

Dear Incoming Freshman/Freshman Parent(s):

We are looking forward to meeting you in person in January and want to take this opportunity to give you some information as you prepare for our first day of class.

Ninth grade Honors English is designed to be a **challenging, demanding, and stimulating** course. In this class you will read a diverse selection of literary texts from a variety of time periods and cultures, you will work independently and collaboratively, and you will strive to improve your writing and critical thinking skills. Expectations for your effort, attitude and performance will be high; being an Honors student means going above and beyond at all times.

To demonstrate your commitment to this high standard, and also to prepare you for the ninth grade Honors English curriculum, you will need to read **Of Mice and Men** by John Steinbeck before the first day of class. There are plenty of copies in the library to check out, but we recommend buying your own copy so you can write and take notes inside your book. Although it is not required to purchase your books, it is good practice for college to annotate your literary texts. Please look for and take notes on the following items found inside the novel:

- 1. Major themes** – Lessons the characters learn or help teach
- 2. Symbols** – Objects that represent ideas
- 3. Conflicts** - Complications or struggles that the characters face
- 4. Characterization** – Direct (physical traits described) and Indirect (character traits revealed)
- 5. Character Roles** – Find major plot events that track the roles of the characters
- 6. Character Motivations** - Motivations the characters possess. What drives them?

While you may choose to consult a novel aide or online summary, we encourage you to do as much of your own thinking about this novel as possible. It is through your own thinking that you will gain understanding and see the bigger picture Steinbeck had in mind. There will be an in-class essay assigned during the first week of class as well as an assessment of the novel given.

We are also including a list of all the novels (and specific editions) we will be reading during this course, in case you want to start purchasing them now. Because books sell out fast at the local bookstores, we recommend ordering them online. This will also give you the option of purchasing used books at a cheaper price.

Finally, Honors English I is a specialized course which requires sustained effort in order to be successful. If you feel a desire to remove this course from your schedule, please visit the counseling office in order to get a schedule change.

If you have any questions, please contact us. We look forward to seeing all of you soon.

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### **Book List In Order of Instruction**

- 1. The Count of Monte Cristo** by Alexandre Dumas, abridged, translated by Lowell Bair
- 2. The Odyssey** by Homer, translated by Robert Fagels
- 3. Life of Pi** by Yann Martel