

## Bearden High School Summer Reading for 2025-26

Parents and students:

Students enrolled in Honors and AP English courses at Bearden are expected to complete summer reading before the start of class. During the first few weeks of class each term, the students are required to complete exams, write essays, and participate in discussions on the selected texts. *Reading a summary of the text is not a substitute for this assignment.*

*Tips:*

When completing summer reading novels, the students should be active readers, ***thoroughly annotating*** each of the texts. AP and Honors teachers expect student annotations to provide evidence of critical reading, which may include the following:

- Take notes about the basic elements of literature in the reading selections (plot, setting, characterization, point of view, theme, conflict, climax, etc.)
- Highlight important segments of the selection, and reflect on why it is significant
- Ask questions about the selection

The BHS English Department suggests that these texts be purchased to make this process easier. Rising English II Honors and AP Literature students should pay close attention to the instructions about the required assignments. If necessary, we can make hard copies available for pickup this summer, and digital versions are available on the school website.

If you have questions or concerns, my email address is [tim.vacek@knoxschools.org](mailto:tim.vacek@knoxschools.org). I have also included a contact for each grade level for any questions you have about specific texts.

Thank you,  
Tim Vacek  
English Department Chair

### Contacts

9<sup>th</sup> Grade – Kelley Davis ([kelley.davis@knoxschools.org](mailto:kelley.davis@knoxschools.org))

10<sup>th</sup> Grade – Rebecca Napreyeva ([rebecca.napreyeva@knoxschools.org](mailto:rebecca.napreyeva@knoxschools.org))

AP Lit – Nescha Lee ([nescha.lee@knoxschools.org](mailto:nescha.lee@knoxschools.org))

AP Lang & AP Seminar – Tim Vacek ([tim.vacek@knoxschools.org](mailto:tim.vacek@knoxschools.org))

## NOTES ABOUT ANNOTATION (from the AP Central Website)

### Why Annotate?

- Annotate any text that you must know well, in detail, and from which you might need to produce evidence that supports your knowledge or reading, such as a book on which you will be tested.
- Don't assume that you must annotate when you read for pleasure; if you're relaxing with a book, well, relax. Still, some people—let's call them "not-abnormal"—actually annotate for pleasure.

Don't annotate other people's property, which is almost always selfish, often destructive, rude, and possibly illegal. For a book that doesn't belong to you, use adhesive notes for your comments, removing them before you return the text.

Don't annotate your own book if it has intrinsic value as an art object or a rarity. Consider doing what teachers do: *buy an inexpensive copy of the text for class.*

### Tools: Highlighter, Pencil, and Your Own Text

**1. Yellow Highlighter:** A yellow highlighter allows you to mark exactly what you feel is necessary. Equally important, the yellow line emphasizes without interfering. Highlighters in blue and pink and fluorescent colors are even more distracting. The idea is to see the important text more clearly, not give your eyes a psychedelic exercise. While you read, highlight whatever seems to be key information. At first, you will probably highlight too little or too much; with experience, you will choose more effectively which material to highlight.

**2. Pencil:** A pencil is better than a pen because you can make changes. Even geniuses make mistakes, temporary comments, and incomplete notes. While you read, use marginalia—marginal notes—to mark key material. Marginalia can include check marks, question marks, stars, arrows, brackets, and written words and phrases. Create your own system for marking what is important, interesting, quotable, questionable, and so forth.

**3. Your Text:** Inside the front cover of your book, keep an orderly, legible list of "key information" with page references. Key information in a novel might include themes; passages that relate to the book's title; characters' names; salient quotes; important scenes, passages, and chapters; and maybe key definitions or vocabulary. Remember that key information will vary according to genre and the reader's purpose, so make your own good plan.

As you read, section by section, chapter by chapter, **consider doing the following, if useful/necessary:**

- At the end of each chapter or section, **briefly** summarize the material.
- Title each chapter or section as soon as you finish it, especially if the text does not provide headings for chapters or sections.
- Make a list of vocabulary words on a back page or the inside back cover. Possible ideas for lists include the author's special jargon and new, unknown, or otherwise interesting words.
- Important plot happenings
- Supporting details or textual evidence to support a conclusion you are drawing
- Writer's craft to create effect, such as figurative language, imagery, characterization, etc.

## Honors English – 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Summer Reading 2025

Read both novellas:

*Anthem* by Ayn Rand

*Animal Farm* by George Orwell

*Synopsis of each work:*

***Anthem*:** Ayn Rand’s dystopian novella is not just a story about the individual being swallowed by the collective. This book also deals with an identification of how that can happen and what ideas people must first accept before such a totalitarian society can take hold. *Anthem* is not merely a story about the horrible, depressing life of people in a collectivist society; it is also about the triumph of the individual’s independent spirit and the triumph of those who reject the ethics of collectivism. **(Annotations required.) Please annotate for literary devices (figurative language), plot points, character development, and thematic ideas (themes, symbols, and motifs).**

***Animal Farm*:** George Orwell’s allegorical satirical fable takes place on a country farm in England. The animals revolt against their owner, take over the farm, and run the farm with “communist” principles. What follows shocks the reader and unfolds the truth of Russia’s Bolshevik Revolution and its attempt to create a communist socialist society. Orwell’s novella creates memorable characters each representing a player in the Russian Revolution and illustrates the allure of socialism and the erosion of equal rights. **(Annotations required.) Please annotate for plot points, character development, and thematic ideas (themes, symbols, and motifs).**

Before jumping into annotation, please watch the video linked below. Watch how this AP student hones her annotation skills and simplifies the process through effective annotation.

