

Briarcliff High School

English 9C – 2026



Assignment For all incoming Freshmen of the 2026-27 school year:

You will be required to read and take notes for *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne. Below are guidelines for annotating the book. When we return to school in September your notes will be checked, and you will be using these during book discussions, activities, and assessments so please do a thorough job.

Taking Notes

For this summer reading assignment, you are required to take handwritten notes, unless student has an accommodation for word processing. Page numbers are required for notes, excluding any highlighted lines and marginal notes in the book. Any notes that violate academic integrity rules regarding plagiarism will receive a zero. Please bring a copy of the book to the first two weeks of class. See your teacher if this is a problem.

Close Reading Entails:

- ❖ Comment on and highlight things that intrigue you. For example, plot choices, character development, setting shifts.
- ❖ Comment on and highlight lines /quotations you think are especially significant. Identify its relevance.
- ❖ Take note of any literary elements in the chart below and how they impact meaning.

Effects of word choice (diction) or sentence structure or type (syntax)	Setting / Historical context – When does the book take place? How does it affect the story?
Point of view / effect	Tone—how characters express themselves
References (historical, pop-culture)	Imagery – how does the author evoke the 5 senses (touch, sight, sound, smell, taste)
Irony – contrasts, contradictions	Themes – what lessons or ideas are expressed?
Mood—how author makes reader feel	Foreshadowing – make predictions as you read

The most common complaint about annotating is that it slows down your reading. **Yes, it does! That's the point.** If annotating as you read is challenging for you, read a chapter and then go back and annotate. Reading a text a second time is preferable anyway.

*****Bring all of your notes to class the first day.**

Approach the book with an open mind. Let the text inspire you and stretch your imagination. If you have questions before school starts, feel free to e-mail your teacher. We look forward to seeing you in September! ☺

If you're looking for some other good books to read this summer, check out the list below!

Suggested Summer Reading

9th & 10th Grade

Here is a list of suggested books for incoming 9th & 10th grade students. None of these books are required – they're just great books to read and enjoy!

- Acevedo, Elizabeth ***Clap When You Land:*** Camino Rios lives for the summers when her father visits her in the Dominican Republic. But this time, on the day when his plane is supposed to land, Camino arrives at the airport to see crowds of crying people... In New York City, Yahaira Rios is called to the principal's office, where her mother is waiting to tell her that her father, her hero, has died in a plane crash. Separated by distance--and Papi's secrets--the two girls are forced to face a new reality in which their father is dead and their lives are forever altered. And then, when it seems like they've lost everything of their father, they learn of each other.
- Adams, Douglas ***The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy:*** Seconds before Earth is destroyed to make room for a galactic freeway, a young man is rescued by an alien friend who whisks him away on a space-traveling adventure. **Sequels:** *Restaurant at the End of the Universe, Life, The Universe and Everything, So Long and Thanks for All the Fish and Mostly Harmless*
- Adeyemi, Tomi ***Children of Anguish and Anarchy:*** Seventeen-year-old Zelig, her older brother Tzain, and rogue Princess Amari fight to restore magic to the land and activate a new generation of magi, but they are ruthlessly pursued by the Crown Prince Inan, who believes the return of magic will mean the end of the monarchy. ***Children of Orisha, book 3***
- Ahmed, Samira ***Internment:*** A terrifying, futuristic United States where Muslim-Americans are forced into internment camps, and seventeen-year-old Layla Amin must lead a revolution against complicit silence.
- Albergotti, Reed & O'Connell, Vanessa ***Wheelmen: The Tour de France and the Greatest Sports Conspiracy Ever:*** The sensational New York Times bestselling in-depth look at Lance Armstrong's doping scandal, the phenomenal business success built on the back of fraud, and the greatest conspiracy in the history of sports.
- Austen, Jane ***Pride and Prejudice:*** Jane Austen called this brilliant work "her own darling child" and its vivacious heroine, Elizabeth Bennet, "as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print." The romantic clash between the opinionated Elizabeth and her proud beau, Mr. Darcy, is a splendid performance of civilized sparring. And Austen's radiant wit sparkles as her characters dance a delicate quadrille of flirtation and intrigue, making this book the most superb comedy of manners of Regency England.
- Bernet, Katie ***Beth is Dead:*** For those who like a modern twist on a classic: When Beth March is found dead in the woods her sisters vow to uncover her murderer. There are plenty of suspects: The neighbor who has feelings for not one but two sisters. Meg's manipulative

best friend. Amy's flirtatious mentor. And Beth's first love. But it doesn't take much digging to show each of the March sisters has their own motives too.

