



## English IV British Literature: Summer Reading Assignment 2026

### 1. Read *Grendel* by John Gardner

We will begin our study of British Literature in August with one of the earliest known examples: *Beowulf*. Your Summer Reading Assignment, however, will be a modern retelling of the epic from the perspective of one of the antagonists, Grendel. We will use this text in conjunction with *Beowulf* as we start the year.

**Everyone will read *Grendel* by John Gardner.** You will need your own copy of this to annotate. As you read, you should annotate for thematic topics of **heroism, sacrifice, and isolation**. The required reading and annotations should be completed by the first day of class in August. 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-E8g35nl>.

**2. In addition, read one of the supplemental texts by British authors from the list below.** You will complete the following activity using this supplemental text.

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

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

*Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare

*The Once and Future King* by T. H. White

*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen

*Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe

*The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

### **3. Activity for your supplemental text:**

Create a memory box for the main character of the novel. Use items you have around your house to represent important events in the narrative. For example, a penny could represent the cost of something in the story which created an important conflict. On a separate document, write a paragraph for each item in the box, explaining the symbolism of each item and its significance in the story. Your memory box should contain 8 symbolic items. This will be due within the first week of school.