



St. Thomas Aquinas HIGH SCHOOL

Summer and Independent Reading Information:

In the pursuit of helping our students tap into the art of reading, we have flexed our former Summer Reading into a year long engagement. The STA Independent Reading program will have students read three books over the course of the academic year spread out through the first three quarters starting with one over the summer. This will allow students to exercise how their analytical and writing skills have developed throughout the year, as well as keep students reading independently.

There will be three parts to the project for each book:

- 1) A book is read from the provided list below and linked here.
- 2) Annotations are done (directly in the book, on sticky notes in the book, or on notes with page #'s and a MLA citation for the book at the beginning of the notes). [Expectations for Annotations Listed Here.](#)
- 3) A thematic response essay is written to share out their experiences with the stories. [Rubric Provided Here.](#)

Over the Summer (then subsequently again for the second and third marking periods):

Students will choose **ONE** book from List 1 (three total books over the year, list 2 and 3 used for the next reads) curated by the English Department. As they read students will annotate the work. Then in a full MLA formatted response, with a full Works Cited at the end, students will write an essay for each book. Work will be turned in on Canvas & a hard copy, with an original essay title that includes the book's title. The essay will explore the student's experience with the book.

Each Essay Should:

- Meet the minimum word count
Foundations: 500
CP: 800
Honors: 1,000
AP: 1500
- Be turned in on Canvas & a hard copy
- Essay's introduction includes: book's title, genre, and author, as it begins with a brief ORIGINAL summary of the book which has been written by the student to capture the core of the work, maintaining the author's tone, before concluding the intro with a strong original thesis which articulates a coherent interpretation of the work

- Essay should meet the required number of quotes properly integrated with in-text MLA citations that match the works cited at the end of the essay:
Foundations: 1-2
CP:4-6
Honors: 8-10
AP:12
- Essay focuses on the student’s experience with the book in a detailed and thorough discussion illustrating superior understanding of the book and its themes or arguments . Students may have used some of the possible writing prompt questions to guide their work into a complete and cohesive narrative:
 - What was your first impression of the book? Did it match your expectations? Did your opinion of the book change by the time you finished it?
 - What aspects of the book (dialogue, characters, pacing, etc.) do you think are worthy of praise? What aspects do you think deserve criticism? Explain.
 - What message do you think the author wants readers to take away? Do you agree with it? Why or why not?
 - How does the book or its themes relate to something in your own life?
 - What lingering questions does the book leave unanswered? Why do you think the author might not have resolved them?
 - Would you recommend this book to someone else? Why or why not? Is there anything you would want to warn another reader about before starting the book?
- **No use of generative AI is permitted, including brainstorming, outlining, drafting, summarizing, rephrasing, or grammatical assistance, including tools such as Grammarly.**

Students will still have choice over the novels they read, though their choices will be derived from the lists curated by the English Department. In theory they could read all three over the summer, but do not have to; they could simply elect to complete the first. The structure will follow this schedule (Subject to change):

Book 1: Novel of choice from List 1; 3 “classics” within the class’s area of study (American Lit, British Lit, etc.)

- First Day of Classes: Annotations for Book 1
- End of Second Week of Classes: First paper due
 - Possibly written in class during first week (depending on class)

Book 2: Novel of choice from List 2; expanded list of options from area of study

- After Thanksgiving Break: Annotations for Book 2 (due date announced by teacher)
- Week before Christmas Break: Second paper due (due date announced by teacher)
 - Again, possibly an in-class project (depending on class)

Book 3: Novel of choice with minimum page count pending teacher approval

- Before Spring Break: Annotations are due (due date announced by teacher)
- Week before Spring Break: Third paper due (due date announced by teacher)
 - Again, possibly an in-class project (depending on class)

The Book Lists by Grade

9th GRADE

- TIER ONE
 - *Animal Farm* by George Orwell
 - *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis
 - *Night* by Elie Wiesel
- TIER TWO
 - *The Absolute True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie
 - *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr
 - *The Boy on the Wooden Box* by Leon Leyson (non-fiction)
 - *The Crazy Horse Electric Game* by Chris Crutcher
 - *Hidden Figures* (non-fiction) by Margot Lee Shetterly
 - *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
 - *If I Ever Get Out of Here* by Eric Gansworth
 - *Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie
 - *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse
 - *The Thief* by Megan Whalen Turner
- TIER THREE
 - Free choice fiction or non-fiction, 200 page minimum.

10th GRADE

- TIER ONE
 - *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger
 - *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott
 - *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- TIER TWO
 - *Airman* by Eoin Colfer
 - *Charles and Emma* by Deborah Heiligman (non-fiction)
 - *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green
 - *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
 - *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett
 - *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
 - *O Pioneers!* by Willa Cather
 - *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
 - *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles
 - *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James
- TIER THREE
 - Free choice fiction or non-fiction, 250 page minimum.

11th GRADE

- TIER ONE
 - *Dracula* by Bram Stoker
 - *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien
 - *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë
- TIER TWO
 - *1984* by George Orwell
 - *An Abundance of Katherines* by John Green
 - *Medea* by Euripides
 - *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
 - *Mistborn: The Final Empire* by Brandon Sanderson
 - *The Picture of Dorian Grey* by Oscar Wilde
 - *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen
 - *Scythe* by Neal Shusterman
 - *Thank You for Arguing* by Jay Heinrichs (non-fiction)
 - *World War Z* by Max Brooks
- TIER THREE
 - Free choice fiction or non-fiction, 250 page minimum.

12th GRADE

- TIER ONE
 - *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelly
 - *The Oedipus Cycle* (Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone) by Sophocles
 - *Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens
- TIER TWO
 - *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
 - *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller
 - *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller
 - *The House of the Scorpion* by Nancy Farmer
 - *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros
 - *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster (non-fiction)
 - *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy
 - *The Stranger* by Albert Camus
 - *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams
 - *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe
- TIER THREE
 - Free choice fiction or non-fiction, 300 page minimum.