

May 1, 2010

Dear Upcoming Junior Honors English Students:

You have chosen to be in the Junior Honors English class. The literature that we read during the year is classic adult literature. The literature is deliberately chosen to help the students better understand American literature from the Puritan Age through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The topics in the novels are ones that are time-honored, but they frequently touch on sensitive issues. Each book is discussed with care and sensitivity, but we do discuss the themes and characters of the novels even when they require us to look outside of our value system for understanding.

The books are American literature and will include the three summer reading books – A Separate Peace by John Knowles, The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The summer reading will require you to do more than just read the book for pleasure. Attached to this letter is the work that you must complete for each book, which is due the first week of school. Additionally, you should be ready for an objective test over all three novels the first week of school.

Other books that we have read in the past include The Crucible by Arthur Miller, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain, My Antonia by Willa Cather, The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams, and As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner.

In addition to the literature, we will be focusing on preparation for the ACT, a study of grammar, vocabulary development, and composition skills. A literary research paper will be done in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the school year. Students who in the honors' program should be active participants in class. Discussions are important and require students to read and to prepare for class participation.

I look forward to having you in class next year. If you have any questions before the end of the school year, please come to see me in Room 108.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Rita Keogh  
English Department Chairperson

P. S. If you should decide that the course is not right for you, please see your counselor now and make the change in course selection.

Summer Reading Accountability for Honors Juniors English Students:

A Separate Peace by John Knowles

This book looks at life in the United States during World War II. The setting is a boys' preparatory school in New England. Phineas and Gene are roommates, best friends, and sometimes enemies. The story is compelling and challenging. As you read, underline passages that are important to you. Additionally, write notes in the margin of the book or take notes for your use.

Required Work:

1. Type a list of the major characters and write three – four sentences about each character.
2. Choose one symbol in the book. Draw a representation of the symbol on 8 ½ x 11 inch paper. Then analyze the symbol in a one-page essay that is typed in double spacing.
3. Be ready to discuss this book the first week of school. Your character list and symbol work will be collected.

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne

This book looks at life in the United States during Puritan times in Boston, MA. There are four major characters in the book, and we open the story with Hester Prynne being punished for the sin of adultery. The book demands a close reading and careful analysis of the characters. Underline passages in the book, take notes, and write down what you do not understand.

Required Work:

1. Type a one-half page [double-spaced] summary for each chapter.
2. Find one literary device for each chapter. List the literary device and analyze it. This should be typed.
3. Find one new word in each chapter. Type the word and its definition.

We will begin the study of this book by September after I have introduced the Puritan era and a few major writers of the time period. Your notes will be very important in our class discussions. I will be collecting the required work before we begin the novel.

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

This novel was written about the Roaring Twenties or Jazz Age. Our narrator Nick Carraway will give you an insightful look at the life of his friend Jay Gatsby. Even though you will read the book this summer, we will not study it until the 3<sup>rd</sup> nine weeks. Your written notes will be important, and I will collect them the first week of school.

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Required Work

1. Type a summary for each chapter.
2. Type a character-list for the novel giving 3 – 4 sentences for each character. You may want to focus on changes from chapter to chapter within the characters.
3. Find one literary device for each chapter, list it, and analyze the literary device. This list should be typed