

2026 English Summer Reading Guide:
English 2 Honors

Instructions:

- Read **ONE** of the three books listed on the next page before the first day of school.
- Obtain the physical book, not an ebook.*
 - *Students with specific ebook accommodations should follow their learning plan and can consult with their school learning specialist with any questions about their accommodations.
- You may purchase the book or get it from the library – but you must have it in your possession each day of class to start the school year. For most in-class work related to the book, you will *not* be able to use your iPad (except for accommodations), so you need your own physical copy.
- Follow the instructions below for reading and preparing for the in-class assessment. Your English teacher will provide further instructions on the first day of school.
- In-class assessment: You will need to write about your chosen book on demand during class on one of the first days of school. You will be able to use your physical book and annotations for this but no other resources. Make sure you have carefully and thoughtfully read your book and that your annotations are helpful to you.

List of Book Choices:



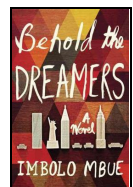
[The Book of Unknown Americans](#) by [Cristina Henríquez](#) (novel)

ISBN: 9780345806406

“When fifteen-year-old Maribel Rivera sustains a terrible injury, the Riveras leave behind a comfortable life in Mexico and risk everything to come to the United States so that Maribel can have the care she needs. Once they arrive, it’s not long before Maribel attracts the attention of Mayor Toro, the son of one of their new neighbors, who sees a kindred spirit in this beautiful, damaged outsider.

Their love story sets in motion events that will have profound repercussions for everyone involved.

Here Henríquez seamlessly interweaves the story of these star-crossed lovers, and of the Rivera and Toro families, with the testimonials of men and women who have come to the United States from all over Latin America.”

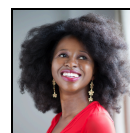


[Behold the Dreamers](#) by [Imbolo Mbue](#) (novel)

ISBN: 9780525509714

“Jende Jonga, a Cameroonian immigrant living in Harlem, has come to the United States to provide a better life for himself, his wife, Neni, and their six-year-old son. In the fall of 2007, Jende can hardly believe his luck when he lands a job as a chauffeur for Clark Edwards, a senior executive at Lehman Brothers. Clark demands punctuality, discretion, and loyalty—and Jende is eager to please. Clark’s wife, Cindy, even offers Neni temporary work at the Edwardses’ summer home in the Hamptons. With these opportunities, Jende and Neni can at last gain a foothold in America and imagine a brighter future. However,

the world of great power and privilege conceals troubling secrets, and soon Jende and Neni notice cracks in their employers’ façades. When the financial world is rocked by the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the Jongas are desperate to keep Jende’s job—even as their marriage threatens to fall apart. As all four lives are dramatically upended, Jende and Neni are forced to make an impossible choice.”



[Beautiful Country](#) by [Qian Julie Wang](#) (memoir)

ISBN: 9780385547215

In Chinese, the word for America, Mei Guo, translates directly to “beautiful country.” Yet when seven-year-old Qian arrives in New York City in 1994 full of curiosity, she is overwhelmed by crushing fear and scarcity. In China, Qian’s parents were professors; in America, her family is “illegal” and it will require all the determination and small joys they can muster to survive. Inhabiting her childhood perspective with exquisite lyric clarity and unforgettable charm and strength, Qian Julie Wang has penned an essential American story about a family fracturing under the weight of invisibility, and a girl coming of age in the shadows, who never stops seeking the light.



Questions to Guide Reading and Annotating

Directions: Use the questions below to guide what you think about and notice as you read. You do not need to submit written answers to these questions. In class during the first week of school, you will complete a written assessment using only your book and annotations. For this assessment, you will need to draw upon the thinking you did while reading and find specific scenes in the book to directly reference. You should have thorough annotations either directly on your book pages, on post-its in your book, or handwritten in a notebook so you can efficiently access your thinking and find specific pages while completing the in-class assessment. Printed, typed notes will not be allowed.

Character and Conflict

1. What motivates each character to make the choices they make throughout the book? Do motivations between characters differ? Do individual characters' motivations change? If so, why?
2. What are the main conflict(s) from start to finish in the book? What are the sources of these conflicts? Are they external to the character or internal? In what ways are the sources of conflict connected?
3. How does each character respond to the conflict(s) they experience? What does this reveal about them? What larger idea(s) might this reveal?
4. Which characters appear to be shifting or developing? How do they change? In what ways do others stay the same? What causes these developments?
5. How does the author end the book? In what ways are the conflicts resolved or not? What might this reveal about larger ideas or questions the author is pushing the reader to consider?

Topic and Theme

1. Do any ideas appear regularly or with a recurring pattern throughout the book?
2. What issues related to humanity or society does the book make the reader think about?
3. What questions does this book raise, about human life or about society?
4. In what ways does this book reveal complications or new layers to the reader's usual understanding of an experience or idea?

Author's Choices

1. Do any characters, settings, scenes, or objects feel symbolic of a larger idea?
2. In what ways does the ending of the book suggest a thematic idea or raise a thematic question?

Takeaway

Think about how the larger concepts of **social class** or **"The American Dream"** play a role in your chosen book. What might the author be saying, suggesting, or questioning about these concepts in this story? There is not one "answer" to this. *Explore your thinking!*