

## REQUIRED SUMMER READING FOR ENGLISH CLASSES:

### **Students entering 9<sup>th</sup> Grade English (one book):**

*The Secret Life of Bees*, by Sue Monk Kidd

FOCUS: How can citizens, including ourselves, break through barriers of prejudice to promote tolerance? In particular, *The Secret Life of Bees* focuses on our need to be loved as the essential human condition. If the need for love is our most basic emotional need, then what could be more despairing than to feel unloved? What other basic human needs are addressed in this book?

### **Students entering 10<sup>th</sup> Grade College Prep (one book):**

*The Curious Incident of a Dog in the Night-Time*, Mark Haddon

FOCUS: Mark Haddon has said of his book: "It's not just a book about disability. Obviously, on some level it is, but on another level...it's a book about books, about what you can do with words, and what it means to communicate with someone in a book. Here's a character whom if you met him in real life you'd never, ever get inside his head. Yet something magical happens when you write a novel about him. You slip inside his head, and it seems like the most natural thing in the world"

(<http://www.powells.com/authors/haddon.html>).

Since Mark Haddon has chosen to make us see the world through Christopher's eyes, what does he help us discover about ourselves and the different people who make up the world?

### **Students entering 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Honors (read both):**

*The Curious Incident of a Dog in the Night-Time*, Mark Haddon

FOCUS: See question for 10<sup>th</sup> Grade College Prep

*Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley

FOCUS: Few of Huxley's predictions have proven to be perfectly accurate, yet many aspects of the Utopia of *Brave New World* feel uncomfortably like our world. Think about the book as a vision of the future. Which aspects of the book did you find most disturbing? Which hit closest to home? Which seem the most far-fetched?

### **Students entering 11<sup>th</sup> Grade College Prep (read both):**

*Into Thin Air*, Jon Krakauer

*A Raisin in the Sun*, Lorraine Hansberry

FOCUS: Both of these works (in very different ways) depict humans in pursuit of their dreams who are confronted by significant obstacles and dangers. Consider how the harshness of the physical or social environment is juxtaposed with the spirit of human courage. Consider also the costs and rewards of their pursuits.

**Students entering 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Honors (read both):**

*Sister Carrie*, Theodore Dreiser

*Cannery Row*, John Steinbeck

FOCUS: What does each of these works have to say about the validity of the American Dream? What is the relationship between social class and the American Dream in the two works? (Mr. Leonardi's students: check your FirstClass desktops during the summer)

**Students entering AP English Language and Composition (read all three):**

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain

*Beloved*, Toni Morrison

*The Poisonwood Bible*, Barbara Kingsolver

FOCUS: See instructor, Ms. Dunphy, for focal points.

**Students entering English 12 College Prep (read both):**

*Monster*, Walter Dean Myers

*The Metamorphosis*, Franz Kafka

Focus: How is the protagonist in each of the works "trapped"?

**Students entering Honors English 12 (read both):**

*The Help*, Kathryn Stockett

*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn

FOCUS: Human beings are distinguished from other creatures by the richness of their inner lives, the constant flow of thoughts and feelings that constitutes human experience. In simplest terms, this is the human spirit. In both works studied this summer, focus on the elements of the human spirit that allow characters to endure, prevail over, and gain wisdom from the adversities set upon them by society, government, and environment. Despite the obvious differences, what common traits do the major characters share?

**Students entering AP Literature and Composition (read all three):**

*Oedipus, the King*, Sophocles

FOCUS: What control does an individual have over his fate?

*Twelfth Night*, William Shakespeare

FOCUS: Note the gender roles, allusions, and the concept of appearance versus reality.

*Atlas Shrugged*, Ayn Rand

FOCUS: Is it possible to lead one's life through pure reason, critical thinking, and without passionate judgment? Are the characters, specifically Dagny Taggart and John Gault, real? Do their thoughts and actions ring true?

(See instructor, Mr. Leonardi, for additional instructions and check your FirstClass desktops during the summer)