Bradbury, Ray

Fahrenheit 451: Guy Montag is a fireman. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden. Montag never questions the destruction and ruin his actions produce, returning each day to his bland life and wife, Mildred, who spends all day with her television "family." But when he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people didn't live in fear and to a present where one sees the world through the ideas in books instead of the mindless chatter of television, Montag begins to question everything he has ever known.

Burcaw, Shane

Laughing at My Nightmare: With acerbic wit and a hilarious voice, Shane Burcaw describes the challenges he faces as a twenty-one-year-old with spinal muscular atrophy. From awkward handshakes to having a girlfriend and everything in between, Shane handles his situation with humor and a "you-only-live-once" perspective on life. While he does talk about everyday issues that are relatable to teens, he also offers an eye-opening perspective on what it is like to have a life-threatening disease.

Butler, Caron

Shot Clock: Tony loves basketball. But the game changed when his best friend, Dante, a hoops phenom, was killed by a police officer. Tony hopes he can carry on Dante's legacy by making the Sabres, Dante's AAU basketball team. Tony doesn't make the team, but Coach James likes what he sees at tryouts and offers him another chance: join the team as the statistician. With his community reeling and the team just finding its footing on the court, can Tony find a path to healing while helping to bring the Sabres a championship?

Caffall, Eiren

All the Water in the World: In the years after the glaciers melt, Nonie and her family stayed in an almost deserted NYC, creating a settlement on the roof of the American Museum of Natural History. They hunt for their food and try to save the collections in the museum. When a superstorm breaches the city's floodwalls, Nonie and her family must head north up the Hudson River Valley toward safety.

Caletti, Deb

A Heart in a Body in the World: When everything's been taken from you, what else is there to do but run? That's what Annabelle does-- from Seattle to Washington, DC. She's not ready to think about the *why*, just the *how*--muscles burning, heart pumping, feet pounding the earth. But no matter how hard she tries, she can't outrun the tragedy from the past year, or the person--*The Taker*--that haunts her. Followed by Grandpa Ed in his RV and backed by her brother and friends, Annabelle becomes a reluctant activist as people connect her journey to the trauma from her past. **Printz Honor Book, 2019**

Chee, Traci

We Are Not Free: For fourteen-year-old budding artist Minoru Ito, his two brothers, his friends, and the other members of the Japanese-American community in southern California, the three months since Pearl Harbor was attacked have become a waking nightmare: attacked, spat on, and abused with no way to retaliate--and now things are about to get worse, their lives forever changed by the mass incarcerations in the relocation camps.

Cherrix, Amy E.

In the Shadow of the Moon: America, Russia, and the Hidden History of the Space Race: You've heard of the space race, but do you know the whole story? The most

ambitious race humankind has ever undertaken was masterminded in the shadows by two engineers on opposite sides of the Cold War--Wernher von Braun, a former Nazi officer living in the US, and Sergei Korolev, a Russian rocket designer once jailed for crimes against his country--and your textbooks probably never told you.

- Davidhizar, Megan ***Gaslit:*** When a night of babysitting turns fatal, a girl burdened with survivors guilt becomes increasingly convinced that someone is responsible for the gas leak that killed her family member – and that she was the intended target all along.
- Deen, Nathasha ***In the Key of Nira Ghani:*** Nira Ghani has always dreamed of becoming a musician. Her Guyanese parents, however, have big plans for her to become a scientist or doctor. Nira's grandmother and her best friend, Emily, are the only people who seem to truly understand her desire to establish an identity outside of the one imposed on Nira by her parents. When auditions for jazz band are announced, Nira realizes it's now or never to convince her parents that she deserves a chance to pursue her passion.
- Deuker, Carl ***Golden Arm:*** Lazarus Weathers has always been shy, and his issue with stuttering hasn't helped. Laz finds baseball helps him escape from the world of poverty and drugs. When he gets a chance to pitch for a team across town, he has a chance to get drafted by the major leagues. But playing for the other team means leaving behind his family, including his younger brother. Now Laz will have to choose between being the star pitcher he always dreamed of becoming and the team player his family needs.
- Deuker, Carl ***Shadowed:*** Nate plays soccer, but doesn't love it. He plays because it's what's expected. Then Lucas moves in across the street. Lucas is an outcast at school, but Nate and Lucas find common ground in their one-on-one games of basketball. It's not long before Nate realizes basketball is his game and it becomes his focus. But he soon learns life is about more than getting ready for the next game.
- Elston, Ashley ***This is Our Story:*** No one knows what happened that morning at River Point. Five boys went hunting. Four came back. The boys won't say who fired the shot that killed their friend, Grant; the evidence shows it could have been any one of them. Kate, an intern at the DA's office and the Assistant DA must solve the crime to get justice for Grant.
- Florio, John ***Doomed: Sacco, Vanzetti, and the End of the American Dream:*** The story of how in the early 1920s, as a Red Scare gripped America, two Italian immigrants, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, were wrongly accused, tried, and executed for murder, making front-page headlines as they maintained their innocence to the very end.
- Gaddy, K.R. ***Flowers in the Gutter: The True Story of the Edelweiss Pirates, Teenagers who Resisted the Nazis:*** The Edelweiss Pirates were a loosely organized group of working-class young people in the Rhine Valley of Germany. They faced off with Nazis during the Third Reich and suffered consequences for their resistance during and after World War II.
- Gladwell, Malcolm ***The Revenge of the Tipping Point:*** Why is Miami... Miami? What does the heartbreaking fate of cheetahs tell us about how we raise our kids? Why do Ivy League schools care so much about sports? What's the Magic Third and what does it mean for racial harmony? In this provocative new work, Malcolm Gladwell returns for the first

