



2026 Advanced Academics Summer Study

PreAP English I

A Note for Students and Guardians-Aledo ISD Advanced RLA courses are focused on College Board's Areas of Focus for English classes: **reading closely**, **valuing evidence**, and **noticing language choices**. Our Pre-AP Summer Studies were designed with these focal points in mind. All students enrolled in PreAP English I are required to watch two videos and read at least ONE text from a list of titles curated for their literary value and the author's purpose and craft evident in the text. Students will be asked to use their resulting deep understanding of texts in classroom discussion and compositions during the first unit of instruction for the 2025-26 school year. If you have any questions, please contact AHS/DNG at 817-441-8711.

Overview - Please watch ALL videos and then select ONE title from the list below.

Each of the texts below contains components of the universal trope of a hero's journey. Please watch both videos, taking notes on the content and why the hero's journey is so universal in storytelling. Then choose one of the books from the list to read over the summer. As you read, keep what you learned from the videos in mind and note how the author follows or strays from the concept of the hero's journey. Note: Your annotations will not be graded, but you will use this work and text in assignments during the first grading cycle.

**Some of these titles may contain mature language and/or situations. Select the text with which you and your family are most comfortable.*

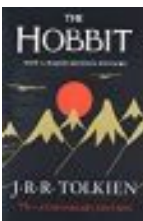
Videos - Watch all (can be found on YouTube).

- Ted-Ed: "[What Makes a Hero?](#)" (7 minutes)
- "[12 Stages of The Hero's Journey](#)" (22 minutes) Here is a helpful [graphic](#) to use when viewing this video.

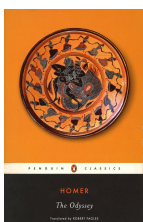
Books - Choose at least one. Make sure to bring it to class for the first 3 weeks of school.



Salt to the Sea by Ruta Sepetys is a gripping historical novel that follows four teenagers from different backgrounds as they embark on a dangerous journey to escape war-torn Eastern Europe during World War II. Each character carries personal secrets and emotional burdens, yet their paths converge aboard the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, a real ship whose tragic sinking remains one of history's deadliest maritime disasters. As they navigate both physical danger and moral dilemmas, their courage and compassion reveal quiet acts of heroism in the face of overwhelming loss. *Salt to the Sea* is a powerful exploration of survival, sacrifice, and the human spirit on a journey toward hope.



The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien is a classic fantasy adventure that follows Bilbo Baggins, a quiet hobbit who is unexpectedly swept into a quest to reclaim a stolen treasure from the dragon Smaug. Alongside a band of dwarves and the wizard Gandalf, Bilbo faces trolls, goblins, and riddles in the dark, discovering courage and cleverness he never knew he had. Rich with imagination and humor, *The Hobbit* explores themes of heroism, personal growth, and the unexpected rewards of stepping outside one's comfort zone. It's an engaging and accessible introduction to Tolkien's epic world of Middle-earth.



The Odyssey by Homer tells the story of Odysseus's long and perilous journey home after the Trojan War. As he battles mythical creatures, faces vengeful gods, and overcomes temptation, Odysseus must rely on his wit, resilience, and loyalty to reach his family and kingdom. Filled with adventure, symbolism, and timeless themes, *The Odyssey* explores the human struggle to find one's way through trials and return to what matters most. This foundational work of Western literature invites rich discussion about heroism, identity, and the power of storytelling.

(The Robert Fagles' translation of *The Odyssey* is preferred. ISBN 978-0140268867)