



## English 1 Honors Required Reading Abstracts

### ***Required***

#### ***Lord of the Flies*** by William Golding

This novel tells the story of a group of British boys who are stranded on a deserted island together after a plane crash. The boys learn the importance of society and rules and experience first-hand what can occur when they are absent. William Golding's work has been chosen as Outstanding Novel of the Year by E. M. Forster, and he was named the 1983 Nobel Laureate in Literature. Golding's novels are known for his use of realism, and his writing is often compared to that of Joseph Conrad. **Because of his use of realism, this work contains some mild profanity, sexual imagery, and violence.**

#### ***To Kill a Mockingbird*** by Harper Lee

This book is a 1961 Pulitzer Prize winning novel about prejudices of race, gender, social class, and growing up in the Deep South during the Depression. Two young people deal with these prejudices as they watch their father defend a black man unjustly accused of raping a white woman. **Some racially offensive language is included.** The symbolism of the mockingbird is used to bring about the themes of innocence and the need to protect it. As Miss Maudie points out in the novel, "Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."

#### ***Fahrenheit 451*** by Ray Bradbury

The story of fireman Guy Montag first appeared in "The Fireman," a short story published in *Galaxy Science Fiction* in 1951. The story was expanded two years later into this classic novel that tells of a future where firemen are hired to start fires rather than put them out. The themes of censorship and defiance are as important today as they were when the book was first published fifty years ago when the **mild profanity and one character's drug use** caused controversy. While it is classified as science fiction, it is first and foremost a social criticism that shows the danger of suppressing thought by oppressive governments. It is a perfect vehicle for discussions about the first amendment, censorship, and the importance of intellectual freedom.

#### ***Mythology*** by Edith Hamilton

This work is considered by most authorities to be the most comprehensive and accurate translation of Greek and Roman classic myths. The author, Edith Hamilton, is a renowned classical scholar. She introduces students to ancient mythological figures, and describes their adventures in vivid detail. She provides helpful lineage charts and illustrations based on ancient sources. Exposure to Greek and Roman mythology is crucial because of the frequent classical allusions found in modern literature. **This work contains mild sexual references and descriptive violence.**

***Romeo and Juliet*** by William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is one of the most popular plays of all time. Teenagers from two feuding families meet, fall in love, and marry secretly. The priest who performs the ceremony hopes their union will repair the rift between the feuding Capulets and Montagues. The couple's love is no match for this ancient quarrel, and a series of tragic misunderstandings leads ultimately to their deaths. The plot, characters, and themes of this tragedy have inspired scores of modern novels, short stories, and screenplays. **Parents are advised that *Romeo and Juliet* contains mild sexual references and innuendo.**

***Options (Choose at least one)***

***Cyrano De Bergerac*** by Edmond Ronstand

This drama in the great French romantic tradition was first performed in 1897. Set in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Paris, the action in this masterpiece revolves around the noble, swashbuckling Cyrano, who despite his many gifts, feels that no woman can ever love him because he has an enormous nose. Secretly in love with the lovely Roxane, Cyrano agrees to help his inarticulate rival, Christian, win her heart by allowing him to present Cyrano's love poems, speeches, and letters as his own work. The play has wit, comedy, adventure, danger and intellectual swordplay. Cyrano, a sharp-witted, swashbuckling poet is one of the great tragic characters in all literature. The play contains much magnificent poetry, including many romantic lines that rival the best of Keats and Yates.

***The Odyssey*** by Homer

This classic epic poem describes the efforts of Trojan War Hero Odysseus to return home to Ithaca. After insulting the mythical god Poseidon, Odysseus is forced to endure a ten-year ordeal as he battles monsters, witches, spirits, and native armies in the ancient Mediterranean region. With the assistance of his primary defender and confidant, the goddess Athena, Odysseus finally returns home to reunite with his son, defeat his wife's suitors, and reclaim the throne of his nation-state. This important literary work set the standard for all modern quest stories, and inspired generations of poets, novelists, and screenwriters. **Parents are advised that *The Odyssey* contains mild sexual references and descriptive violence.**

***Animal Farm*** by George Orwell

*Animal Farm*, an allegory and one of Orwell's most highly acclaimed works, uses the events of the Russian Revolution to satirize totalitarianism. It has been established as a modern classic and is characterized as a razor-edged fairy tale for grownups, which addresses the problem of how to combine power with ideals. The author uses animals as characters and symbols of historical figures. The *New York Times* considers *Animal Farm* a "wise, compassionate, and illuminating fable for our times." **This novel contains some mild violence but no profanity.** Many colleges and universities consider this novel to be essential reading.

### ***The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference***

by Malcolm Gladwell

*The Tipping Point* explores the forces that drive the spread of products and ideas. Gladwell analyzes the process and mechanisms by which some trends achieve popularity while others do not, and ultimately identifies three key factors that determine if a trend will “tip” into wide-scale popularity: the Law of the Few, the Stickiness Factor, and the Power of Context. He primarily focuses on examples from the United States utilizing history, the business industry, educational television, and fashion in his examination of the power of communication and how an idea transforms into an “epidemic” that takes hold of an entire society. ***Parents need to be aware that there is an in-depth exploration of the anti-smoking campaign and why it was unsuccessful.***

### ***Something to Declare*** by Julia Alvarez

Julia Alvarez tells of how she and her family, persecuted during the regime of Dominican strongman Rafael Trujillo, were forced from their country and resettled in Queens, New York during the 1960’s, when she was in her teens. Julia’s family moved from a position of privilege in their native country to one of marginal existence and frequent humiliation in the family’s adopted home.

Taunted by schoolmates who called her “Spic,” mocked her accent, and threw stones at her, Julia was determined to learn English so well that people would one day take notice of how she used the language. She recounts how the early indignities she suffered at the hands of ruffian classmates made her determined to use writing as a means of revenge upon them. Writing also offered her a means of finding her own identity.

*Something to Declare* is so titled because Alvarez, in answering questions from audiences she has addressed throughout the country, boiled the questions down essentially to inquiries about whether she had anything left to say. Her resolute answer is that she indeed still has something to declare. This book’s twenty-four essays are divided into two sections, the first reflecting on her growing up as a part of two distinct cultures, the second focusing on what it is that made her a writer and what underlies her writing.

### ***The Carolina Way*** by Dean Smith

For forty years, Dean Smith coached the University of North Carolina basketball team with unsurpassed success. Now, in *The Carolina Way*, he explains his coaching philosophy and shows readers how to apply it to the leadership and team-building challenges they face in their own lives. Accompanying each of Coach Smith’s major points is a “Player Perspective” from a former North Carolina basketball star and an in-depth “Business Perspective” from Gerald D. Bell, a world-renowned leadership consultant and a professor at UNC’s Kenan-Flagler Business School. The keystones of Coach Smith’s coaching philosophy are widely applicable and centrally relevant to building successful teams of any kind.