

## British Literature Summer Reading 2024-2025

A warm welcome to British Literature. In this course, we will work our way through a chronological survey of the literature of the British Isles from Chaucer to Shakespeare to the Romantics and beyond. Our first assignment, due the second day of school, is to read George Orwell's novel, *Nineteen Eighty Four*. As you read, you are to complete a journal recording details and responses. This journal will count as the first major grade of the year. We will also dedicate our first two weeks of class to discussion of the book and it will appear on the first exam.

### Guidelines and Suggestions:

- Give yourself ample time to complete the readings and assignments. Do not wait until the last minute to try to complete this assignment.
- Map out a reading schedule in a planner, calendar, or other location that you can easily refer back to. When and where will you read? On the subway as you go to meet friends? At the beach when you're relaxing? On a flight? With your morning cup of coffee? Each night before bed? At the park on a beautiful day? No matter the time and place, deciding on a strategy will help you get through the texts.
- On your calendar count the days when you know you will have anywhere between 20-40 minutes to read and make sure that you give yourself time to make it through both texts.
- Calculate how many pages (or chapters) you will need to read per day. 10 to 50 pages is doable. More than that might be overly ambitious.
- Don't forget to include days that you will dedicate to writing your assignment. You may complete the assignment as you are reading the book or after you have finished it in its entirety.

### Summer Reading Texts:

1. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell

**As you read, be sure to annotate.**

**Annotation Guide:** While reading the novels during the summer, students are highly encouraged to annotate (that is, to underline and make notes in the margins). What kinds of things could you annotate?

- words and phrases that stand out to you

- important scenes or key sections of dialogue
- character descriptions, motivations, and flaws
- key decisions characters make
- sections that are confusing for you
- questions that pop into your head as you are reading
- inferences you make while reading
- connections you make to other texts
- symbols, themes, topics
- literary devices (flashbacks, foreshadowing, sub-plots)
- figurative language (allusions, alliteration, metaphors, similes, etc.)

**Writing Assignment:** This assignment can be written by hand or you can use Google Documents, Canva, etc. to keep a digital notebook (do not pay for any features, just use the free templates). If you choose to handwrite your work, keep one small, organized journal in which to record your responses. Be sure to clearly label each response. You should create a section of your journal for each prompt.

- **Author Biography:** Do some research. Gather background information on the authors, and identify their purposes in writing their respective novels. Do not use Wikipedia or Biography.com as sources.
- **Characterization:** Write a thorough description of each main character and that character's role within the novel. Describe the character's appearance (if given), actions, and thoughts. List the conflicts and challenges each character faces.
- **Significant Passage:** Choose ONE passage from the book that strikes you as particularly important. Explain why the passage is significant to the work, relating it to a major theme, a character's development, or a significant plot element (rising action, climax, etc.). Also explain **WHY** you consider the passage to be significant. Be sure to provide the page number the passage appears on, and quote the passage (or the first few lines – feel free to type the passage and paste it in your journal)
- **Themes:** In your reading and research of the work, you should also discover the major themes of the book. After identifying at least TWO themes, briefly explain how each is developed throughout the course of the work. Give specific support (at least three quotes) from the work.

- **Time Period and Setting:** Where and when does each novel take place? Why is that important to the novel? What are some of the major historical events going on during that time?  
Write a full account of the setting. Time, place, images and places of interest were used as the background for the story?
- **Questions:** Write five questions about each novel. The questions could be for the author or for a specific character. Explain your reasoning for each question.
- **Personal Reaction/Review OR write an alternative ending:**
  - Write a two to three paragraph personal reaction to each book. Consider questions such as: What have you learned from the character's experiences? Would you recommend this book to a friend? What surprised you about the novel? What did you enjoy? What did you dislike? Be sure to explain your reasoning and be specific.
  - **Or** you can pick to write an alternative ending to the books, which should be around three paragraphs long.

**Due Date:** Your journal is due the second day of school.

If you have any questions regarding the assignment, you can email me over the summer at [popkin.e@stsaviour.org](mailto:popkin.e@stsaviour.org). Have a lovely summer, and I look forward to having you all in my class.

If you plan on buying the book instead of borrowing it from the library, shop locally:

- **Barnes & Noble bookstore** (on 7th Ave. & 6th Street)
- **Greenlight Bookstore** 686 Fulton St, Brooklyn, NY 11217
- **Troubled Sleep**, 129 6th Avenue, Brooklyn (used bookstore/cheaper)
- **The Community Bookstore**, 143 7th Avenue.
- **Books are Magic**, 225 Smith Street, Brooklyn
- **Unnameable Books** 615 Vanderbilt Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11238
- **The Strand Bookstore**, the corner of 12th Street and Broadway in Manhattan