



Guidelines for the Study of Literature: Summer Reading

How do I “study” a novel? When should I begin my summer reading?
What will I be required to know about the books when school begins?
What will happen if I don’t finish my summer reading?

Freshmen frequently ask these questions; this guide will answer your questions and prepare you for a rewarding, productive year in Freshman English!

****Be aware that your English teacher will give a summer reading quiz on the second or third day of school. Know characters, settings, and plots of the novels. The summer reading assignments will be checked on the first day of school.**

- Studying a novel is not the same as reading a novel for pleasure. Certain procedures can be followed so that your comprehension improves.
Also, novels need to be explored in terms of literary elements, history, and author’s background; only then can the reader truly appreciate and understand the work.
- Keep a character list on post-its or in a notebook. You may also try a graphic organizer. Add details about the characters as you learn more about them. Are there any special quotes which seem to define the character?
- Keep a list of unfamiliar vocabulary words. After finishing your day’s reading, look up the words. If you suspect that the definition changes the meaning of what you’ve read, read the passage again. Make sure to include page numbers as you jot down words! Use context clues to help you.
If you have your own book, highlight words and look them up later. Do not consult the dictionary each time you encounter a word; this will impair your comprehension and enjoyment.

- Read at a time of day when you are most likely to retain information. This is different for everyone; know yourself and your best time. Do not read when you are very tired.
- After you've read a chapter or two, write a brief summary of what you've read. The summary should not exceed one paragraph (five sentences) in length. Do not rewrite the book! You may also create graphic organizers to serve as summaries.
- Read aloud whenever possible. This takes time, and you won't want to read the entire novel aloud, but comprehension improves when you hear the words. Try this when you are losing interest in the story.
- Discuss your reading with friends who are reading the same book.
- Discuss your reading with parents, especially if they've read the book!
- As you read, take note of important events. Write them down.
- If you are confused about anything, write it down! We will address questions in the fall. If you neglect to write them down, you won't remember.
- As you read, try to apply the literary terms you have learned. For example, try to determine the novel's theme. If you think you've found an example of foreshadowing, write it down.
- When you've finished a novel, type your own "study guide" using the notes you've taken. Include a paragraph or two that describes your emotional reaction to the literature.
- *Cliff's Notes* and *Spark Notes* may help you, but they are not replacements for the reading. Do not cheat yourself; enjoy the full impact of the literature.
- As you read, remember the five W's: Who, What, Where, When, and Why. (Characters, plot, setting, theme, etc.)
- Remember that it is your responsibility to finish all reading before the first day of school. Anything within the literature is test worthy, even if it is not specifically addressed in class.

- Start the year on the right foot; if you begin the year behind, you may never catch up!
- Allow approximately two weeks per novel. If you read at a slower rate, allow yourself more time. Even speedy readers need time to reflect and write about what they've read.
- Though you may not love every book we study, learn to appreciate and value each piece of literature. This will make your work more pleasant, and our discussions more interesting.
- Find time to read other books of your own choosing.
- Look up the summer novel authors. Share what you learn in the fall.



Required Assignments for Summer Reading:

1. Select a note taking method. Use loose leaf paper, a spiral notebook, or post-its directly placed in books. Write summaries of chapters. A summary should be about a paragraph in length. If the novel does not have chapters, write summaries for every 10-15 pages. Within your summaries, include notes on characters. Highlight or underline character notes. A list of characters is included with this guide. You may also write separate character notes using this list. *All notes must be hand written in pencil or ink. Do not copy notes from Spark Notes or other sources; this is plagiarism.*

You may use graphic organizers, webs, clusters, and bullets to organize notes. You may also write sentences. Include some important quotations as you take notes; five quotations for each novel is sufficient. (10 points per novel)

2. Summer Vocabulary assignment: Write definitions on paper. Please include the part of speech. (10 points per list)

