

2026-2027 Senior English Summer Reading Information

Teacher: Jill Benfer (jbenfer@fwc.org)

Book Choices: Choose one book (that you have not already read for school) from the following list to read. You will use your book as the topic for your **senior research paper**.

1. **1984 by George Orwell*** (pub. 1949) – Many pop-culture references, including “Big Brother is watching” and the title of the reality show *Big Brother*, allude to this book. Although the year 1984 has come and gone without many of Orwell’s dire predictions becoming reality, his futuristic vision of a world where the government controls all aspects of life and monitors even the most private moments, is chilling. You CANNOT choose this if you read it in Dual Credit or AP English.
2. ***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon*** (pub. 2003) – A more recent novel than many on this list, *Curious Incident* (2003) explores the life of Christopher, a fifteen-year-old math whiz who is somewhere on the autism spectrum. Chris struggles with some of the aspects of daily emotions, but decides to write a book for school to record the details of a crime he is falsely accused of committing. This evolves into an adventure that he never expects.
3. ***Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley** (pub. 1818) – Although familiar in pop culture, this novel, framed by letters from brother to sister, tells the story of Victor Frankenstein and his creation. Considered by some the first sci-fi novel, the story explores the ideas of isolation utilizing traditional gothic elements. Readers are often surprised by how different this story is than the Halloween idea or the films they may know.
4. ***The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle** (pub. 1902) - In this classic whodunit, Sherlock Holmes and his trusty assistant Dr. Watson investigate the mysteries surrounding the death of Sir Charles Baskerville. From shady figures to the possibility of the supernatural, Holmes and Watson must deduce what actually happened at the Baskerville estate before someone else is hurt.
5. ***Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë** (pub. 1847) – Jane, orphaned, abused, and then neglected, exemplifies Brontë’s personal ideals of a strong-willed woman living Victorian society. Through her experiences living with her aunt, attending boarding school, and becoming a governess, she remains strong and questions commonly accepted ideas of her time as she searches for love and acceptance.
6. ***Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens** (pub. 1838) – Orphaned at a young age and living at a workhouse for the first nine years of his life, young Oliver Twist escapes a harsh apprenticeship only to find nineteenth-century England to be a dark place of cruelty, pickpocketing, and desperation. After a series of mix-ups and coincidences, Oliver finds that there is more to his life than might be expected of a runaway orphan.
7. ***Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen** (pub. 1813) – In one of her best-known and most popular novels, Jane Austen presents the character of Elizabeth Bennet, the second of five daughters of a country gentleman living in a small village near London in the early nineteenth century. Through the stories of the five girls, particularly Elizabeth who is unusually assertive and independent for girls of that time, Austen explores the issues of class distinctions and the limitations of opportunities open to women of the era.
8. ***Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë** (pub. 1847) – *Wuthering Heights*, a story of passionate love and revenge, centers on the mysterious young man Heathcliff. It follows him from childhood to young adulthood, as he falls in love with his benefactor’s daughter, Catherine, who despite her love for Heathcliff, is engaged to another man; Heathcliff, too, marries another, and misery ensues. This story of star-crossed lovers is a true classic of the Victorian era and completely different from the 2026 film.

*Books marked with an asterisk contain references or language that some might find offensive. For more information, please contact Sharon Bryant at sbryant@fwc.org.

Annotate as you read: Remember that you'll need this information for your research paper.

- Characters and setting - mark / make notes about character traits.
- Literary Elements: Mark literary elements that you notice – allusions, symbols, figurative language, metaphors, similes, motifs, etc.
- Style: Underline or highlight sentences that stand out to you.
- Questions: In the margins, note anything that you do not understand.
- Theme: Write notes about the theme (the message the author is trying to present) in the margins or at the ends of chapters. What does the author want readers to understand from this book?
- Plot: Write notes at the tops of pages that indicate important events or thematic elements. Mark plot elements like exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
- Chapter Summaries: As you finish each chapter, write a few bullet points that will remind you of the important elements of that chapter. **You will find it extremely helpful to have a summary of each chapter when you begin your research paper.**

First Days of School: We will not waste a moment this year in English. Come prepared!

- You should have completely and **thoroughly read and annotated your book FOR A GRADE.** Bring it with you. I will look at your book to check that you have annotated adequately and effectively. I will expect to see chapter summaries (50+ points) and most of the other items listed above. **It will be your first daily grade.**
- Bring your **charged computer** with you. You will need it almost every day in English.
- Expect a **reading quiz**, discussion, and other activities in the first few days of school.

Supplies: You will need to **turn in** the following supplies on/before the first **MONDAY** of school:

- 1 folder with pockets — brads helpful but optional — **FOR THE RESEARCH PAPER ONLY (this will not be a class folder)**
- 1 school supply of your choice of the following:
\$5 for me to just purchase whatever we end up needing the most
1 package kleenex **OR**
1 package of giant construction paper (18x12ish) **OR**
1 small pack of sticky tabs **OR**
AA or AAA batteries **OR**
1 pack of 1 bag of candy / goldfish / snacks for days people are *just starving*