

2026-27 MHS Honors English II Required Summer Reading

Course: English II Honors

Play: *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw

Nonfiction Work: *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser

Welcome to sophomore English! As the current school year begins to wind down and summer break approaches, students at the honors level are required to fulfill the necessary summer reading obligations for next school year. For English II Honors, there are two works that will need to be completed prior to entering the course. These are *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw and *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser.

You will need to purchase your own copy of the works so that you will be able to highlight or underline important passages or make notes in the page margins. Used copies of the books may be ordered on Amazon.com for a minimal price, but you also may want to attempt to find them at local used bookstores such as Southland, The Book Rack, or Cover to Cover. Please bring your works with you to school during the first week of instruction.

Pygmalion, by George Bernard Shaw, was originally published in 1912. It is the comedically written story of a professor who makes a bet that he can transform a working-class woman into a proper lady by training. It is as relevant today as it was then, despite America's less rigid class structure and formality, as it explores issues of code-switching to ingratiate oneself into different social groups, and whether social class is something to be valued at all.

When *Fast Food Nation* released in 2001, the book received critical acclaim and became an international bestseller for exposing the uncomfortable truths behind the fast-food industry. An investigative journalist, Eric Schlosser originally wrote this work as an article for *Rolling Stone*, but the book that derived from this would examine in greater depth how the world of fast food not only generated America's obesity problem but also contributed to a socioeconomic divide. As the work outlines the proliferation of fast-food establishments following World War II and the global impact of this cultural phenomenon, it also raises questions about American eating habits and the long-standing problems dished out from a meal served quickly.

When your English class begins either in the fall or spring, you will be asked to display your knowledge of the books through discussion, writing, and objective testing. Please remember that **the completion of summer reading is a required component of an Honors English class** and is a necessary step to begin the course on a successful note. In preparation for discussion and writing, it is important that you take notes and write down your own questions as you read. By doing this, you will be prepared to bring your own insight to share in class. Enjoy the works!

We highly recommend waiting until Christmas break to read the texts if you are taking the course in spring semester. Moreover, we strongly suggest that you watch the play online, watch the movie version of it, or simply search for analysis videos on YouTube to aid in your understanding of the play.