

English II/ English II Honors Summer Reading Assignment

Please read and annotate *The Song of Achilles* and ONE of the choice books. Thoughtful, careful, and reflective reading takes time. Unplug and disconnect from your digital world and read with a pencil in hand, underlining passages and making notes in the margins. Use sticky tabs or Post-Its to mark pages. Don't worry about underlining or marking the "wrong" passages or pages—this is *your* reading experience.

As you read, think. Think about not only what's going on in the text, but what messages are conveyed, and how? What values are promoted and encouraged, and what values are discouraged or looked upon with disdain? Is the writer criticizing an aspect of his or her society? What is being mocked, mourned, celebrated, or lamented? These are just a few questions you might consider as you figure out what you think about the text you are reading. You can also follow this guide for reading and annotating, and keep in mind that we'll have a quiz in the first week of school, followed by several weeks of class discussion and a graded writing assignment:

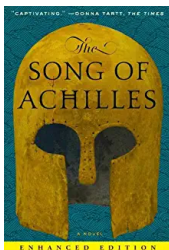
- Look for the development of certain **themes, metaphors, and symbols**;
- Examine how **characterization** is achieved;
- Consider **point of view** and how the story is told (Who is the narrator? Is the story chronological? How are flashbacks used and why?);
- Explore how **setting** is depicted and what this reveals about characters and themes;
- Consider the **language** in each novel and how the language contributes thematically.

When school starts you will be responsible for discussing and writing about what you've read. Therefore it is imperative that you remember what you have read! Please consider keeping a reading journal to help you in remembering what you've read. By reflecting on each chapter as you read them, you will strengthen your recall of the material as well as your own understanding of your reactions. This reading journal can also become a valuable resource when it comes time to write an essay or review for a test. This is an optional but encouraged endeavor.

Required Book:

[The Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller](#)

A modern retelling of Homer's *The Iliad*. Achilles, son of the cruel sea goddess Thetis and the legendary king Peleus, is strong, swift, and beautiful—



irresistible to all who meet him. Patroclus is an awkward young prince, exiled from his homeland. Brought together by chance, they forge an inseparable bond, despite risking the gods' wrath.

When word comes that Helen of Sparta has been kidnapped, all the heroes of Greece are called upon to lay siege to Troy in her name. Seduced by the promise of a glorious destiny, Achilles joins their cause, and torn between love and fear, Patroclus follows. Little do they know that the cruel Fates will test them both as never before and demand a terrible sacrifice.

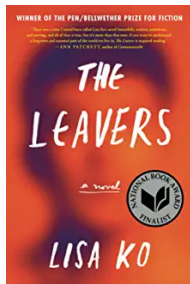
Choice Novel: Choose ONE of the following texts



The Marrow Thieves (Cherie Dimaline)

Within this dystopic, coming-of-age story, humanity has nearly destroyed its world through global warming, but now an even greater evil lurks. The indigenous people of North America are being hunted and harvested for their bone marrow, which carries the key to recovering something the rest of the population has lost: the ability to dream. In this dark world, Frenchie and his companions struggle to survive as they make their way up north to the old lands.

For now, survival means staying hidden - but what they don't know is that one of them holds the secret to defeating the marrow thieves.



The Leavers (Lisa Ko)

One morning, Deming Guo's mother, Polly, an undocumented Chinese immigrant, goes to her job at a nail salon—and never comes home. With his mother gone, eleven-year-old Deming is left mystified and bereft. Eventually adopted by well-meaning white professors, Deming is moved from the Bronx to a small town upstate and renamed Daniel Wilkinson. Daniel struggles to understand his identity, living in two different worlds and struggling to assimilate.

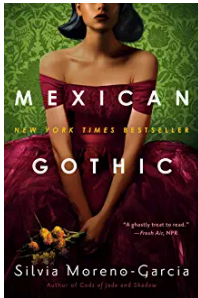
Told from the perspective of both Daniel and Polly, and set in New York and China, *The Leavers* is a vivid examination of borders and belonging. It's a moving story of how a boy comes into his own when everything he loves is taken away, and how a mother learns to live with the mistakes of the past.



Patron Saints of Nothing (Randy Ribay)

Jay Reguero plans to spend the last semester of his senior year playing video games before heading to the University of Michigan in the fall. But when he discovers that his Filipino cousin Jun was murdered as part of President Duterte's war on drugs, and no one in the family wants to talk about what happened, Jay travels to the Philippines to find out the real story.

Hoping to uncover more about Jun and the events that led to his death, Jay is forced to reckon with the many sides of his cousin before he can face the whole horrible truth -- and the part he played in it. As gripping as it is lyrical, *Patron Saints of Nothing* is a page-turning portrayal of the struggle to reconcile faith, family, and immigrant identity.



Mexican Gothic (Silvia Moreno-Garcia)

A page-turner of gothic suspense and magical realism, *Mexican Gothic* tells the story of Noemi Taboada who receives a frantic letter from her cousin, begging for someone to save her from a mysterious doom. Noemí heads to High Place, a distant house in the Mexican countryside. She's not sure what she will find—her cousin's husband, a handsome Englishman, is a stranger, and Noemí knows little about the region.

An unlikely rescuer, Noemí is a glamorous debutante with an indomitable will. With the house itself invading her dreams and becoming a force against her, her only ally is the family's youngest son. Shy and gentle, he seems to want to help Noemí, but might also be hiding dark knowledge of his family's past. For there are many secrets behind the walls of High Place and Noemí, mesmerized by this terrifying yet seductive world, may soon find it impossible to ever leave this enigmatic house behind.

We will spend the first several weeks of school discussing and writing about these novels. You will have a summer reading quiz as well as an essay. Since there are only two texts assigned, we encourage you to also read other books for fun. The English Dept has created a list of texts that we recommend, covering many genres, topics, and styles. Happy reading!

*All blurbs have been adapted from Amazon book descriptions.

