

Dear Elyria Catholic Parents and Guardians,

The following letter is to inform you about the requirements for summer reading for the 2023-2024 school year. Please note that requirements have CHANGED this year and your student is being held to high expectations regarding summer reading. If possible, take time to sit down with your student and make sure they understand what will be expected of them when they return to school on August 24th, 2023.

Summer reading requirements have been largely the same for decades, and the English department at EC sees a need to revise our requirements to meet the needs of our current students, many of whom are struggling to build strong reading habits and skills in a post-COVID environment where cell phones and technology are swiftly replacing students' desire and ability to become strong readers. Although we recognize that all students will not go to college or university after graduating, it is our goal to meet students where they are and build their skills in reading, writing, and critical thinking over the course of their high school experience so that if they do choose to attend college or university, they are prepared to succeed in that environment.

We have carefully chosen 3 books for each grade level that encompass the skills and themes that will be covered during the year in each respective class. Your student will be asked to select ONE of these books to read in its entirety. The introduction of student choice is a purposeful move designed to meet students where they are, and incorporate student voice into our classrooms from day one of the school year. Students are also being asked to annotate (make physical notes in the book) their books this year and come to school ready to turn that book in to their teacher as part of their summer reading assessment. Research shows that students who engage with the text in real time (as they read) are far more likely to understand not only surface level ideas, but also deeper concepts presented in the text. This essential college skill is one that we want students in all grade levels to attain and build upon during their four years at EC for obvious reasons.

Please see the attached pages that detail what your student needs to read this summer, how they will be assessed on their reading, and resources to help them successfully navigate their assignment – including how to complete annotations for students who are unfamiliar with this technique.

Finally, we humbly ask that you take time over the summer to have a conversation with your students about these requirements, and encourage them to set time aside each week to read small portions of the book, rather than attempting to read the whole book in the last weeks before school begins. Please also encourage them to reach out to their teachers through the email addresses listed below for help on anything they may need. A final note: we are aware that many students like to use audiobooks to help them read. Please help your students understand that this is a good technique, but only if they are following along in the book and making annotations so that they remain engaged. Otherwise, students are doing themselves a disservice as an audiobook alone does not help students understand a text deeply.

We are working hard in our classrooms to help your students re-establish strong reading habits and skills, and we ask for your support in this endeavor. Thank you for all you do. We look forward to seeing your students in August.

Sincerely,

The Elyria Catholic English Department

SUMMER READING EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

- **Expectations:** Regular level students will have 3 options of books to pick from. You are expected to pick ONE book, read it in its entirety and annotate the 3 chapters indicated for each book title in the charts below. Honors students must read the assigned book listed below.
 - The physical copy of your book will be COLLECTED and GRADED for your annotations ONLY in the 3 indicated chapters.
 - Regular level students do NOT have to annotate the whole book. See the section at the bottom of this document for advice on how and what to annotate. Please also feel free to email the teacher if you need help with your annotation or understanding your text.
- **NOTE TO PARENTS:** please note that your student will be given a skill-based test within the first week of school. This test will not be on plot, settings or characters like a “traditional” summer reading test, but will rather ask students to apply their knowledge of a deeper concept like theme to the text itself. Therefore, it is very important that you encourage your student to read the book in its entirety and if possible, assist them in their understanding of the text as a whole. Please encourage them to reach out to their teacher for assistance if they are struggling, or feel free to contact Dean of Academics, Beth Adkins adkins@elyriacatholic.com if teachers cannot be reached over the summer.
- **Extra Credit Option:** students who complete more than the required 3 chapters worth of annotations will be awarded extra credit. Point values will be determined by each teacher.

INCOMING FRESHMAN REQUIREMENTS

- **Theme** : Coming of Age
- **Book Options** : Choose 1 of the following and read the book in its entirety

Book Title	Chapters to Annotate
<i>The Grief Keeper</i> by Alexandra Villasante	2, 16, 24
<i>The Love and Lies of Rukshana Ali</i> by Sabina Khan	1, 21, 40
<i>The Other Wes Moore</i> - Wes Moore	3, 5, 8 & epilogue

- **Teacher to email for help:** Mrs. Coughlin, coughlin@elyriacatholic.com or Ms. Post post@elyriacatholic.com

INCOMING HONORS FRESHMAN REQUIREMENTS

You must read and annotate the book below. Shoot for 1 annotation per page at least, looking for theme, symbolism, characterization, and other literary devices. At the end of each section, summarize the section with at least 5 bullet points.

