

UPPER SCHOOL Summer Reading 2025



THE
WESTFIELD
SCHOOL

Upper School Required Summer Reading

Students should take notes as they read, in preparation for class discussion and an assignment with due date to be announced by teacher at the start of school.

Students must have a copy of the book (paperback or hardback) on first day of class.

Any edition/ISBN is acceptable. Electronic copies (iPad/Kindle versions) are not acceptable.

GRADE 9 (ENGLISH I)

Read a book of your choice. Book must be a minimum of 175 pages.

(No *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* or graphic novel adaptation.)

GRADE 9 (HONORS ENGLISH I)

***To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee**

GRADE 10 (ENGLISH II)

***Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury**

GRADE 10 (HONORS ENGLISH II)

***A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines**

GRADE 11 (ENGLISH III)

***The Coming of the Dragon* by Rebecca Barnhouse**

GRADE 11 AP LANGUAGE/COMPOSITION)

***Educated* by Tara Westover**

GRADE 12 (AP LITERATURE)

***How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster**

Please see next page for assignment information.

GRADE 12 (ENGLISH IV)

Students should read one book of their choosing. Book must be a minimum of 200 pages.

AP LITERATURE SUMMER READING RESPONSES:

HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR by THOMAS C. FOSTER

***revised edition with red cover**

A nonfiction book as summer reading for a fiction course? Definitely! The goal in having you read this work is to get you thinking about how to talk about literature. The goal of our course this year is really to equip you to use the language of literature, or the “language of reading” as Foster calls it, so that you can discuss literature in a nuanced, analytical, and insightful manner. Several times this year, we will discuss what we are reading for a grade, which means you must read with a different lens than you are perhaps used to. I believe reading this work will serve you well this year.

I would like for you to read the entire book and answer the questions below. **They are due when you come to class.** They should be handwritten and answered in **NO MORE THAN FIVE** complete sentences. This is informal writing, so you may use “I” and answer the questions personally when appropriate.

1. Introduction: What does Foster mean by a “language of reading” (xxv)? What three items does Foster say separate the “professional reader” apart from the crowd, and why are these so important in interpreting literature?
2. Chapter 1: You have read a lot of stories about quests. What does Foster say the quest story is really about? What is a quest story you have read/seen and enjoyed (other than those he mentions)?
3. Chapter 2: What is Foster trying to say about communion here?
4. Chapter 9: Explain how rain and snow are often paradoxical symbols (pages 71-73).
5. Chapter 10: What point does Foster make about the purpose of supporting characters in a story?
6. Chapter 12: What is Foster trying to say about the recognizing and defining symbols? Does he mean that there is no right and wrong answer as to what functions as a symbol and what it stands for? Explain.
7. Chapter 14: In this chapter Foster asserts the importance of recognizing and understanding Christian imagery. Why does he believe that you need to “put aside your belief system, at least for the period during which you read” (126-127)? Do you agree? Explain.
8. Chapters 19-20: In these chapters, Foster is trying to assert that the author makes deliberate choices about his or her setting, and readers should pay attention to these choices. What is a story that you have read where the geography or season greatly impacts the story? (Chapter 21: I don’t have a question for you here. Just keep in mind that the physical aspects of a character are also important and often symbolic.)
9. Chapter 24: Cliff Fadiman said, “When you reread a classic you do not see more in the book than you did before; you see more in you than there was before.” How does this quote clarify or relate to Foster’s assertions in chapter 24?
(Chapter 27: I have also assigned this chapter, but I don’t have questions for you on this one.)
10. Envoi: Choose a motif not discussed in this book (as the horse reference on page 304) and note its appearance in three or four different works. What does this idea seem to signify?