

Summer Reading

Honors English III—selections for the 2024-2025 school year

Your summer assignment is based on a British novel or play of recognized literary merit. Please select any **one** of the following choices to read over the summer. You will be reading the literary work, and responding to the questions at the bottom of this document.

Respond to the questions, using complete sentences, well-developed paragraphs, and detailed examples from the work. Bring the completed responses with you to your first English class. The responses will form the basis of your first in class essay or analytical paper. Responses must include direct quotes from the novel or play you have selected.

I am providing you with many choices; **please email your selection to me once you have decided.** If you are torn between two works that pique your interest, please do not fret; you may use the other for your Q3 research paper. If, perchance, I have too many students selecting the same work and you are not granted your first choice, again, you will be able to use that selection in Q3.

Please be aware that these are not works that can be speed-read two days before Labor Day, and, it is nice to sit outside and read a book. Be sure to take notes so that you will not forget in mid-August the quotes or other details you found relevant.

I am providing a genre and a brief description for each author or work to help you decide.

Your selections:

E. M. Forster

A Room with a View

This novel addresses the British class system. *A Room with a View* starts at an English guesthouse in Florence. Lucy Honeychurch and her cousin Charlotte are among the guests and are given a room with a view by the impulsive Emersons, George and his father. Lucy is the central character, and she shortly witnesses a murder but is immediately comforted by George, who later kisses her on an outing to the hills. The story then returns to England. This is not only a wonderful love story, but also a first-rate tale of social comedy.

John Fowles

The French Lieutenant's Woman

This work is a novel of historical fiction. John Fowles wrote this in the late 1960's, and in many ways repopularized the Victorian novel. The tale goes back and forth between a woman in Victorian times, and one in modern America. It is filled with enchanting mysteries and is a delightfully pleasant read.

John Dryden

All for Love (or The World Well Lost)

This is another work of historical fiction, but as different as night and day from the previous selection. First of all, it is a play, written in five acts and in blank verse. If you like Shakespeare, you will like Dryden's drama. He actually is writing this about 70 years after William Shakespeare wrote on the same topic. The topic, of course, is where the history enters. It is the story of Antony and Cleopatra. Dryden acknowledged the imitation of Shakespeare, but he tells a very different story. I really like this one, as it focuses on the characters' later lives.

Oscar Wilde

The Picture of Dorian Gray

This novel's central character is beautiful and irresistible. He is a superficial socialite with an inflated ego. When his friend Basil Hallward paints his portrait, Gray expresses his wish that he could stay forever as young and charming. His wish comes true. That is all I am going to reveal. It has a bit of the *Benjamin Button* theme to it.

Charles Dickens

A Tale of Two Cities

This novel goes back and forth between England and France during the French Revolution. It provides a look at Europe during a time of upheaval and change. This novel will provide a great deal of historical information. This great book should be part of your personal canon. There are characters here that you will never forget!

Charles Dickens

Oliver Twist

Like *A Christmas Carol*, this is a classic "rags to riches" story set in Dickensian England.

Emily Bronte

Wuthering Heights

This is a classic Gothic novel. The spooky and isolated English moors are the setting for this story of Heathcliff, one of literature's most fascinating and complex characters.

Charlotte Bronte

Jane Eyre

Charlotte is Emily's sister; there were three sisters, all writers—not an easy feat for the time. This novel is a classic gothic story of the tragic governess, Jane, and the "Madwoman in the Attic." I will not give any more away.

Kazuo Ishiguro

The Remains of the Day

This novel is a compelling portrait of the perfect English butler and of his fading, insular world in postwar England. At the end of his three decades of service at Darlington Hall, Stevens, the butler embarks on a country drive, during which he looks back over his career to reassure himself that he has served humanity by serving a “great gentleman.” This is another tale about British class-consciousness.

Jane Austen

Emma

Beautiful, clever, rich—and single—Emma Woodhouse is perfectly content with her life and sees no need for either love or marriage. Nothing, however, delights her more than interfering in the romantic lives of others. With the *charming* heroine and its witty subtle exploration of relationships, *Emma* is often seen as Jane Austen’s most flawless work.

Jane Austen

Sense and Sensibility

The Dashwood sisters are the center of this lovely comedy of manners. Look up the rest. It is the embodiment of the Jane Austen genre.

Joseph Conrad

Heart of Darkness

The theme here is British Imperialism and its effects. Set in the Belgian Congo in Africa, this is the story of a white power monger who sets himself up in Africa as a “superior being” and is the epitome of evil power.

George Bernard Shaw

Man and Superman
Major Barbara
Pygmalion

These are three separate choices, but they only need one description. Shaw thoroughly delighted in satirizing the upper crust of British society. Choose any one of the above Shavian plays.

T.H. White

The Once and Future King

Written in 1958, this novel is a brilliant retelling of the saga of King Arthur, Excalibur, and Camelot.

Robert Graves

I Claudius

A 1934 fascinating story about Ancient Rome and the decadence of some of the emperors. Caligula will give you chills down your spine. Another one from which to enhance your historical knowledge.

H.G. Wells

The War of the Worlds

This work is one of the greatest early science fiction novels. It is a story of alien invasion, but if you probe deeper, you will see it is also about British Imperialism and racism.

Aldous Huxley

Brave New World

The genre here is dystopian society. The novel portrays “Utopia.” There is constant prosperity. People are always content, as they are well provided for and have been programmed to like their society in all respects. What can possibly be wrong with a world in which everybody is happy? Read on and find out.

Thomas Hardy

The Mayor of Casterbridge

The themes addressed here are the powerlessness of women and political corruption. Set in early 20th century England, the mayor, an amoral being, sells his daughter, and the action takes off from there. A few other fine choices by Hardy are *Jude the Obscure* and *The Return of the Native*.

Questions for Analysis

Directions:

Answer the following five questions in complete sentences. Where you feel it will support your responses, please include direct quotations and page numbers from the text. As you ponder these characters and your responses, please remember, the answers you provide will be the basis of your first major paper for the course.

1. List three major characters of the literary work and in well-developed paragraphs give an example/examples of what the character learns by the end of the work.
2. Pretend that you are one of the major characters in the literary work. Write a monologue (one person talking) of the character telling his/her most unique experience.

3. Choose one complex and important character in your novel or play who might, based on the character's actions alone, be considered evil or immoral. (*i.e.* Find the "bad guy.") Explain both how and why the full presentation of the character in the work and the society in which he or she lives, makes us react more sympathetically than we otherwise might.

4. Pick a national issue. Compose a speech (100-150 words) to be given on that topic by one of the major characters in the work you read. Be sure the contents reflect the character's personality. Possible issues are *aging, political corruption, prejudice, family communications, poverty, disillusionment with society.*

5. Finally, complete each of these ideas with material from the literary work: This work made me . . . wish that, realize that, decide that, wonder about, see that, believe that, feel that, and hope that.