

Freshman Summer Reading Assignment for 2023-2024

Parents:

Research has firmly established the correlation between time spent reading and reading achievement. Furthermore, the effects of reading extend into quality of life: high levels of leisure reading and reading proficiency are associated with greater academic, financial, professional, and civic benefits (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). The Notre Dame Academy English department is committed to encouraging our students to become lifelong readers. As such, we have opened up our summer reading assignment to encourage autonomy and student choice in the reading process. The primary objective of this assignment is to allow students to choose and read books that interest them. With the volume of books available, we will not know the details of every book students might select. In the spirit of the Sisters of Notre Dame, who encourage transformation through education, it is important to know that we will not place a tight filter on selections. What we want is to nurture each student's willingness to read – for pleasure, for knowledge, for understanding – so that they choose to read beyond assigned reading, beyond what is compulsory for class. We encourage parents to be involved in this selection process as they see fit. Consider looking over your daughter's selection to ensure that you feel the content of the novel is appropriate for your child. If you have objections, have your student choose another book from the list. As Katherine Patterson notes, "it is not enough to simply teach children to read; we have to give them something worth reading. Something that will stretch their imaginations—something that will help them make sense of their own lives and encourage them to reach out toward people whose lives are quite different from their own."

-NDA English Department

Students:

Your assignment is to select ONE book from the list below based on your grade level for the 2023-24 school year. Read through the summaries of the texts at the end of this packet and choose any text that interests you and that you have not previously read, and then share your book selection and the information on the previous page with your parents. You must purchase a clean copy of your chosen book (there should be no writing in the book when you buy it). The specific assignment is explained on page 3. The grading rubric is on page 4.

-NDA English Department

Summer Reading Annotation Guide

Annotating your Selected Book

Begin by selecting a book from your grade level reading list. For this assignment your book will need to be a physical copy (no ebooks) and it should have no writing in it. Put your name and grade level inside the book with a permanent marker.

Your summer assignment is to read and carefully annotate your book. Your book should be read and your annotations completed by the first day back to school. Please bring the book with you on that day!

WHAT ARE ANNOTATIONS?

Think of annotation as a way to read closely and actively interact with the book you are reading. Instead of simply reading and turning the page, think about what you read and then share those thoughts on the pages of the book! Highlighted passages that have no notes to explain why they are highlighted are not considered annotation.

You DO NOT need to annotate on every page. Your annotations should be spread out throughout the book and should show a thoughtful and engaged reading of the text.

Aim for approximately 25-30 quality annotations per 100 pages.

SO WHAT DO I LOOK FOR AS I ANNOTATE?

IN GENERAL consider annotating for things like

- Brief summaries of what is happening (plot) in the text. *It's especially helpful to paraphrase difficult passages!*
- Questions about what you don't understand.
- Emotional reactions you may have to what you read!
- Connections you see to other parts of the book.
- Connections you see to real life, especially to your own life experience.
- Connections to other works of literature, to movies, to songs, to current events...
- Passages that describe or reveal the book's characters.
- Literary techniques you recognize (like symbolism, types of conflict, irony, etc)
- Historical context or traditions/social customs that are used in the book.

IN SPECIFIC you should focus on the following based on your grade level:

Incoming Freshmen: Characterization and Setting

Name:

Class:

Date:

Annotation Rubric

A

- Text is marked throughout - approximately 25-30 annotations per 100 pages.
- Words and phrases are marked and commentary/notations appear in the margins that indicate a response to the words/phrases marked
- Marginalia (comments in the margin) reflect applications of literary terms, questioning, summarizing, analysis.
- Annotations demonstrate a high level of analysis and interpretation – thinking beyond the surface level of the text and insight beyond classroom terminology. Thoughtful connections made to other texts, or other events throughout the novel with in-depth analysis.
- Marginalia is relevant to your grade level focus

B

- Text is marked throughout but with less than 25-30 annotations per 100 pages
- Commentary/notations in margins appear less frequently or don't respond directly to the passage annotated.
- Marginalia may be primarily summary or paraphrase with some attempt at analysis.
- Annotations demonstrate analysis and interpretation – thinking beyond the surface level of the text. Thoughtful connections made to other texts or events.
- Marginalia is mostly relevant to your grade level focus

C

- Text is not consistently marked throughout
- Some random passages appear to be marked; passages selected often have no real significance
- Little/no marginalia or marginalia that is characterized by plot level questions or simplistic summary
- Annotations demonstrate some analysis and interpretation – thinking somewhat beyond the surface level of the text. Attempts at making connections.
- Marginalia is somewhat relevant to your grade level focus

D

- Text is only partially annotated
- Annotations are highlights only. Marginalia is minimal or non-existent
- Random passages appear to be marked; passages selected have no real significance
- Marginalia is not relevant to your grade level focus.

F

- Annotated text not submitted or annotations are plagiarized or student submits a text they have read previously for school or summer reading

Freshman Book List (summaries from goodreads.com and amazon.com)

American Born Chinese (2006) by Gene Luen Yang

American Born Chinese tells the story of three apparently unrelated characters: Jin Wang, who moves to a new neighborhood with his family only to discover that he's the only Chinese-American student at his new school; the powerful Monkey King, subject of one of the oldest and greatest Chinese fables; and Chin-Kee, a personification of the ultimate negative Chinese stereotype, who is ruining his cousin Danny's life with his yearly visits. Their lives and stories come together with an unexpected twist in this action-packed modern fable. American Born Chinese is an amazing ride, all the way up to the astonishing climax.

Little Women (1868) by Louisa May Alcott

Grown-up Meg, tomboyish Jo, timid Beth, and precocious Amy. The four March sisters couldn't be more different. But with their father away at war, and their mother working to support the family, they have to rely on one another. Whether they're putting on a play, forming a secret society, or celebrating Christmas, there's one thing they can't help wondering: Will Father return home safely?

The Hate U Give (2017) by Angie Thomas

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed. Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr. But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

Common Reader for Summer 2023 is *Between Shades of Grey* (2011) by Ruta Sepetys. All students are expected to read this novel for our Common Reader Day.