



TENAFLY HIGH SCHOOL

English Department

Summer 2026 Reading Assignments

NOTE: Summer reading is only required for Advanced Placement classes.

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Entering 9th Grade: World Literature I Honors

Recommended Reading: *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kid

“Set in South Carolina in 1964, *The Secret Life of Bees* tells the story of Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. When Lily's fierce-hearted Black "stand-in mother," Rosaleen, insults three of the deepest racists in town, Lily decides to spring them both free. They escape to Tiburon, South Carolina—a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. Taken in by an eccentric trio of Black beekeeping sisters, Lily is introduced to their mesmerizing world of bees and honey, and the Black Madonna. This is a remarkable novel about divine female power, a story that women will share and pass on to their daughters for years to come” (Penguin Books).

Suggested Guided Instruction:

As you read, consider taking notes on how the story embodies a coming-of-age experience, specifically the psychological and moral growth of the main character, Lily.



Entering 10th Grade: World Literature II Honors

Recommended Reading:

- [*Jane Eyre*](#) by Charlotte Bronte
- [*Wuthering Heights*](#) by Emily Bronte
- [*Sarah's Key*](#) by Tatiana De Rosnay
- [*A Tale of Two Cities*](#) by Charles Dickens
- [*The Count of Monte Cristo*](#) by Alexandre Dumas
- [*Rebecca*](#) by Daphne Du Maurier
- [*Angela's Ashes*](#) by Frank McCourt

Suggested Guided Instruction:

As you read, pay attention to how the story is written; to how the writer delivers the story to you. Consider using post-it notes to track important rhetorical excerpts.



Entering 10th Grade: Sophomore Humanities Honors

Within the first two weeks of school, you will be assessed on the following text:

- [Robert Fagles' translation of *The Odyssey*](#)

While you will have time to make your way through this book at the start of the school year, it is highly recommended that you start reading over the summer.

You are also encouraged to select a book from the following list of recommended texts:

- [*Six of Crows*](#) by Leigh Bardugo
- [*Jane Eyre*](#) by Charlotte Bronte
- [*The Count of Monte Cristo*](#) by Alexandre Dumas
- [*Rebecca*](#) by Daphne Du Maurier
- [*The Ocean at the End of the Lane*](#) by Neil Gaiman
- [*The Song of Achilles*](#) or [*Circe*](#) by Madeline Miller
- [*Angela's Ashes*](#) by Frank McCourt
- [*Salt to the Sea*](#) by Ruta Sepetys
- [*The Picture of Dorian Gray*](#) by Oscar Wilde

Suggested Guided Instruction:

These texts will prepare you for our discussions on archetypes and narrative styles in Western literature. As you read, pay attention to how the writer delivers the story to you, and consider using post-it notes to keep track of your observations. Also, consider these questions:

- What incarnations of good and evil exist?
- How do our choices reflect our beliefs in fate or free will?
- What are the innate qualities of a hero?
- How are deities—or aspects of divinity—depicted in this text?
- What cultural norms or rituals exist within that society?



Entering 11th Grade: Advanced Placement English Language and Composition

To prepare for the literary journey we will take throughout the school year, over the summer you are required to read two novels: *[The Grapes of Wrath](#)* by John Steinbeck and *[Their Eyes Were Watching God](#)* by Zora Neale Hurston.

These two books fit the general reading focus of the junior curriculum—American Literature—and, as you will come to see, are set during similar time periods.

- *The Grapes of Wrath* tells the story of the Joad family's experience as they drive west to California after being driven out of their home in Oklahoma due to agricultural and economic hardships in the 1930s. The Joads desperately search for work wherever they can find it and, like the other migrant farmworkers and families making the same journey, earnestly hope for the possibility of a brighter future.
- *Their Eyes Were Watching God* tells the story of Janie Crawford, a fair-skinned black woman living in the South in the 1930s. The novel begins with Janie returning to Eatonville, Florida, one of the first self-governed, all-black towns in America, after the death of her third husband. The story then flashes back to tell the story of Janie's life from her girlhood up to her return to Eatonville.

You might want to consider purchasing your own copies of the books, since that option offers you the freedom to write in your books as you please, which can be useful when discussion time comes. Neither reading "Cliffs Notes" (or any other print or on-line equivalent) nor watching a film adaptation is an acceptable substitute for the experience of reading a novel. Do not attempt to substitute one of these activities for actual reading—either now or during the school year.

In the first days of school, you will be tested on your comprehension of the two novels. We will then devote the first few weeks of the school year for activities and discussions related to the texts. In preparation for discussion, please complete the following:

- On the first day of school, come to class with a copy of two passages (one from each novel) that struck you in some way. Either flag these passages with post-it notes or bring in printed copies of the passages. Be sure to designate chapters/pages where others can find the passage(s).
- Please choose passages that you would be interested in discussing with the class and/or exploring further. These passages should demonstrate an aspect of writing style or rhetorical language (for example, a device of classical rhetoric, figurative language, description, shifting point of view, irony, or syntactic patterning).



Entering 12th Grade: Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition

To prepare for our literary journey, over the summer you are required to read two novels: *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, and *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker.

- *Great Expectations*, written by a British author in the nineteenth century, is quite long and presents a lengthy cast of characters to the reader. It is very good but does require time and focused attention in order to be appreciated and enjoyed. Be sure to allow yourself enough time and space to read this novel. Make sure to read an **UNABRIDGED** copy of this novel.
- *The Color Purple*, written by an African-American author in the twentieth century, is shorter and stylistically more modern. The novel is very graphic, raw, and requires your ability to handle controversial material in a mature fashion.

You will have assessments on both novels upon your return to school.

Copies of the Texts

We encourage you to buy your own copies so that you may highlight and mark the texts as you wish. Don't forget that you will need an UNABRIDGED copy of *Great Expectations*.

If you would like to borrow copies of the texts from the English Department, come to our office (room 212) after school.



Entering 10th or 11th Grade: AP Seminar (Elective)

Please [click here](#) to access the full instructions and the AP Seminar required reading packet, as it is quite long, but consolidated into one file.

Best,
Mrs. Helms