



Summer 2025

Required Summer Reading

English II College Prep & Honors

This summer's reading for rising sophomores consists of selections that complement the Ethics and Culture course that you'll take this year. As you read these books, consider the human person's desire for happiness and how it can be attained: *In what does happiness consist? Is happiness ultimately dependent upon our circumstances? How is happiness analogous to a quest? What are some of the obstacles that must be overcome or battles that must be fought in this quest for happiness? What role does forgiveness play in happiness? Are suffering and happiness diametrically opposed to each other? Is there a relationship between happiness, virtue, love, and freedom?*

Task: Read these books and complete the corresponding assignment for each.

1. Book I: *The Two Towers* by J.R.R. Tolkien

Read and annotate. On the first day of school, you'll turn your book in, and grades will be assigned according to the quality of annotations.

To annotate a text means to take notes on the pages of a text while reading. It is a way of engaging with and entering into an author's art and ideas. The goal is to have a rich, satisfying, and thought-provoking reading experience.

To annotate wells means to thoughtfully and frequently do the following as you read:

- o underline and/or star key sentences
- o circle and define any words that you do not know yet
- o note transitions to help you map out the structure of the book's flow
- o ask questions in the margins
- o make comments about your own thoughts about / reactions to the text (example: "This character is crazy!")
- o identify key symbols, and speculate on their meaning
- o speculate on the book's theme as you go
- o write a bullet summary of what happened at the end of each chapter.

As readers annotate, they often develop an annotating system of their own. You will learn what works for you. For now, the important thing is to read all your summer assignments with pen or pencil in your hand, and take time to "talk back" to the text as you go.

*This will be assessed with a one-on-one meeting with the teacher to discuss the book

2. Book II: *Left To Tell* by Immaculee Ilibagiza (Honors Only): This text is a non-fiction book about the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, told through the eyes of Immaculee who miraculously survived to tell her story of love and forgiveness. This will be discussed and assessed in a seminar during the first week of school.