time in 25 years to the subject of social epidemics and tipping points, this time with the aim of explaining the dark side of contagious phenomena.

- Gratton, Tessa & Ireland, Justina **Chaos & Flame:** Two unlikely allies from rival factions, Darling Seabreak and Talon Goldhoard, must work together to navigate treacherous House politics and ancient magic to keep their world from falling apart.
- Greenfield, Amy ***The Woman All Spies Fear: Code Breaker Elizebeth Smith Friedman and Her Hidden Life:*** An inspiring true story. Elizebeth Smith Friedman had a talent for spotting patterns and solving puzzles. These skills led her to become one of the top cryptanalysts in America playing a major role decoding messages during both World War I and World War II and also for the Coast Guard's war against smugglers. Elizebeth and her husband, William, became the top code-breaking team in the US, and she did it all at a time when most women weren't welcome in the workforce.
- Grogan, John ***Marley & Me: Life and Love with the World's Worst Dog:*** A tender story of his family's love for their yellow Labrador retriever, Marley, chronicling how he grew from a mischievous puppy into a nearly impossible adult that no amount of obedience school training could correct.
- Hemingway, Ernest ***The Old Man and the Sea:*** The story of an old Cuban fisherman and his supreme ordeal: a relentless, agonizing battle with a giant marlin far out in the Gulf Stream. Using the simple, powerful language of a fable, Hemingway takes the timeless themes of courage in the face of defeat and personal triumph won from loss and transforms them into a magnificent twentieth-century classic.
- King, Stephen ***The Shining:*** Jack Torrance's new job at the Overlook Hotel is the perfect chance for a fresh start. As the off-season caretaker at the old hotel, he'll have plenty of time to spend reconnecting with his family and working on his writing. But as the harsh winter weather sets in, the idyllic location feels ever more remote . . . and more sinister. And the only one to notice the strange and terrible forces gathering around the Overlook is Danny Torrance, Jack's uniquely gifted five-year-old.
- Krosoczka, Jarrett ***Hey, Kiddo:*** In his graphic novel style memoir, Jarrett Krosoczka describes how in kindergarten his teacher asks him to draw his family, with a mommy and a daddy. But Jarrett's family is much more complicated than that. His mom is an addict, in and out of rehab, and - Jarrett's life. His father is a mystery. Jarrett lives with his loud, opinionated, but loving grandparents. Only as a teenager can Jarrett begin to piece together the truth of his family, reckoning with his mother and tracking down his father.
- Jack, Gordon ***The Boomerang Effect:*** Because of a string of pranks, Lawrence Barry is one step away from reform school unless he agrees to mentor a Norwegian exchange student with Spock-like intelligence but no social skills. During Homecoming week, someone dressed as the school's Viking mascot starts destroying the homecoming floats, and Lawrence becomes suspect #1. As the situation spirals out of control, he realizes that Spencer may be his best friend -- the one he never knew he needed.
- Johnson, Lea ***You Should See Me in a Crown:*** Liz Lighty has always done her best to avoid the spotlight in her small, prom-obsessed midwestern high school, especially since her mother died; she has concentrated on her grades and musical ability hoping it will win

her a scholarship to elite Pennington College. But when that scholarship falls through she is forced to turn to her school's scholarship for prom king and queen, which plunges her into the gauntlet of social media and leads her to discoveries about her own identity and the value of true friendships.

