

English IV British Literature: Summer Reading Assignment 2023

1. Reading: We will begin our study of British Literature with one of the earliest known examples: *Beowulf*. Your Summer Reading Assignment will prepare you for our study of Old English texts in August. Everyone will read ***Beowulf – Translated by Seamus Heaney***. In addition to this, you will also **SELECT ONE** additional work from the supplemental list. As you read your two books, you should annotate for themes of **heroism, sacrifice, and courage**. The required reading and annotations should be completed by the first day of class. You will have an in-class writing assignment over this material within the first week of school.

If you are new to the idea of annotating, annotations may include brief notes, questions, highlighted passages, sticky notes, or coded references that can be reviewed at a later time. Here is a link to a video from UT about annotations: <https://youtu.be/CNr-E8g35nI>

2. Activity: Choose one of the following activities. Be prepared to submit the assignment when school begins.

Character Correspondence: Choose one person or character from each of the two books you read that you believe would have something in common, see the world similarly, or have something to say to one another. Compose a letter from one to the other, either rejoicing, commiserating, venting, asking advice, or in some other way sharing their common bond. Then write a response from the other character. Your letters should reveal your understanding of the characters.

Travel Guide: Create a touring pamphlet for one of the locations in one of the books. Research the time and location, and create your travel guide appropriate for the setting in the book. Use quotes (actual or imagined, but in context with the character and events of the book) from characters as “testimonials” to encourage travelers to visit.

Author’s Background Slideshow: Choose one of the books you read and create a slideshow that explores the author’s background, inspiration, and purpose in writing this book. Add a slide at the end to give your opinion about whether or not the author achieved his/her purpose.

- ***Beowulf* Translated by Seamus Heaney** – It’s important that you select this particular translation. **(Everyone reads this book.)**

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- **Supplemental Text Options (Pick One) *Choose a book you have not read.**

Touch the Top of the World by Erik Weihenmayer

The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring by J.R.R. Tolkien

Grendel by John Gardner

The Red Bandana by Tom Rinaldi

The Once and Future King by T. H. White

**Note: By studying a diverse body of texts we will be introduced to literature that, at times, describes behavior and expresses ideas that conflict with the Christian view of the human situation and the values of WCS. Literature reflects Truth in two ways: 1) The Truth of the universe pervades our writing and appears as symbols, themes, thoughts and ideas expressed in literature. 2) Sometimes literature shows the need for God through the emptiness and actions a character accepts or the writing reveals. As a mature audience, we will be able to evaluate the material and literature through a Christian Theistic perspective when we study material in class.*