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

***Honors freshmen will be held to a higher standard for their annotations and ability to comprehend the text material. Please come to class on the first day of school prepared to discuss the novel's literary elements.**

SOPHOMORE REQUIREMENTS

- **Theme** : Early American Literature / Social Issues
- **Book Options** : Choose 1 of the following and read the book in its entirety

Book Title	Chapters to Annotate
<i>This Is My America</i> - Kim Johnson	8, 14, 26
<i>The Hate You Give</i> - Angie Thomas	9, 19, 24
<i>Raiders Night</i> - Robert Lipsyte	3, 19, 32

- **Teacher to email for help:** Mr. Zeitvogel, zeitvogel@elyriacatholic.com or Ms. Post post@elyriacatholic.com

HONORS SOPHOMORE REQUIREMENTS

You must read and annotate the book below. Shoot for 1 annotation per page at least.

***Honors Sophomores will be held to a higher standard for their annotations and ability to comprehend the text material. Please come to class on the first day of school prepared to discuss the novel's literary elements.**

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

- **Teacher to email for help:** Mr. Zeitvogel, zeitvogel@elyriacatholic.com

JUNIOR REQUIREMENTS

- **Theme** : Modern American Literature / The American Dream
- **Book Options** : Choose 1 of the following and read the book in its entirety

Book Title	Chapters to Annotate
<i>The Help</i> -Kathryn Stockett	6, 14, 24
<i>The Nickel Boys</i> -Colson Whitehead	1, 3, 14
<i>Hillbilly Elegy</i> -J.D. Vance	1, 9, 15 *nonfiction book....look for anything that helps answer the questions, What is the American dream? Can all people reach the American dream?

- **Teacher to email for help:** Mrs. Coughlin, coughlin@elyriacatholic.com or Mrs. Edmonds edmonds@elyriacatholic.com

INCOMING HONORS JUNIORS REQUIREMENTS

You must read and annotate the book below. Shoot for 1 annotation per page at least, looking for theme, symbolism, characterization, and other literary devices. At the end of each section, summarize the section with at least 5 bullet points.

***Honors juniors will be held to a higher standard for their annotations and ability to comprehend the text material. Please come to class on the first day of school prepared to discuss the novel's literary elements.**

American Dirt Jeanine Cummins

- **Teacher to email for help:** Mrs. Edmonds edmonds@elyriacatholic.com

SENIOR REQUIREMENTS

- **Theme** : British Literature
- **Book Options** : Choose 1 of the following and read the book in its entirety

Book Title	Chapters to Annotate
<i>The Alchemist</i> - Paulo Coelho	4, 6, 13
Any Agatha Christie novel except <i>Murder on the Orient Express</i> or <i>Death on the Nile</i>	You may select 3 chapters. Must use one chapter from beginning, middle and end.

- **Teacher to email for help:** Mr. Zeitvogel, zeitvogel@elyriacatholic.com

INCOMING AP LITERATURE REQUIREMENTS

- You must read and annotate **both** books listed below. Shoot for 1 annotation per page at least, looking for theme, symbolism, characterization, and other literary devices. At the end of each section, summarize the section with at least 5 bullet points.

Book Title	Chapters to Annotate
<i>Where the Crawdads Sing</i> - Delia Owens	Entire book
<i>How to Read Literature Like a Professor</i> - Thomas C. Foster (2014, revised edition)	Introduction and chapters 18, 19

Students should read the Introduction and chapters 18 and 19 of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* first and then apply the information in those chapters to *Where the Crawdads Sing*.

- **Teacher to email for help:** Cathy Edmonds edmonds@elyriacatholic.com

CCP ENGLISH

- There is no summer reading requirement for CCP English.

FAQs

Where should I get a book for my student?

You can order any of the books online on websites such as Amazon.com or visit Barnes and Noble.

Buying a gently used book at Half Price Books is a great way to save money too. You may also borrow a book from your local library, but please note that you will not be able to write directly into the book for annotation purposes. You may use sticky notes instead if you choose to use a library book.

ANNOTATIONS- What are they and how should students go about doing them?

Annotating a text means to have a conversation with a book. Annotations are personal, meaning they should represent YOUR understanding of the book. Therefore, each person's annotations will be unique. Please feel free to use your "own language" as you make notes...you do not need to write long sentences in the small spaces in your book.

- Shoot for 2-3 annotations / notes per page
- Ask short questions in the margins as you are reading
- Use symbols
 - Examples: question marks for something confusing, exclamation points for exciting plot points, boxes around important quotes, etc.
- Summarize an important paragraph by writing a short phrase in the margins
 - Example: "main char. meets new char"
- As you read, look for examples literary devices:
 - characterization, theme, symbolism, conflict, irony, flashback, foreshadowing, etc. (Google the definitions if you are unfamiliar)

Here is an example of what an annotated page of reading might look like. Google "sample annotated book page" for more examples.