What is annotation, and why do we do it?

- [Click here to watch an informative video on how to annotate effectively.](#)

Tools: Highlighter, Pen, Pencil, and Your Own Text

1. **Highlighter or Colored Pens:** While you read, highlight or underline key information. If you choose to put a key at the front of the book, you can easily use different colors to highlight for different things: figurative language, symbols, plot points, characterization, themes etc. *If you use only one highlighter color, make sure you annotate explaining why that particular passage is important.* **Do not simply highlight the text.**
2. **Pen or Pencil:** While you read, use marginalia—marginal notes—to mark key material. Marginalia can include check marks, question marks, stars, arrows, brackets, and written words

and phrases. *Create your own system for marking what is important, interesting, quotable, questionable, and so forth.*

**3. Your Text:**

- On the inside front and back cover of your book you may want to include the following:
  - List of main characters
  - Highlighter key and/or annotation key
  - Quotable quotes with page numbers
  - Make a list of vocabulary words on a back page or the inside back cover. Possible ideas for lists include the author's special jargon and new, unknown, or otherwise interesting words.
- As you read, section by section, chapter by chapter, consider doing the following:
  - At the end of each chapter or section, briefly summarize the material. (Sticky notes work well for this!)
  - Title each chapter or section as soon as you finish it, especially if the text does not provide headings for chapters or sections.

**If you have any questions or concerns about specific texts, email one of the two freshmen Honors English teachers.**

[karen.peebles@knoxschools.org](mailto:karen.peebles@knoxschools.org)

[kelly.davis@knoxschools.org](mailto:kelly.davis@knoxschools.org)

## Honors English – 10<sup>th</sup> Grade

Read each of the following:

*A Separate Peace* by John Knowles

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston

*Assignment for each work:*

***Their Eyes Were Watching God*** is a novel published by Zora Neale Hurston in 1937. Though Hurston's novel was highly disregarded upon publication, it has become a staple for African-American female writers and is studied now for its multifaceted American literary traditions. The novel's dialect can make it a difficult read, but its context is true to southern literature, feminist literature, and its connection to the Harlem Renaissance. **Students must also complete the *Their Eyes Were Watching God* analysis questions, according to the instructions.**

***A Separate Peace*** by John Knowles is a model coming-of-age novel in which the protagonist, Gene Forrester, remembers time spent at his old prep school, Devon, in New Hampshire. Gene must face the consequences of his past actions that change both his own life and the life of his best friend, Finny. Taking place from 1942-1943, the story deals with themes of jealousy, rivalry, anger, war, and guilt. **Students must also complete the *A Separate Peace* dialectical journal assignment, according to the instructions.**

**NOTE:** \*Students can obtain instructions for the **dialectical journal** (*A Separate Peace*) and **analysis questions** (*Their Eyes Were Watching God*) from the [school website](#). Students may also send an email to Mrs. Napreyeva at [rebecca.napreyeva@knoxschools.org](mailto:rebecca.napreyeva@knoxschools.org).

## AP Literature

**REQUIRED:** Read *The Kite Runner* by **Khaled Hosseini** and **complete the dialectical journal\*** according to the instructions. Published in 2003, this is an unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant. Caught in the tragic sweep of history, the global settings transport readers to Afghanistan at a tense and crucial moment of change and destruction. A powerful story of friendship and the burdens of guilt, it is also about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption. Family relationships are also explored through the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, their lies. Previous AP students have labeled this book as the most moving text they've ever read. Mrs. Fine has several copies if you want one.

(Some content may be objectionable; an alternate text is available; email [nescha.lee@knoxschools.org](mailto:nescha.lee@knoxschools.org))

**REQUIRED:** Read *The Great Gatsby* and **PREPARE A LITERARY ONE-PAGER\***: Set in the Jazz Age where “anything can happen once [you've] slid over the bridge” and into the corrupt city, Fitzgerald's novel manages to capture the decadence and hedonism of the 1920s while exposing some themes that are still relevant today. It is a multi-layered novel about a young man's obsessive quest for the love of one girl. Review the requirements for the one-pager and then actively read and annotate your copy. Be careful! The movies are not aligned with the book. We highly recommend that you skip the movie until after the AP exam.

### **EXTRA-CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES: YOU MAY READ ANY OF THESE AND SEE YOUR INSTRUCTOR IN AUGUST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

***The Island of Sea Women*, (Lisa See):** Published in 2019, this text is an evocative tale of two best friends whose bonds are both strengthened and tested over decades by forces beyond their control. Two girls from strikingly different backgrounds bond over their shared love of the sea. Working in their village's all-female diving collective, the two friends come of age in a community where gender roles are anything but typical. Here, women are the primary breadwinners, the heads of household in all but name, and yet, as Mi-ja and Young-sook come to realize, there are limits to their control that can prove devastating. If you're looking for an epic tale of historical fiction where the female characters rock, this is for you!