- Lance, Rubin ***16 Forever:*** Carter wakes up on his 16th birthday excited to get his driver's license. But when he goes downstairs his mom bursts into tears. Everytime he is supposed to turn 17, he loops back a year and his memory is wiped clean, his body ages backwards and the world moves on. His girlfriend, Maggie Spear on the other hand has been dreading this day. She doesn't want to date someone who will keep forgetting they were together and maybe it's just better if she pretends they never were.
- Levitt, Stephen D. ***Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything:*** The authors explore the economics of real-world issues often viewed as insignificant, such as the extent to which the Roe v. Wade decision affected violent crime, and examine hidden incentives behind all sorts of human behavior.
- Le Guin, Ursula ***A Wizard of Earthsea:*** Ged was the greatest sorcerer in Earthsea, but in his youth he was the reckless Sparrowhawk. In his hunger for power and knowledge, he tampered with long-held secrets and loosed a terrible shadow upon the world. This is the tumultuous tale of his testing, how he mastered the mighty words of power, tamed an ancient dragon, and crossed death's threshold to restore the balance.
- Marquis, Krystal ***The Davenports:*** The Davenports are one of the few Black families of great wealth and status in a changing United States, their fortune made through by William Davenport, a formerly enslaved man who founded the Davenport Carriage Company years ago. Now in 1910, the Davenports live surrounded by servants and endless parties, finding their way & finding love--even where they're not supposed to. Inspired by the real-life story of the Patterson family, *The Davenports* is the tale of four young Black women discovering the courage to steer their own path in life & love.
- Masters, Oksana ***The Hard Parts: A Memoir of Courage and Triumph:*** The United States' most decorated winter Paralympic or Olympic athlete tells how she overcame Chernobyl disaster-caused physical challenges, through sheer determination and a drive to succeed, to win the world's best in elite rowing, biathlon, cross-country skiing, and road cycling competitions.
- Morton, Kate ***The Lake House:*** 16-year-old Alice Edevane's brother Theo disappears one night during a party with hundreds of guests at her family's English estate. Years later, Alice still harbors a suspicion as to how her brother disappeared. Meanwhile, London detective Sadie Sparrow stumbles upon the old Edevane estate, now abandoned. With her curiosity sparked, a chain of events brings her and Alice together and reveals the shocking truth behind the mystery.
- Murphy, Julie ***Puddin': Companion to book & Netflix movie Dumplin':*** Millie Michalchuk has gone to fat camp every year since she was a little girl. Not this year. She has plans to chase her secret dream of being a newscaster--and to kiss the boy she's crushing on. Callie Reyes is the pretty girl who is next in line for dance team captain and has the popular boyfriend. But when it comes to other girls, she's more frenemy than friend. When the

girls come together over the course of a semester, they surprise everyone by realizing that they might have more in common than they imagined.

- O'Connor, Ian ***Coach K: The Rise and Reign of Mike Krzyewsky***: A biography of well-known college basketball coach, Mike Krzyzewski, covering his early years in Chicago and West Point, his rise to coaching stardom, specific games, interviews, and more.
- Poe, Edgar Allan ***The Collected Tales of Edgar Allan Poe***: Edgar Allan Poe was one of the most original writers in the history of American letters, a genius who was tragically misunderstood in his lifetime. This edition includes his most well-known works--"The Raven," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "Annabel Lee," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"--as well as less-familiar stories, poems, and essays.
- Redgate, Riley ***Alone Out Here***: The year is 2072. Soon a volcanic eruption will trigger catastrophic devastation, and the only way out is up. While the world's leaders, scientists, and engineers oversee the frantic production of a space fleet meant to save humankind, their children are brought in for a weekend of touring the Lazarus, a high-tech prototype spaceship. But when the apocalypse arrives months ahead of schedule, First Daughter Leigh Chen and a handful of teens from the tour are the only ones to escape the planet. But as isolation presses in, their uneasy peace begins to fracture.
- Reynolds, Jason ***When I was the Greatest***: Ali lives in Bed-Stuy, a Brooklyn neighborhood known for guns and drugs, but he and his sister, Jazz, and their neighbors, Needles and Noodles, stay out of trouble until they go to the wrong party, where one gets badly hurt and another leaves with a target on his back.
- Rowell, Rainbow ***Eleanor and Park***: Set over the course of one school year in 1986, this is the story of two star-crossed misfits—smart enough to know that first love almost never lasts, but brave and desperate enough to try. When Eleanor meets Park, you'll remember your own first love—and just how hard it pulled you under. **Printz Honor Book, 2014**
- Sepetys, Ruta ***Fountains of Silence***: Madrid, 1957. Under the fascist dictatorship of General Francisco Franco, Spain is hiding a dark secret. Meanwhile, tourists and foreign businessmen flood into Spain under the welcoming promise of sunshine and wine. Among them Daniel Matheson who is hoping to connect with the country through the lens of his camera. Photography--and fate--introduce him to Ana, whose family is still suffering from the lingering effects of the Spanish Civil War. Daniel's photographs leave him with uncomfortable questions amidst shadows of danger.
- Searle, Sarah Winifred ***The Greatest Thing***: It's the first day of sophomore year and Winifred's two best (and only) friends have transferred to a private school & she must navigate high school on her own. In art class, she meets two offbeat students, Oscar and April. The three bond through clandestine sleepovers, thrift store shopping, and zine publishing. Winifred is finally breaking out of her shell, but there's one secret she can't bear to admit to April and Oscar, or even to herself--and this lie is threatening to destroy her newfound friendships. *Graphic Novel*
- Shim, Grace ***The OKs are Not OK***: When 17-year-old influencer Elena Ok's family loses its fast-fashion fortune and flees to rural California, she is forced to confront her family's

