

English IV Summer Reading Choices

Students in **English IV** will choose **one** novel from the list to read over the summer and complete **one** of the three assignment options.

***Grendel* – John Gardner**

Grendel is a beautiful and heartbreaking modern retelling of the Beowulf epic from the point of view of the monster, Grendel, the villain of the 8th-century Anglo-Saxon epic. This book benefits from both of Gardner's careers: in addition to his work as a novelist, Gardner was a noted professor of medieval literature and a scholar of ancient languages.

***The Road*- McCarthy**

Post-apocalyptic novel - A father and his son walk alone through burned America. Nothing moves in the ravaged landscape save the ash on the wind. It is cold enough to crack stones, and when the snow falls it is gray. The sky is dark. Their destination is the coast, although they don't know what, if anything, awaits them there. They have nothing; just a pistol to defend themselves against the lawless bands that stalk the road, the clothes they are wearing, a cart of scavenged food—and each other.

***Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*- Sophocles**

Aristotle called "Oedipus The King," the second-written of the three Theban plays written by Sophocles, the masterpiece of the whole of Greek theater. Today, nearly 2,500 years after Sophocles wrote, scholars and audiences still consider it one of the most powerful dramatic works ever made.

***Siddhartha*- Herman Hesse**

In the novel, *Siddhartha*, a young man, leaves his family for a contemplative life, then, restless, discards it for one of the flesh. He conceives a son, but bored and sickened by lust and greed, moves on again. Near despair, Siddhartha comes to a river where he hears a unique sound. This sound signals the true beginning of his life -- the beginning of suffering, rejection, peace, and, finally, wisdom.

***A Doll's House*-Henrick Ibsen**

In the central character of Nora, Ibsen epitomized the human struggle against the humiliating constraints of social conformity. Nora's ultimate rejection of a smothering marriage and life in "a doll's house" shocked theatergoers of the late 1800s and opened new horizons for playwrights and their audiences. But daring social themes are only one aspect of Ibsen's power as a dramatist. *A Doll's House* shows as well his gifts for creating realistic dialogue, a suspenseful flow of events and, above all, psychologically penetrating characterizations that make the struggles of his dramatic personages utterly convincing.

***A Long Way Gone* – Ishmael Beah**

This is how wars are fought now: by children, hopped-up on drugs and wielding AK-47s. Children have become soldiers of choice. In the more than fifty conflicts going on worldwide, it is estimated that there are some 300,000 child soldiers. Ishmael Beah used to be one of them. What is war like through the eyes of a child soldier? How does one become a killer? How does one stop? Child soldiers have been profiled by journalists, and novelists have struggled to imagine their lives. But until now, there has not been a first-person account from someone who came through this hell and survived. In *A Long Way Gone*, Beah, now twenty-five years old, tells a riveting story: how at the age of twelve, he fled attacking rebels and wandered a land rendered unrecognizable by violence. By thirteen, he'd been picked up by the government army, and Beah, at heart a gentle boy, found that he was capable of truly terrible acts. This is a rare and mesmerizing account, told with real literary force and heartbreaking honesty.

***All novel descriptions are from Amazon.**

Summer Reading Assignment Options for English IV Students

Choose **ONE** of the following options to turn in no later than the first Friday of the semester.

Option 1: Original Movie Trailer

If you think the book you just read would make a great movie, create a movie trailer to sell it to a larger audience. Use technology to create a movie trailer (1-3 minutes) that highlights the theme of the novel, and the pivotal moments when characters made specific choices that changed the outcome of the work. Use Animoto or a similar online tool, or the Movie option on iMovie. Make sure there is music and the trailer appropriately matches the book you are basing it on. Include at least one significant quote to add to the trailer.

See an example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-PZnRIqa8c>

Option 2: Independent Reading Project Book Soundtrack

You will be required to prepare a soundtrack for the novel you have chosen to read. Like music used in movie and musical soundtracks, the songs that you select will need to relate to significant elements in the novel. Include the following with your project: a PLAYLIST with the songs (if possible) AND ALBUM ARTWORK to fit the cover.

1. You will need to pick five different songs, one pertaining to each of the following:

- a. A particular character
- b. The relationship between two or more characters
- c. The prominent theme in the novel (remember a theme is a life message)
- d. The tone of a specific passage.
- e. The setting of the novel in general or at a specific point

2. Write a 3-5 sentence response/explanation for each choice. Each response/explanation needs to be clearly labeled as to which of the five elements it is covering. Each response must also have at least one significant quote from your novel (with page number!) connected to at least one lyric line from the song.

Remember: * SONGS MUST BE SCHOOL APPROPRIATE!

Option 3: Thematic Poster:

Create a poster that demonstrates your ability to articulate the THEME of your novel. What is the author saying about life, humanity, the world? Each poster should contain:

- a. A title that clearly states the THEME (e.g. Humans are Beautiful or Humans are Brutal)
- b. Three examples from your novel (excerpts from the text, quotes from the text along with an appropriate image or illustration) and two examples (visuals, graphics) from the real world supporting the theme.
- c. one to two paragraphs of explanation for each example. This should explain why these examples from the book and the real world show that humans are more beautiful or brutal.
- d. At least five quality images: hand-drawn, cut from a magazine, or found electronically (think carefully about what a quality image is before choosing one for your poster)