

# **Freshman Honors English Summer Reading Contract**

If you submitted an essay to the Reno High School Turnitin.com Honors English account in April 2020, you have been approved to enter Honors English for the 20-21 school year. Below is your summer reading assignment.

After you have read and understood all of the information included in the packet, please sign below and have your parent/guardian sign as well.

**Please return this contract to Mrs. Mileo at Reno High School (you may mail it or take a picture and send it via email to [rmileo@washoeschools.net](mailto:rmileo@washoeschools.net) )**

I understand that as a condition of participating in freshman honors English in the fall of 2019, I must continue practicing the important skills of reading and writing.

I understand that during the first week of school, I will be finalizing a piece of writing generated from my Writer's Notebook.

I understand that failure to complete the summer reading assignment by the deadline removes an extra credit opportunity for the fall semester gradebook.

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Student's Signature

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Student's Name—please print

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Parent/Guardian's Signature

If you do not wish to participate in Honors English, email your counselor as soon as possible so that he or she may make a schedule change for you.

## Congratulations!

You have been accepted to Honors English 1-2 for your freshman year!

As a part of the freshman honors curriculum, you are expected to read and write with fluency and ease. Please read the following instructions carefully and have your work completed by August 30, 2020.

In order to be excellent at something, human beings need to spend hours upon hours practicing that skill. Therefore, we think it is important you spend time during the summer reading and writing, practicing those skills on your own before we spend time working on them academically as a class. **However, nothing is specifically required of you. Everything listed below is an option and an opportunity.**

### Reading Portion:

If you are looking for a good book to read and would like to start the year with some extra credit points, you can choose to read **one** book from the list below. In order to earn the extra points, you will need to take a test during the third and fourth weeks of school. Testing times will be discussed in class during the first week of school.

*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith      *Cold Sassy Tree* by Olive Ann Burns  
*Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck      *Peace Like a River* by Leif Enger  
*The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros

You should be able to purchase any of these books at any good bookstore or check a copy out from the library.

Before starting any independent reading, you should complete the following:

Read “Before You Read: Questions to Ask Yourself about a Book” and “The Elements of the Novel”

### Writing Portion:

Much of our understanding of literature as well as grammar comes from our understanding and our practice of writing. With that being said, over the summer you will complete a writing project. Expect to work with your writing when you come to school in the fall, and expect to continue to use the notebook throughout the entire school year.

- Keep a Writer’s Notebook all summer long. This Writer’s Notebook can be spiral bound, journal size, or a bunch of loose leaf papers stapled together. However you organize your writing is up to you. Bring the notebook to class the first week of school.
- In this Writer’s Notebook, you should make consistent entries over the summer about any and all topics you feel like writing about. A writer’s notebook is a great place to write down ideas you have for writing, thoughts and feelings you have about the world, and any writing in any format you wish to create. By the end of the summer, you should have a variety of entries in your Writer’s Notebook that could be polished into final drafts later.

***During the first week of school, you will be finalizing a piece of writing generated from your Writer’s Notebook.***

Have a wonderful summer! We are looking forward to meeting all of you in the fall.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Callahan & Mrs. Mileo  
Honors English 1-2 Teachers

**Accelerated Reader (AR) Opportunity:** we utilize the AR program for extra reading opportunities. You may choose to read **one** of the following books and complete an AR quiz on it during the month of August.

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|--|-----------|
| ▪ <i>Murder on the Orient Express</i> by Agatha Christie | 9 points  |
| ▪ <i>Girl with a Pearl Earring</i> by Tracy Chevalier    | 11 points |
| ▪ <i>Silas Marner</i> by George Eliot                    | 14 points |
| ▪ <i>The Joy Luck Club</i> by Amy Tan                    | 14 points |

## Before You Read

### Questions to Ask yourself about a Book

**When was  
this book  
written?**

The date when the book was written can tell you a lot about the author's background and point of view. The *earliest* date on the **copyright page** tells you when the book was first published. (You'll find the copyright page on the back of the title page, at the front of the book.) For books up to sixty or seventy years old, the earliest copyright date is approximately when the book was written. Older books, however, may show only the date for the current edition, not the date the book was *first* published. If you think the book you're reading may have been written more than sixty or seventy years ago, look for an author biography at the beginning or end of the book. This biography may mention when the book was written; at the least, it will usually tell you the years the author was alive.

