

Summer Reading 2026

Incoming 11th Grade Honors

Parents,

Our summer reading program opts to give York Catholic students more choice in what they read, hoping that students can find a book that is a true page turner. Our goal has always been to keep students reading through the summer months, but getting students to put down the phone and pick up a book is even more challenging. In expanding our recommended list, we hope to ensure there is something for everyone, and that the summer read is a positive experience and a fun adventure. Our English Department invested time developing reading lists per grade level, to include a few classics, nonfiction, realistic and historical fiction, science fiction, fantasy, and dystopia.

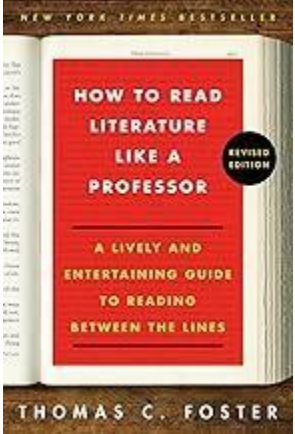
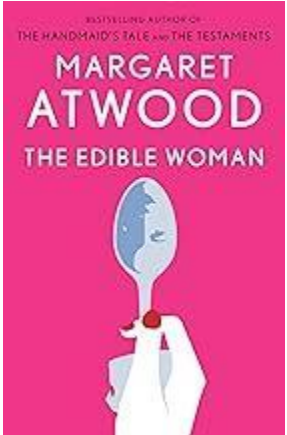
Take time with your student(s) to peruse the list, making sure their book choice meets with your parental approval. A synopsis is included with each title to assist with selection. If you are not sure where to look for more information regarding the content of the text for your child, you can consult [Common Sense Media \(www.commonensemedia.org\)](http://www.commonensemedia.org) or look at the publisher's recommendations.


The assignment for the honors-level non-fiction text is located at the end of this document. This can be turned in on Google Classroom (code jndu5owr). (If you are a new student, you will be able to access this classroom once we return to school.) Teachers will also ask students to respond to a written prompt referencing the title of their fiction text once they are back in the classroom in late August. If you have questions regarding this assignment, you can contact your teacher, Dr. Frick (efrick@yorkcatholic.org).

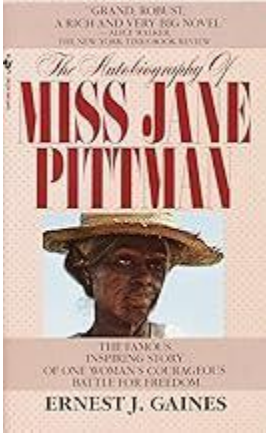
We wish your family a safe and fun-filled summer, and invite all of you to pick up one of the titles listed to enjoy on the beach, by the pool, on a long car ride, or in a shady chair in the backyard. Happy reading, everyone!

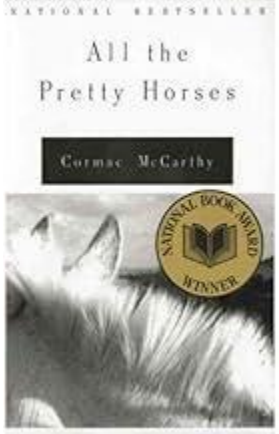
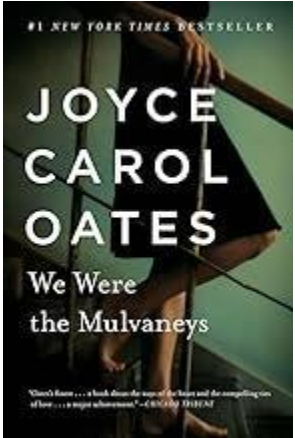
Mrs. Kathy Hand
Principal

You will read two books this summer. The first is an interesting take on literary analysis and is accompanied by a packet for you to complete. Once you finish that, please choose one of the following books to read during the summer. When you return to school in August, your chosen book will be the topic of your first writing.

