suffocating

Roger rocked the
trunk gently.
Jack rocked it
violently.

It's so dark Ralph can't see anything!
He feels sharp cinders. He and Roger
hear Jack.

HE 10 Character Comparison Chart

Name:

Question	Character:	Character:
What does each character want?		
What are his /her motives for wanting this?		
How do we learn what each character wants? Note dialogue, actions, interior thinking, and page numbers		

Question	Character:	Character:
<p>What does that desire/want set in motion?</p>		
<p>Who and/or what stands in the way of his achieving it?</p>		