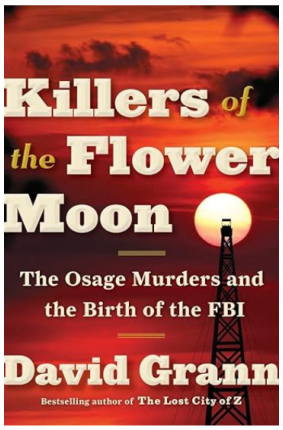
New Trier Township High School
Social Studies Department

Summer Reading 2026

American Studies (Level 9)

Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI, David Grann

ISBN-13: 978-0385534246



Summary: In the 1920s, the richest people per capita in the world were members of the Osage Nation in Oklahoma. After oil was discovered beneath their land, the Osage rode in chauffeured automobiles, built mansions, and sent their children to study in Europe.

Then, one by one, the Osage began to be killed off. The family of an Osage woman, Mollie Burkhart, became a prime target. One of her relatives was shot. Another was poisoned. And it was just the beginning, as more and more Osage were dying under mysterious circumstances, and many of those who dared to investigate the killings were themselves murdered.

As the death toll rose, the newly created FBI took up the case, and the young director, J. Edgar Hoover, turned to a former Texas Ranger named Tom White to try to unravel the mystery. White put together an undercover team, including a Native American agent who infiltrated the region, and together with the Osage began to expose one of the most chilling conspiracies in American history. (Amazon)

You are only required to read Chronicle One (pages 1-108) and Chronicle Three (pages 260-316). Chronicle One ("The Marked Woman") focuses on the series of mysterious murders of members of the Osage Nation in the 1920s. Chronicle Three ("The Reporter") focuses on the lasting impact of the violence on the Osage tribe and examines who ultimately shaped the narrative of their history.

As you read Chronicle One, write margin notes about the following:

- The portrayal of Native Americans by dominant society
- The growing wealth of the Osage people from oil rights & the role of federally imposed system of financial guardians
- The suspicious and often unexplained deaths of Osage individuals
- The failure or refusal of local authorities to properly investigate
- Themes of fear, greed, and exploitation
- Questions you have

As you read Chronicle Three, write margin notes about the following:

- Various lasting impacts of the violence and murders
- Lies people told and important parts of the story they tried to hide
- Clues, evidence, and hidden details that investigators eventually uncovered