

Summer Reading for Greenville Technical Charter High School
Questions? Contact Cara Mathis, English Department Head: cmathis@staff.gtchs.org

Dear GTCHS students,

All students at GTCHS are given summer reading assignments as part of their English requirements. Students should read the novel assigned for the English course they will take during the 2021-2022 school year. Summer reading will be assessed in English classes upon students' return to school in August 2021.

Happy reading and enjoy your summer!

Cara Mathis

English Department Chair
Greenville Technical Charter High School

English I: *Animal Farm* by George Orwell (Assessment will be assigned in class)

"As ferociously fresh as it was more than a half century ago, this remarkable allegory of a downtrodden society of overworked, mistreated animals and their quest to create a paradise of progress, justice, and equality is one of the most scathing satires ever published. As readers witness the rise and bloody fall of the revolutionary animals, they begin to recognize the seeds of totalitarianism in the most idealistic organization—and in the most charismatic leaders, the souls of the cruelest oppressors" (Amazon.com).

Animal Farm is an allegory, which is a simple, straightforward story that has another, deeper meaning and is rich with many layers of thought. Allegories are written in the form of fables, parables, poems, stories, and almost any other style or genre. An allegory is a literary work in which characters, events, objects, and ideas have secondary or symbolic meanings. The difference between an allegory and a symbol is that an allegory is a complete narrative that conveys abstract ideas to get a point across, while a symbol is a representation of an idea or concept that can have a different meaning throughout a literary work.

English II: *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak (Assessment will be assigned in class)

"It's just a small story really, about among other things: a girl, some words, an accordionist, some fanatical Germans, a Jewish fist-fighter, and quite a lot of thievery...."

"Set during World War II in Germany, Markus Zusak's groundbreaking new novel is the story of Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich. Liesel scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement before he is marched to Dachau.

"This is an unforgettable story about the ability of books to feed the soul" (www.goodreads.com).

English II Honors: *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe (Assessment will be assigned in class)

"Things Fall Apart tells two overlapping, intertwining stories, both of which center around Okonkwo, a 'strong man' of an Ibo village in Nigeria. The first of these stories traces Okonkwo's fall from grace with the tribal world in which he lives, and in its classical purity of line and economical beauty it provides us with a powerful fable about the immemorial conflict between the individual and society.

"The second story, which is as modern as the first is ancient, and which elevates the book to a tragic plane, concerns the clash of cultures and the destruction of Okonkwo's world through the arrival of aggressive, proselytizing European missionaries. These twin dramas are perfectly harmonized, and they are modulated by an awareness capable of encompassing at once the life of nature, human history, and the mysterious compulsions of the soul. Things Fall Apart is the most illuminating and permanent monument we have to the modern African experience as seen from within" (www.goodreads.com).

English III: *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (Assessment will be assigned in class)

“The Great Gatsby is one of the great classics of American twentieth-century literature. F. Scott Fitzgerald’s third book, it stands as the supreme achievement of his career. The story of the fabulously wealthy Jay Gatsby, his love for the beautiful Daisy Buchanan, and his lavish parties on Long Island is an exquisitely crafted tale of America in the 1920s” (Amazon.com).

English III Honors: *Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver (Assessment will be assigned in class)

“The Poisonwood Bible is a story told by the wife and four daughters of Nathan Price, a fierce, evangelical Baptist who takes his family and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959. They carry with them everything they believe they will need from home, but soon find that all of it -- from garden seeds to Scripture -- is calamitously transformed on African soil. What follows is a suspenseful epic of one family’s tragic undoing and remarkable reconstruction over the course of three decades in postcolonial Africa” (www.goodreads.com).

English IV: *Grendel* by John Gardner

“Grendel is a beautiful and heartbreaking modern retelling of Beowulf 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” (Amazon.com).

Assessment

Respond to the following prompt in a well-organized, 500-word (minimum) essay. Do not use any sources other than the novel *Grendel*. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

The essay should be typed in 12 pt. Times New Roman and double spaced. Proofread your essay carefully before you turn it in. **The essay is due on the first day of class as a hard copy.** No email submissions will be accepted.

Analyze a scene in *Grendel* and explore its significance to the novel as a whole, its connection to a greater meaning, or its connection to Grendel’s character development or psyche.

Suggested scenes:

- The opening scene where Grendel curses at the ram, the sky, the animals and addresses the absurdity of life.
- The scene when Grendel hangs from the tree and understands “that the world was nothing. . . .that, finally and absolutely, [he] alone exists.”
- The scene where Grendel deliberately kills a man for the first time.
- The scene where Grendel kills the goat.
- The scene where Grendel confronts the blind priest.
- The scene where Grendel chooses not to kill Hrothgar’s wife, Wealtheow, OR Grendel’s overall fascination with Wealtheow.
- The scene where Grendel meets the dragon.
- The scene where Unferth confronts Grendel in his cave.
- The scene where Grendel battles the warrior (this is Beowulf, although he is never named). Grendel’s death scene.

You may choose a scene not listed here, but your chosen scene must be significant to the novel as a whole, connect to a greater meaning, or connect to Grendel’s character development or psyche.