

Shawnee Mission West Language Arts
Honors ELA 1 Summer Jump Start Reading 2026

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It is recommended that before class begins in August, you have completed the task below. We also **highly** suggest having the ability to keep these books or at least having access to them as we will be using the novels in class throughout September.

Reading a summer novel allows students to get a head start on our first novel study when we return to school in August, rather than reading the entire novel during the first two weeks of your high school career. Students are not required to read or do work over the summer, but you may choose to do so in order to get ahead and / or lighten the workload at the start of the year. If you are worried you might forget about the assignment, we would suggest setting some reminders on your phone throughout the summer as check points along the way—especially in July to remind yourself to at least read if you haven't done so by then.

You may complete the attached work on paper to be handed in physically or on a computer to be turned in on Canvas at the start of the year. This work will be due at the end of the first two full weeks of school on Friday, August 28, 2026.

Our first semester will be all about “classics.” A classic novel is one that is seen as timeless. It has an enduring relevance, meaning that all types of people can relate to it no matter how old the book is. “Classics” also have exceptional writing, are groundbreaking in the style/genre, continue to be studied and discussed, and leave a lasting impact on culture or literature.

Your Task: Choose TWO books—1 book from early elementary school or earlier (think picture book or comic here), and 1 novel (a book with chapters), that you have read **outside** of school that you consider to be “classics.” When we say “outside of school”, we mean books that were not assigned to you by a teacher—so books like *Night* or *The Outsiders* would not count. Re-read the books—actually re-read them, do not go from memory or a movie. For example, I would choose *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling and *The Magic School Bus on the Ocean Floor* by Joanna Cole.

Directions

First, and most importantly, re-read the books! We hope you enjoy them as much this time as you did in the past.

Part 1: For **each** novel, complete each question—5 questions answered twice = 10 answers total. Remember, they can be typed or handwritten on notebook paper. **Do not** try to write your answers on this handout—there is not enough space to do the answers justice, especially for 2 books. Be sure to give a complete answer to each question; bullet points are absolutely acceptable in your answers.

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Please label each set of answers with the title and author of the novel the questions are being answered for.

1. Why do you consider this book a “classic”?
2. Who is the main character, and what makes them compelling or memorable?
3. What is one important conflict in the story? How was it resolved?
4. What was a powerful scene or moment that stayed with you? Why?
5. How did this book make you think or feel differently after reading it?

Part 2: Create a Dialectical Journal—a chart where in the left column, you give the quote, and the right column has your explanation about why the quote is important.

As you read, select 4 quotes from the novel that stand out for some reason related to the plot. Give the quote, word for word, and cite it in MLA format (ex: (Hinds 57)). 4 quotes for **each** novel = 8 total. I would suggest having 2 separate dialectical journals: 1 for each novel.

For each quote, you will then give a literary analysis—think: WHY is this quote important to what happens in the novel, HOW is this showing character development, HOW does the quote move the plot along, etc. For an analysis to truly be successful, it cannot be done in less than 4 sentences.

Suggestions for what to look for in choosing evidence:

- A turning point for a character
- An emerging theme or lesson
- A powerful image or symbol
- A moment of conflict or change

Example of a Dialectical Journal

Quote	Analysis
“Place the quote here word for word as it is in the book. Avoid quoting an entire paragraph. Often, 1-2 sentences are plenty” (Hinds 64).	Your explanation about why the quote is important goes here. Caution: avoid simply re-stating or paraphrasing the quote, but instead focus on why it is important to the novel/plot.