dynamics, and when she begins helping local vendors at the Blaire Fair, she starts to rethink her definition of success.

- Shusterman, Neal ***All Better Now:*** A deadly virus is spreading but those who survive it experience long-term effects no one has seen before – utter contentment. As more people recover and feel the unburdening, people who sell products to those with depression and anxiety realize this new state is bad for business and a race to create a vaccine begins. Meanwhile, Recoverees plan to spread the virus as fast as possible. Three teens end up in the center of a power play that can change humanity forever.
- Sortino, Anna ***Give Me A Sign:*** Lilah is stuck in the middle. She doesn't feel "deaf enough" to identify as Deaf or hearing enough to meet the world's expectations. When Lilah becomes a counselor at a summer camp for the deaf and blind, her plan is to brush up on her ASL. She also finds a community, including Isaac, the dreamy Deaf counselor. Romance wasn't on the agenda, but all signs seem to point to love. One thing's for sure: Lilah wanted change, and things are certainly different than what she's used to.
- Stevenson, Bryan ***Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption:*** Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinksmanship--and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever.
- Thomas, Angie ***On the Come Up:*** Sixteen-year-old Bri hopes to become a great rapper, and after her first song goes viral for all the wrong reasons, must decide whether to sell out or face eviction with her widowed mother.
- Vermette, Katherena ***A Girl Called Echo Vol. 1:*** Echo Desjardins, a 13-year-old Metis girl adjusting to a new home and school, is struggling with loneliness while separated from her mother. Then an ordinary day in Mr. Bee's history class turns extraordinary, and Echo's life will never be the same. During Mr. Bee's lecture, Echo finds herself transported to another time and place--a bison hunt on the Saskatchewan prairie--and back again to the present. In the following weeks, Echo slips back and forth in time. She visits a Metis camp, travels the old fur-trade routes, and experiences the perilous and bygone era of the Pemmican Wars. **Graphic novel**
- Volponi, Paul ***The Final Four:*** Four players at the Final Four of the NCAA basketball tournament struggle with the pressures of tournament play and the expectations of society at large.
- Whitman, Walt ***Leaves of Grass:*** Abraham Lincoln read it with approval, but Emily Dickinson described its bold language and themes as "disgraceful." Leaves of Grass inaugurated a new voice and style into American letters and gave expression to an optimistic, bombastic vision that took the nation as its subject.
- Yang, Gene Luen ***Dragon Hoops:*** Gene Luen Yang understands stories -- comic book stories, in particular. Big action. Bigger thrills. And the hero always wins. But Gene doesn't get sports. He lost interest in basketball long ago, but at the high school where he now

teaches, it's all anyone can talk about. The men's varsity team is having a phenomenal season getting them closer to their ultimate goal: the California State Championship. Once Gene meets these young all-stars, he realizes that their story is just as thrilling as anything he's seen on a comic book page. **Printz Honor, 2021**

Yoon, Nicola

Everything, Everything: The story of a teenage girl who's literally allergic to the outside world. When a new family moves in next door, she begins a complicated romance that challenges everything she's ever known. The narrative unfolds via vignettes, diary entries, texts, charts, lists, illustrations, and more.

Zoboi, Ibi

America Street: Fabiola Toussaint, a young Haitian immigrant to the United States, must navigate her life, school and relationships, while dealing with her loud cousins after her mother is detained by the United States immigration department.

Zusak, Markus

The Book Thief: Trying to make sense of the horrors of World War II, Death relates the story of Liesel--a young German girl whose book-stealing and story-telling talents help sustain her family and the Jewish man they are hiding, as well as their neighbors.