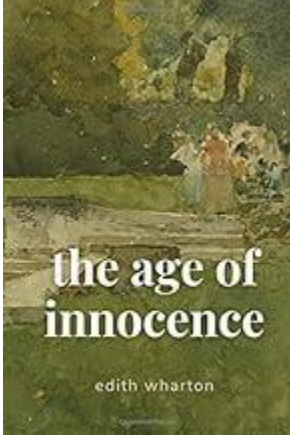
Genre	Title/Author	Summary
<p data-bbox="201 506 350 533">Nonfiction</p> <p data-bbox="201 583 399 768">MANDATED TEXT: <i>How to Read Literature Like a Professor</i></p> <p data-bbox="201 816 344 884">Thomas C. Foster</p> <p data-bbox="201 932 391 1272">**The online link to this text is found on the summer reading classroom for 11H, code: jndu5owr</p>		<p data-bbox="807 506 1403 810">While many books can be enjoyed for their basic stories, there are often deeper literary meanings interwoven in these texts. <i>How to Read Literature Like a Professor</i> helps us to discover those hidden truths by looking at literature with the eyes—and the literary codes—of the ultimate professional reader, the college professor.</p> <p data-bbox="807 821 1411 957">What does it mean when a literary hero is traveling along a dusty road? When he hands a drink to his companion? When he’s drenched in a sudden rain shower?</p> <p data-bbox="807 968 1403 1346">Ranging from major themes to literary models, narrative devices and form, Thomas C. Foster provides us with a broad overview of literature—a world where a road leads to a quest, a shared meal may signify a communion, and rain, whether cleansing or destructive, is never just a shower—and shows us how to make our reading experience more enriching, satisfying, and fun.</p>
<p data-bbox="201 1398 310 1425">Classics</p> <p data-bbox="201 1476 344 1543"><i>The Edible Woman</i></p> <p data-bbox="201 1591 334 1659">Margaret Atwood</p>		<p data-bbox="807 1398 1414 1894">Marian McAlpin is an “abnormally normal” young woman, according to her friends. A recent university graduate, she crafts consumer surveys for a market research firm, maintains an uneasy truce between her flighty roommate and their prudish landlady, and goes to parties with her solidly dependable boyfriend, Peter. But after Peter proposes marriage, things take a strange turn. Suddenly empathizing with the steak in a restaurant, Marian finds she is unable to eat meat. As the days go by, her feeling of solidarity extends to other categories of</p>

		<p>food, until there is almost nothing left that she can bring herself to consume. Those around her fail to notice Marian’s growing alienation—until it culminates in an act of resistance that is as startling as it is imaginative. Marked by blazingly surreal humor and a colorful cast of eccentric characters, <i>The Edible Woman</i> is a groundbreaking work of fiction.</p>
<p>Classics</p> <p><i>The Invisible Man</i></p> <p>Ralph Ellison</p> <p>**Please ensure you have the correct text- there is more than one with this title.</p>		<p>In this deeply compelling novel and epic milestone of American literature, a nameless narrator tells his story from the basement lair of the Invisible Man he imagines himself to be. He describes growing up in a Black community in the South, attending a Black college from which he is expelled, moving to New York and becoming the chief spokesman of the Harlem branch of "the Brotherhood," before retreating amid violence and confusion.</p>
<p>Modern Classic</p> <p><i>Night Watchman</i></p> <p>Louise Erdrich</p> <p>**Please ensure you have the correct text when you read this. There is another text entitled <i>Night Watch</i>.</p>		<p>Based on the extraordinary life of National Book Award-winning author Louise Erdrich’s grandfather who worked as a night watchman and carried the fight against Native dispossession from rural North Dakota all the way to Washington, D.C., this powerful novel explores themes of love and death with lightness and gravity and unfolds with the elegant prose, sly humor, and depth of feeling of a master craftsman. Thomas Wazhashk is the night watchman at the jewel bearing plant, the first factory located near the Turtle Mountain Reservation in rural North Dakota. He is also a Chippewa Council member who is trying to understand the consequences of a new “emancipation” bill on its way to the floor of the United States Congress. It is 1953 and he and the other council members know the bill isn’t about freedom; Congress is fed up with Indians. The bill is a “termination” that</p>