**My summer reading book was written in \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Does this book  
belong to a genre  
I recognize?**

A **genre** (zhan 'r) is a category of books with similar styles, themes, or subjects. Romances, westerns, science fiction, fantasy, horror stories, and mysteries are all popular fiction genres. Being aware of genre in the books you choose will give you clues to your reading habits. Do you usually read novels or nonfiction? Survival stories, sports biographies, romances, or spy thrillers? Maybe there's a good one you haven't read yet – or maybe its time to try something new.

**The genre my book belongs to is \_\_\_\_\_.**

**What is my  
purpose in  
reading this  
book?**

Knowing *why* you're reading a book will help you decide *how* to read it. Suppose you're reading a book mainly for enjoyment – say, a Stephen King thriller that all your friends are reading. You'll probably read straight through from beginning to end, absorbed in the plot. You might skip over a long description to get back to the action, but you wouldn't ruin the suspense by skipping to the end and then going back.

Now suppose you're reading a book mainly for information -a guide to windsurfing, for example. If you're new to the sport, you might read more slowly than usual, absorbing every detail, looking up key terms you don't understand, making notes of important points. If you're an experienced windsurfer, on the other hand, you might skim the book very quickly, looking for new information, or skip straight to a particular section that interests you.

**My purpose for reading this book is**

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# The Elements of the Novel

A **novel** is a long fictional story normally running between a hundred and five hundred book pages (more than fifty thousand words). In most novels the key elements are **characters** and **plot**. A plot is a coherent series of related incidents, each of which results from **conflicts** – struggles – that come about when a character's desires are blocked in some way.

Conflict is what gives a story its energy, what propels the plot and keeps us reading. This is just as true for novels; the conflict is likely to take place **externally** between the main character and another character or some hostile force in nature. In more complex novels, particularly modern novels, the conflict is more likely to be psychological, taking a place **internally** between warring feelings within a single character's mind.

Another crucial element in a novel is its **setting**, or time and place. Setting can offer clues to the social and economic backgrounds of the characters. It can also have a marked effect on the novel's **mood** or atmosphere.

When we study a novel, we must always ask: What is this story, beneath its surface, really about? On the surface, a novel might be a trip down a river on a raft or a ship captain's hunt for a white whale. But it also can have deeper messages, or **themes**—beliefs about human nature or the meaning of life suggested through the story's event.

In our search for meaning, we need to ask ourselves about two other elements that play important roles in fiction: **point of view** and **tone**. As soon as the storyteller starts the novel, we should begin asking: From whose point of view is this narrative being told? Does the storyteller speak in the **first person**, as an *I* in the story, or in the **third person**, standing outside the story? Should I believe the narrator completely? What aspects of the story might the narrator be ignorant of or biased about or unwilling to reveal?

We also become aware of the tone created by the novel's point of view. Is it marked at all by **irony**, the contrast between expectation and reality? Is the story **satirical**—that is, does it ridicule human faults or social institutions? Or is the story simply an objective picture of life, devoid of any "comment" by the author? Tone is closely tied to **style**, the writer's characteristic form of expression. Some writers use a great deal of long words and complicated sentences; others may write in plain, informal language or even in slang. Some novelists include many long descriptive passages; others stick mainly to action and dialogue. If you find yourself reading book after book by the same author, you've probably found a writer whose style suits your taste.

With its big canvas, with plenty of time to explore characters and settings and ways of life, the novel can gather the reader right into its heart. A good novel can become more fascinating and more real than your actual surroundings. If you're a reader, you've already experienced that pleasure of "getting lost in a book."