

Nazareth Area High School

English 9 Summer Assignment

Welcome to the high school and 9th grade English! This course focuses on critical thinking, analysis of literature, various types of writing, and skills-based projects. Data has shown that the more students read the higher they achieve. So it is important to keep your brain engaged and active over the break! Therefore, to prepare for English 9, each student will complete a summer assignment.

GOALS OF THE ASSIGNMENT:

- To grow as learners and readers.
- To share good books and encourage others to read them.
- To participate in discussions with your peers and teachers.
- To prepare for college experiences.

OVERVIEW OF THE ASSIGNMENT:

The first unit of the course introduces “coming of age” as the thematic focus of the year. The summer assignment focuses on this theme and requires you to read one book from the list provided and complete the tasks on the following page. You must bring your book on the first day of class. Be prepared to discuss the novel and complete activities related to the novel when school begins. The summer assignment should be completed by **the first full school day and submitted to your teacher whether you are in the fall or spring class. This assignment counts as one of your first grades in English.**

Students are responsible for obtaining the novel(s) on their own. You may purchase an inexpensive copy using options listed at the end of the assignment or check one out from a library. If you cannot access a novel, copies may be checked out from the high school guidance office between 8 AM -3 PM Monday-Thursday. Copies are limited, so please plan ahead!

Please e-mail your teacher if you have any questions about obtaining the book or completing the assignments. E-mail will be checked once per week over the summer. Questions about the assignment submitted close to the beginning of school may not be answered due to teachers preparing for the school year, so do not procrastinate! Good luck on your assignment.

Have an enjoyable summer and see you in the fall!

Ms. Hoff - room 352
lhoff@nazarethasd.org

Miss Zansitis- room 344
kzansitis@nazarethasd.org

Mrs. Strouse, Librarian
sstrouse@nazarethasd.org

Mrs. Lynn Dietrich, Teacher Leader
ldietrich@nazarethasd.org

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English 9 Summer Assignment

All English 9 students select one of the following:

- Book of a Thousand Days
- The Contender
- House on Mango Street
- That Was Then, This Is Now
- Twisted

- ✓ As you read, complete five journal entries using the prompts below.
- ✓ Either use pen and paper with **neat** handwriting or type on a computer.
- ✓ Each journal entry should be at least 8-10 sentences, but the goal is to provide a fully developed response.
- ✓ The main question is followed by additional questions that **MUST** be answered in your entry.
- ✓ Turn in your journal to your English teacher on the first FULL day of school.
- ✓ You will complete activities with the summer reading assignment during the first week.

Journal Prompts:

Journal One: Discuss a character from the novel that you find intriguing. What about the character interests you? What role does the character play in the story? Be sure to include any interesting details or qualities you learn about the character as you read.

Journal Two: Locate one quote in the book and record it (include page number). Analyze the meaning of the quote and explain its importance to the story. How did this particular quote have an affect on your reading? For example, did the author use it to foreshadow an event? Was an important character trait revealed? Was the quote used to pique your curiosity about a situation?

Journal Three: Write about a personal connection you were able to make to some aspect of the book. Did a character remind you of someone in your life? Did something in the book happen that made you reflect on a similar personal experience? Did the story inspire you to make a decision or change about something?

Journal Four: Discuss your favorite or least favorite part of the book. Be sure to explain why this part stood out to you. Did it make you happy, sad, angry, etc.? Were you surprised by what happened?

Journal Five: Write a review of your book, providing a brief summary of the story. Be sure to include if you would recommend it to other students. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being the lowest, 5 being the highest) rate your book. Be sure to explain why you assigned it that particular rating.