		<p>threatens the rights of Native Americans to their land and their very identity. How can the government abandon treaties made in good faith with Native Americans “for as long as the grasses shall grow, and the rivers run”?</p>
<p>Classics</p> <p><i>The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman</i></p> <p>Ernest J. Gaines</p>		<p>Miss Jane Pittman. She is one of the most unforgettable heroines in American fiction, a woman whose life has come to symbolize the struggle for freedom, dignity, and justice. Ernest J. Gaines’s now-classic novel—written as an autobiography—spans one hundred years of Miss Jane’s remarkable life, from her childhood as a slave on a Louisiana plantation to the Civil Rights era of the 1960s. It is a story of courage and survival, history, bigotry, and hope—as seen through the eyes of a woman who lived through it all.</p>
<p>Modern Classics</p> <p><i>Demon Copperhead</i></p> <p>Barbara Kingsolver</p>		<p>Set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, <i>Demon Copperhead</i> is the story of a boy born to a teenaged single mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his dead father’s good looks and copper-colored hair, a caustic wit, and a fierce talent for survival. Relayed in his own unsparing voice, Demon braves the modern perils of foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, disastrous loves, and crushing losses. Through all of it, he reckons with his own invisibility in a popular culture where even the superheroes have abandoned rural people in favor of cities. Many generations ago, Charles Dickens wrote <i>David Copperfield</i> from his experience as a survivor of institutional poverty and its damages to children in his society. Those problems have yet to be solved in ours. Dickens is not a prerequisite for readers of this novel, but he provided its inspiration. In transposing a Victorian epic novel to the contemporary American South, Barbara Kingsolver enlists Dickens’ anger and</p>

		<p>compassion, and above all, his faith in the transformative powers of a good story. <i>Demon Copperhead</i> speaks for a new generation of lost boys, and all those born into beautiful, cursed places they can't imagine leaving behind.</p>
<p>Fiction <i>All the Pretty Horses</i> Cormac McCarthy</p>		<p>Teenager John Grady Cole, the last of a long line of Texas ranchers, has nothing left to stay for. Across the border, Mexico beckons—beautiful and desolate, rugged and cruelly civilized. With neighbor Rawlins, and Scruffy Boy, he rides toward an idyllic, sometimes comic adventure, to a place where dreams are paid for in blood.</p>
<p>Fiction <i>We Were the Mulvaney</i> Joyce Carol Oates</p>		<p>The Mulvaneys are blessed by all that makes life sweet. But something happens on Valentine's Day, 1976—an incident that is hushed up in the town and never spoken of in the Mulvaney home—that rends the fabric of their family life...with tragic consequences. Years later, the youngest son attempts to piece together the fragments of the Mulvaney's former glory, seeking to uncover and understand the secret violation that brought about the family's tragic downfall. Profoundly cathartic, this extraordinary novel unfolds as if Oates, in plumbing the darkness of the human spirit, has come upon a source of light at its core. Moving away from the dark tone of her more recent masterpieces, Joyce Carol Oates turns the tale of a family struggling to cope with its fall from grace into a deeply moving and unforgettable account of the vigor of hope and the power of love to prevail over suffering.</p>

<p>War Novels</p> <p><i>The Things They Carried</i></p> <p>Tim O'Brien</p>		<p>A classic work of American literature that has not stopped changing minds and lives since it burst onto the literary scene, <i>The Things They Carried</i> is a ground-breaking meditation on war, memory, imagination, and the redemptive power of storytelling. <i>The Things They Carried</i> depicts the men of Alpha Company: Jimmy Cross, Henry Dobbins, Rat Kiley, Mitchell Sanders, Norman Bowker, Kiowa, and the character Tim O'Brien, who has survived his tour in Vietnam to become a father and writer at the age of forty-three. Taught everywhere from high school classrooms to graduate seminars in creative writing it has become required reading for any American and continues to challenge readers in their perceptions of fact and fiction, war and peace, courage and fear and longing.</p>
<p>Classics</p> <p><i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i></p> <p>Mark Twain</p>		<p>After he and his good buddy Tom Sawyer had uncovered a small fortune, Huckleberry Finn finds himself restrained by the demands of an overbearing guardian. Never one to be confined by the proprieties of society, Huck bolts from this dull life in pursuit of a more exciting and mischievous life. Witty and poignant, <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> is often cited as the preeminent “Great American Novel.” So join this willful vagabond as he sails down the Mighty Mississippi and discovers one thrilling adventure followed by another.</p>

