

SUMMER READING FOR SOPHOMORE ENGLISH

Your summer reading consists of two novels, one required and one which you choose from the list below.

REQUIRED:

Lord of the Flies

William Golding

A plane crashes, innocent schoolboys aged 12 and under find themselves without adults on an island, and the fun begins as they try to establish a civilization based on reasonable rules. They have food for the picking, sand and surf for play, a mountain to climb, and no homework. What could possibly go wrong? They had not counted on fear and the inner workings of the human heart. The debut novel by a Nobel-prize winning author, it has become a favorite of people everywhere for what it reveals about the nature of man. We will be studying this novel the first few weeks of British Literature.

Select one additional novel from the works below:

Great Expectations

Dickens

Great Expectations is a *bildungsroman*, or a coming-of-age novel, and the story genre is Victorian Literature. It depicts the growth and personal development of an orphan named Pip. In the opening pages, the seven-year-old Pip meets a terrifying stranger in the graveyard where Pip's parents are buried. The stranger, an escaped convict, is eventually re-captured, but becomes intertwined in Pip's future. Filled with strong characters—some mysterious, others hilarious—Dickens' classic novel takes Pip through adulthood, and two endings which Dickens produced for his fans.

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society **Shaffer**

The letters comprising this small charming novel begin in 1946, when single, 30-something author Juliet Ashton (nom de plume Izzy Bickerstaff) writes to her publisher to say she is tired of covering the sunny side of war and its aftermath. When Guernsey farmer Dawsey Adams finds Juliet's name in a used book and invites articulate—and not-so-articulate—neighbors to write Juliet with their stories, the book's epistolary circle widens, putting Juliet back in the path of war stories. The letters jump from incident to incident—including the formation of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society while Guernsey was under German occupation—and person to person. But Juliet's quips are so clever, the Guernsey inhabitants so enchanting and the small acts of heroism so vivid and moving that one forgives the author for not being able to settle on a single person or plot. Juliet finds in the letters not just inspiration for her next work, but also for her life—as will readers.

The Mysterious Island **Verne**

The Mysterious Island is an adventure novel by Jules Verne, published in French in three volumes as *L'île mystérieuse* in 1874 and included in his popular science-fiction series *Voyages extraordinaires* (1863-1910). The *Mysterious Island* follows the adventures of a group of castaways who use their survivalist savvy to build a functional community on an uncharted island. A hot-air balloon carrying five passengers and a dog escapes from Richmond, Va., during the American Civil War. It is blown off course and deposited near an obscure island. One of the castaways nearly dies after a skirmish with pirates; he is saved by the unexplained appearance of medicine after the pirates are unexpectedly routed. The group later discovers that their secret helper is the reclusive Captain Nemo (first introduced in Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*), who dies and is buried at sea in his submarine. The castaways are eventually saved by a passing ship.

***The Haunting of Hill House* Jackson**

The Haunting of Hill House is a 1959 novel by author Shirley Jackson. Considered one of the best literary ghost stories published during the twentieth century, it has been made into two feature films and a play. Jackson's novel relies on terror rather than horror to elicit emotion by the reader, utilizing complex relationships between the mysterious events in the house and the characters' psyches. Stephen King, in his book *Danse Macabre*, a non-fiction review of the horror genre, lists *The Haunting of Hill House* as one of the finest horror novels of the late 20th century and provides a lengthy review. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the book is "now widely regarded as the greatest haunted-house story ever written."

1984 Orwell

1984 is a dystopian novel set in Airstrip One in the former Great Britain, a province of the superstate Oceania, whose residents are victims of perpetual war, omnipresent government surveillance and public manipulation. Oceania's political ideology, euphemistically named English Socialism (shortened to "Ingsoc" in Newspeak, the government's invented language that will replace English or Oldspeak) is enforced by the privileged, elite Inner Party. Via the "Thought Police," the Inner Party persecutes individualism and independent thinking, which are regarded as "thoughtcrimes." The tyranny is ostensibly overseen by a mysterious leader known as Big Brother, who enjoys an intense cult of personality. The Party "seeks power entirely for its own sake. It is not interested in the good of others; it is interested solely in power." The protagonist of the novel, Winston Smith, is a member of the Outer Party, who works for the Ministry of Truth, or Minitrue in Newspeak. Minitrue is responsible for propaganda and historical revisionism. Smith's job is to rewrite past newspaper articles, so the historical record always supports the Party's agenda. The workers are told they are correcting misquotations, when they are actually writing false information in the place of fact. Minitrue also destroys all previous editions of revised work. This method ensures there is no proof of government interference. Smith is a diligent and skillful worker, but he secretly hates the Party and dreams of rebellion against Big Brother.

***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* Haddon**

Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. Although gifted with a superbly logical brain, Christopher is autistic. Everyday interactions and admonishments have little meaning for him. Routine, order and predictability shelter him from the messy, wider world. Then, at fifteen, Christopher's carefully constructed world falls apart when he finds his neighbor's dog, Wellington, impaled on a garden fork, and he is initially blamed for the killing. Christopher decides that he will track down the real killer and turns to his favorite fictional character, the impeccably logical Sherlock Holmes, for inspiration. But the investigation leads him down some unexpected paths and ultimately brings him face to face with the dissolution of his parents' marriage. As he tries to deal with the crisis within his own family, we are drawn into the workings of Christopher's mind. And herein lies the key to the brilliance of Mark Haddon's choice of narrator: The most wrenching of emotional moments are chronicled by a boy who cannot fathom emotion. The effect is dazzling, making for a novel that is deeply funny, poignant, and fascinating in its portrayal of a person whose curse and blessing is a mind that perceives the world literally.