List of English 9 Book Options (Select 1):

Book of a Thousand Days by Hale

From the Publisher: When Dashti, a maid, and Lady Saren, her mistress, are shut in a tower for seven years for Saren's refusal to marry a man she despises, the two prepare for a very long and dark imprisonment. As food runs low and the days go from broiling hot to freezing cold, it is all Dashti can do to keep them fed and comfortable. But the arrival outside the tower of Saren's two suitors--one welcome, and the other decidedly less so--brings both hope and great danger, and Dashti must make the desperate choices of a girl whose life is worth more than she knows. With Shannon Hale's lyrical language, this forgotten but classic fairy tale from the Brothers Grimm is reimagined and reset on the central Asian steppes; it is a completely unique retelling filled with adventure and romance, drama and disguise.

The Contender by Lipsyte

From the Publisher: Before you can be a champion, you have to be a contender. Alfred Brooks is scared. He's a high school dropout and his grocery store job is leading nowhere. His best friend is sinking further and further into drug addiction. Some street kids are after him for something he didn't even do. So Alfred begins going to Donatelli's Gym, a boxing club in Harlem that has trained champions. There he learns it's the effort, not the win, that makes the man -- that last desperate struggle to get back on your feet when you thought you were down for the count. Winner of Margaret A. Edwards Award.

House on Mango Street by Cisneros

From the Publisher: Acclaimed by critics, beloved by readers of all ages, taught everywhere from inner-city grade schools to universities across the country, and translated all over the world, **The House on Mango Street** is the remarkable story of Esperanza Cordero. Told in a series of vignettes -- sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous -- it is the story of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Few other books in our time have touched so many readers.

That was Then, This is Now by Hinton

Amazon Review: Ever since Mark's parents died, he has been living with Bryon. The boys are more like brothers than mere friends. They've been inseparable--until recently. Something seems to be changing between them, and Bryon can't figure it out. Is it Cathy, Bryon's new girlfriend? Is Mark jealous? Bryon is also tired of the street fighting, but Mark seems unable to quit. And where is Mark getting all of that money? In *That Was Then, This Is Now*, one of her most admired novels, S. E. Hinton paints a richly textured portrait of two boys at a crossroads in their friendship. With careful, intimate strokes, Hinton reveals a boy struggling over whether to protect his best friend or whether to follow his own beliefs about right and wrong. The ending will surprise readers, challenging them to puzzle over Bryon's dilemma in their own hearts. Winner of Margaret A. Edwards Award.

Twisted by Anderson

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Tyler Miller was a socially invisible nerd ("Your average piece of drywall who spent too much time playing computer games") before he sprayed some attention-getting graffiti and became a legend. Sentenced to a summer of physical labor, he enters his senior year with new muscles that attract popular Bethany Millbury, whose father is Tyler's dad's boss. On probation for his graffiti stunt, Tyler struggles to balance his consuming crush with pressure that comes from schoolwork and his explosive father, and after Tyler is implicated in a drunken crime, his balancing act falls apart. The dialogue occasionally has the clichéd feel of a teen movie ("Party's over." "We're just getting started. And I don't remember inviting you"). What works well here is the frank, on-target humor ("I was a zit on the butt of the student body"), the taut pacing, and the small moments, recounted in Tyler's first-person voice, that illuminate his emotional anguish. Writing for the first time from a male perspective, Anderson skillfully explores identity and power struggles that all young people will recognize.

Below are some ways to acquire free or inexpensive copies of the required summer reading, provided for your reference:

1. If needed, students may borrow books free of charge from the NAHS English department. Books will be located in the guidance office and may be signed out from 8 AM-3 PM on Monday-Thursday. If you wait until the last minute, selections will likely be limited.
2. Websites where new or used copies of books can be purchased at up to a 90% discount include:
 - Ebay (www.ebay.com) Type in the title of your book and bid on copies available from individual sellers around the country.
 - Half.com (<http://www.half.ebay.com/>) Type in the title of your book and directly purchase new or used copies directly from individual sellers at up to 90% savings. No bidding required
 - Amazon.com marketplace (www.amazon.com) Select 'books' in the menu and type in the title of your book. Purchase the book new from amazon.com or click on 'buy used and new' and purchase a copy directly from individual sellers at up to 90% savings. No bidding required.