<p>Fiction</p> <p>Gilead</p> <p>Marilyn Robinson</p>		<p>In 1956, toward the end of Reverend John Ames's life, he begins a letter to his young son, an account of himself and his forebears. Ames is the son of an Iowan preacher and the grandson of a minister who, as a young man in Maine, saw a vision of Christ bound in chains and came west to Kansas to fight for abolition: He "preached men into the Civil War," then, at age fifty, became a chaplain in the Union Army, losing his right eye in battle.</p> <p>Reverend Ames writes to his son about the tension between his father--an ardent pacifist--and his grandfather, whose pistol and bloody shirts, concealed in an army blanket, may be relics from the fight between the abolitionists and those settlers who wanted to vote Kansas into the union as a slave state. And he tells a story of the sacred bonds between fathers and sons, which are tested in his tender and strained relationship with his namesake, John Ames Boughton, his best friend's wayward son.</p>
<p>Classics</p> <p>The Age of Innocence</p> <p>Edith Wharton</p>		<p><i>The Age of Innocence</i>, written by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Edith Wharton, is a classic love story set in late 19th century New York City. It tells the story of Newland Archer, a young lawyer, and his struggle between his arranged marriage to a beautiful but conventional woman and his passionate love for her cousin, the scandalous Countess Ellen Olenska. This novel explores the complexities of life in a society bound by rigid rules and expectations. Through the eyes of Newland Archer, readers gain insight into the hypocrisy, snobbery, and pretense of the Gilded Age. <i>The Age of Innocence</i> is a timeless classic that provides an honest, humorous, and often painful look at the human condition.</p>

Nonfiction Text Assignment

How to Read Literature Like a Professor (Foster)

Study Guide

In Doyle's "The Red-Headed League," Holmes and Watson both observe Jabez Wilson carefully; yet, their different interpretations of the same details reveal the difference between a "good reader" and a "bad reader." Watson can only describe what he sees; Holmes has the knowledge to interpret what he sees, to draw conclusions, and to solve the mystery.

Understanding literature need no longer be a mystery—Foster's book will help transform you from a naïve, sometimes confused Watson to an insightful, literary Holmes. Professors and other informed readers see symbols, archetypes, and patterns because those things are there—if you have learned to look for them. As Foster says, you learn to recognize the literary conventions the "same way you get to Carnegie Hall. Practice" (xiv).

These short writing assignments will let you practice your literary analysis and they will help me to get to know your literary tastes. Whenever I ask for an example from literature, you may use short stories, novels, plays, or film. **Please note that your responses should be paragraphs—not pages.**

Even though this is analytical writing, you may use "I" if you deem it important to do so; however, remember that most uses of "I" are just padding. For example, "I think the wolf is the most important character in 'Little Red Riding Hood,'" is padded, and can be simplified by writing, "The wolf is the most important character in 'Little Red Riding Hood.'" As you compose each written response, rephrase the prompt as part of your answer. In other words, I should be able to tell which questions you are answering without going back to the prompts.

Concerning mechanics, pay special attention to pronouns. Make antecedents clear. Say Foster first, not "he." Remember to capitalize and punctuate titles properly for each genre.

Please note that all materials should be generated from your mind, and your mind alone. Any references that seem to be from AI or a Google search will be discounted.

Writing Assignments: Read the chapter indicated and complete the indicated activity on the Google Document in Google Classroom.

Introduction:

This addresses how memory, symbol, and pattern affect the reading of literature. How does the recognition of patterns make it easier to read complicated literature? Discuss a time when your appreciation of a literary work was enhanced by your understanding symbol or pattern.

Chapter 1: Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not)

List the five aspects of the quest and then apply them to something you have read or viewed in the same format used on pp. 3-5.

Chapter 2: Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion

Choose a meal from a literary work and apply the ideas of Chapter 2 to this literary depiction.

Chapter 4: Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?

Define intertextuality. Discuss three examples that have helped you in reading specific works.

Chapter 5: When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare...

Discuss a work that you are familiar with that alludes to or reflects Shakespeare. Show how the author uses this connection thematically. Read pp. 39-40 carefully. Foster shows how Fugard reflects Shakespeare through plot and theme. In your discussion, focus on theme.

Chapter 9: It's More Than Just Rain or Snow

Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work, not in terms of plot.

Chapter 10: Never Stand Next to the Hero

Think about a minor, flat character from a work you have read and discuss his/her "utility" in terms of characterization, theme, plot, etc.

Chapter 14: Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too

Apply the criterion on p. 126 to a major character in a significant literary work. Try to choose a character that will have many matches. This is a particularly apt tool for analyzing film—*Star Wars*, *Cool Hand Luke*, *Excalibur*, *Malcolm X*, *Braveheart*.

Chapter 18: If She Comes Up, It's Baptism

Think of a "baptism scene" from a significant literary work. How was the character different after the experience? Discuss.