

Dear Rising Sophomore,

If you plan to take Honors English 10 next year, we strongly encourage you to use the summer to get a “heads up” on the first major assignment you will face in the fall. Honors English 10 is a course designed to provide you with a survey of British literature from the Anglo-Saxon period through the Modern era. At the end of September, we will introduce a research paper assignment where you will analyze a canonical British novel (LIST OF OPTIONS ON BACK). There is no need for you to concern yourself with the details of the research paper right now. However, we do encourage you to review the list of novel options and get a start on reading your selected text.

Here are a few tips that will make your reading more effective:

1. You may want to purchase your own copy of the novel so that you can annotate while you read and reference later on when you’re planning your research paper.
2. If you choose to check out your book from a library, please be aware that you will need to re-check it out once you are at the planning stage for your research paper.
3. While reading, you should consider how the author explores the thematic topic of control (government control over citizens, men’s control over women, dominant countries’ control over developing countries, etc.)
4. While reading, you should make note of symbols, motifs, foreshadowing, irony, and any other significant details that you think could relate to theme.
5. When you are getting to the conclusion of the text, you should consider why the author explores his/her portrayal of control as a way to present a social or political argument.

To reiterate, you do NOT have a written assignment due at the start of school. Please DO NOT attempt to write a research paper in advance. We have very specific guidelines that we will provide you with once we get to the research unit.

Finally, several of the book choices contain mature content. We believe that all of these selections, though they may be disquieting at points, offer literary merit worthy of analysis. As you have a choice in which novel to read, we expect you to select a work with which you and your parents are comfortable.

We look forward to teaching you next year and hope that you have a lovely, relaxing summer!

Sincerely,

The 10 Honors Team

1984 by George Orwell

Preview: In 1984, London is a grim city where Big Brother is always watching you and the Thought Police can practically read your mind. Winston is a man in grave danger for the simple reason that his memory still functions. Drawn into a forbidden love affair, Winston finds the courage to join a secret revolutionary organization called The Brotherhood, dedicated to the destruction of the Party. Together with his beloved Julia, he hazards his life in a deadly match against the powers that be.

*Atonement* by Ian McEwan

Preview: On a hot summer day in 1935, thirteen-year-old Briony Tallis witnesses a moment's flirtation between her older sister, Cecilia, and Robbie Turner, the son of a servant and Cecilia's childhood friend. But Briony's incomplete grasp of adult motives—together with her precocious literary gifts—brings about a crime that will change all their lives. As it follows that crime's repercussions through the chaos and carnage of World War II and into the close of the twentieth century,

*Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley

Preview: Satirical and disturbing, *Brave New World* is set some 600 years ahead, in "this year of stability, A.F. 632"—the A.F. standing for After Ford, meaning the godlike Henry Ford. "Community, Identity, Stability," is the motto. Reproduction is controlled through genetic engineering, and people are bred into a rigid class system. As they mature, they are conditioned to be happy with the roles that society has created for them. Against this backdrop, a young man known as John the Savage is brought to London from the remote desert of New Mexico. What he sees in the new civilization a "brave new world" (quoting Shakespeare's *The Tempest*). However, ultimately, John challenges the basic premise of this society in an act that threatens and fascinates its citizens.

*A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess

Preview: A vicious fifteen-year-old "droog" is the central character of this 1963 classic. In Anthony Burgess's nightmare vision of the future, where criminals take over after dark, the story is told by the central character, Alex, who talks in a brutal invented slang that brilliantly renders his and his friends' social pathology. *A Clockwork Orange* is a frightening fable about good and evil, and the meaning of human freedom. When the state undertakes to reform Alex—to "redeem" him—the novel asks, "At what cost?"

*The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood

Preview: Set in the near future, it describes life in what was once the United States, now called the Republic of Gilead, a monotheocracy that has reacted to social unrest and a sharply declining birthrate by reverting to, and going beyond, the repressive intolerance of the original Puritans. The regime takes the Book of Genesis absolutely at its word, with bizarre consequences for the women and men of its population. The story is told through the eyes of Offred, one of the unfortunate Handmaids under the new social order.

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley

Preview: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is a classic tale of a man-made monster seeking acceptance from society in light of his ghastly appearance and strange upbringing. With Europe as its back in the 1790's, the story begins with a series of letters exchanged between Captain Robert Walton and his sister that chronicled the story of a man, Victor Frankenstein, whom he meets on the North Pole.

*Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë

Preview: *Jane Eyre* is the story of a small, plain-faced, intelligent, and passionate English orphan. Jane is abused by her aunt and cousin and then attends a harsh charity school. Through it all she remains strong and determinedly refuses to allow a cruel world to crush her independence or her strength of will. *Jane Eyre* is partly autobiographical, and Charlotte Brontë filled it with social criticism and sinister Gothic elements.

*Life of Pi* by Yan Martel

The son of a zookeeper, Pi Patel has an encyclopedic knowledge of animal behavior and a fervent love of stories. When Pi is sixteen, his family emigrates from India to North America aboard a Japanese cargo ship, along with their zoo animals bound for new homes. The ship sinks. Pi finds himself alone in a lifeboat, his only companions a hyena, an orangutan, a wounded zebra, and Richard Parker, a 450-pound Bengal tiger. Soon the tiger has dispatched all but Pi, whose fear, knowledge, and cunning allow him to coexist with Richard Parker for 227 days while lost at sea. The Japanese authorities who interrogate Pi refuse to believe his story and press him to tell them "the truth."

*Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw

Preview: In Shaw's clever adaptation, Professor Henry Higgins, a linguistic expert, takes on a bet that he can transform an awkward cockney flower seller into a refined young lady simply by polishing her manners and changing the way she speaks. In the process of convincing society that his creation is a mysterious royal figure, the Professor also falls in love with his elegant handiwork. The irresistible theme of the emerging butterfly, together with Shaw's brilliant dialogue and splendid skills as a playwright, have made *Pygmalion* one of the most popular comedies in the English language.