***The Picture of Dorian Gray*, (Oscar Wilde):** Published in 1890, is a Gothic and philosophical tale that is an all-time favorite of AP students. As the young man who purchases eternal youth at the tragic expense of his soul, Dorian Gray will be the archetypal character you will love to hate. Themes of youth, mortality, and the choices of good versus evil are woven throughout. See or email your instructor for a copy if you need one.

**The Road**, (Cormac McCarthy): Touted as McCarthy's most harrowing yet deeply personal work, this book is a journey that will not be forgotten. Some unnamed catastrophe has scourged the world to a burnt-out cinder, inhabited by the last remnants of mankind. The sky is perpetually shrouded by dust as a man and a boy struggle to find safety and hope. If you like post-apocalyptic stories, you will enjoy and be moved by this story. You can grab a copy from Mrs. Fine in room 323.

**Extra-credit study questions:** Students can request a reading guide for *The Kite Runner* from Mrs. Lee ([nescha.lee@knoxschools.org](mailto:nescha.lee@knoxschools.org)) if they wish. Completed reading guides are due on the first day of classes and will be counted as extra-credit during the semester.

**\*NOTE:** Students can obtain instructions for the **dialectical journal** (*The Kite Runner*) and **literary one-pager** (your choice read) from Mrs. Nescha Lee or Mrs. Anne Fine before the end of the year or via the email address below. **The instructions are also available on the school website.**

**Due dates:** Both the journal and the literary one-pager are due on the first full day of school. A summer reading essay will be assigned during the first two weeks of the semester.

**\*If you are a rising 11<sup>th</sup> grader who registered for yearlong AP Seminar/Language Combined instead of AP Literature, please continue to the next page.**

## Assignments for both AP Seminar-Language Combined & AP Language

1. Choose one of the following to read critically:

- *The Girls of Atomic City* by Denise Kiernan – Kiernan seeks to expose an area of Oak Ridge history that has not received much coverage in her book *The Girls of Atomic City*. Women from all over the country worked tirelessly at the Clinton Engineer Works in the 1940s, knowing only that they were helping the American war efforts – oblivious to the world-changing technology that they were working to uncover. Kiernan weaves a factual narrative based on her exhaustive interviews with several of those women, revealing all the once esoteric details of their existence in the Secret City.
- *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien – O'Brien brilliantly blends fiction and nonfiction in *The Things They Carried* as he reflects on his experiences in the Vietnam War. O'Brien's poignant thoughts on war, death, and sacrifice resonate with his growing audience. The book, which is more of a collection of interconnected short stories than it is a novel, is quickly becoming viewed as a contemporary classic. (Excellent story; language and themes may be objectionable.)

2. *Participate in an enriching educational experience:* In AP Language, we will work hard to develop your skills in critically analyzing and writing evidence-based arguments. Much of the evidence that students use to support claims in their papers comes from all of their experiences in and out of the classroom. Think about this like collecting experience points in a video game – the more XP that you have, the better you are at the game. When you start writing in AP Lang, we want your library of experiences to be as diverse and expansive as possible, and this summer presents an opportunity to collect great evidence for future essays. Please complete at least one experience in one of the following categories:

- Culture – Are you traveling this summer? Do you love art or history? Have you ever wanted to immerse yourself in a culture different from your own? Soak up all that you can during a unique cultural experience this summer and reflect on how it expands the ways you view the world and your community. Here are a few examples of possible experiences: visiting another part of the U.S.; traveling abroad; exploring a national park or historical site; touring a museum; learning about a different culture by engaging with its language, cuisine, or art.
- Service – Want to help others and learn more about individuals with different backgrounds from your own? Volunteer for a service organization or for a cause that you care about and reflect on how the experience impacted you.
- Media – What areas of academia most interest you? Do you love robotics? How about poetry or politics? Are you passionate about the environment or the future of education? Identify an area (or areas) of interest and seek out a media



experience in that field. Here are a few suggestions: subscribe to a TED Talk channel, listen to a series of podcasts, follow and read a columnist from a reputable news organization. And remember that those who score your work on the AP exam next May will have a high standard; thus, the more scholarly, the more unbiased the source of information, the better. How does your media experience confirm/challenge your ideas?

Please email if you have another idea in one of the categories that does not seem to fit in the description. When you come back to school, we will complete an activity where you will reflect on your summer experience, so do whatever you need to make sure you remember all the important details. That could include taking notes; recording a voice memo; saving pictures, pamphlets, downloads of articles; etc. If you feel like you have successfully remembered all the important details without doing any of those things, that is fine too. We will not collect anything from you other than the assignment that you will complete early in the semester.

\*Please contact Tim Vacek at [tim.vacek@knoxschools.org](mailto:tim.vacek@knoxschools.org) or Autumn Suranofsky at [autumn.suranofsky@knoxschools.org](mailto:autumn.suranofsky@knoxschools.org) should you have any questions or concerns about either the books or the instructions for the educational experience.