

**The Woodlands College Park**  
**English III Honors**  
**2021 Summer Reading Program**

In Conroe ISD, we encourage all students to read over the summer in order to enrich learning and provoke thought. Summer reading strengthens reading skills, increases academic achievement, fosters a love for reading, and empowers students to become life-long learners.

Additionally, students who enroll in an Honors course are expected to engage in summer reading as it prepares students for the upcoming school year and creates an initial common framework for classroom instruction.

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**Your Assignment:** When you return to school, be ready to engage in an insightful, multilayered discussion about the two books you read this summer. Also, be prepared to write knowledgeably for a major grade. Be aware of possible messages developed by the authors you read, and consider how the authors use characters and conflict to develop the theme.

**Read TWO of the following books -- ONE is JD Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, and AND ONE from the Contemporary American Literature choices seen below.**

**All Students Will Read**

***Catcher in the Rye* by JD Salinger** -- The hero-narrator of *The Catcher in the Rye* is an ancient child of sixteen, a native New Yorker named Holden Caulfield. Through circumstances that tend to preclude adult, secondhand description, he leaves his prep school in Pennsylvania and goes underground in New York City for three days. The boy himself is at once too simple and too complex for us to make any final comment about him or his story. Perhaps the safest thing we can say about Holden is that he was born in the world not just strongly attracted to beauty but, almost, hopelessly impaled on it. J.D. Salinger's classic novel of teenage angst and rebellion was first published in 1951. The novel was included on Time's 2005 list of the 100 best English-language novels written since 1923. It was named by Modern Library and its readers as one of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.

**Contemporary American Literature List -- Choose ONE**

***The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett** -- The Vignes twin sisters will always be identical. But after growing up together in a small, southern black community and running away at age sixteen, it's not just the shape of their daily lives that is different as adults, it's everything: their families, their communities, their racial identities. Many years later, one sister lives with her black daughter in the same southern town she once tried to escape. The other secretly passes for white, and her white husband knows nothing of her past. Still, even separated by so many miles and just as many lies, the fates of the twins remain intertwined. What will happen to the next generation, when their own daughters' storylines intersect? Brit Bennett produces a story that is at once a riveting, emotional family story and a brilliant exploration of the American history of passing. Looking well beyond issues of race, *The Vanishing Half* considers the lasting influence of the past as it shapes a person's decisions, desires, and expectations, and explores some of the multiple reasons and realms in which people sometimes feel pulled to live as something other than their origins.

***Go Set a Watchman* by Harper Lee** -- Originally written in the mid-1950s, *Go Set a Watchman* was the novel Harper Lee first submitted to her publishers before *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Assumed to have been lost, the manuscript was discovered in late 2014. *Go Set a Watchman* features many of the

characters from *To Kill a Mockingbird* some twenty years later. Returning home to Maycomb to visit her father, Jean Louise Finch—Scout—struggles with issues both personal and political, involving Atticus, society, and the small Alabama town that shaped her. Exploring how the characters from *To Kill a Mockingbird* are adjusting to the turbulent events transforming mid-1950s America, *Go Set a Watchman* casts a fascinating new light on Harper Lee's enduring classic.

***The Devil and the White City* by Erik Larson** -- Two men, each handsome and unusually adept at his chosen work, embodied an element of the great dynamic that characterized America's rush toward the twentieth century during the World's Fair. Architect Daniel Hudson Burnham is the fair's brilliant director and the builder of many of the country's most important structures, including the Flatiron Building in New York and Union Station in Washington, D.C. The murderer is Henry H. Holmes, a young doctor who, in a malign parody of the White City, built his "World's Fair Hotel" just west of the fairgrounds—a torture palace complete with dissection table, gas chamber, and 3,000-degree crematorium. Burnham overcame tremendous obstacles and tragedies to transform swampy Jackson Park into the White City, while Holmes used the attraction of the great fair and his own charms to lure scores of young women to their deaths. What makes the story all the more chilling is that Holmes really lived, walking the grounds of that dream city by the lake.

***The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah** -- Texas, 1921. The Great War is over, the bounty of the land is plentiful, and America is on the brink of a new and optimistic era. But for Elsa Wolcott, deemed too old to marry in a time when marriage is a woman's only option, the future seems bleak. Until the night she meets Rafe Martinelli and decides to change the direction of her life. With her reputation in ruin, there is only one respectable choice: marriage to a man she barely knows. By 1934, the world has changed; millions are out of work and drought has devastated the Great Plains. Farmers are fighting to keep their land and their livelihoods as crops fail and water dries up. Dust storms roll relentlessly across the plains. Everything on the Martinelli farm is dying, including Elsa's tenuous marriage; each day is a desperate battle against nature and a fight to keep her children alive. In this uncertain and perilous time, Elsa—like so many of her neighbors—must make an agonizing choice: fight for the land she loves or leave it behind and go west, to California, in search of a better life for her family. *The Four Winds* is a rich, sweeping novel that stunningly brings to life the Great Depression and the people who lived through it.

***American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins** -- Lydia Quixano Pérez lives in the Mexican city of Acapulco. She runs a bookstore. She has a son, Luca, the love of her life, and a wonderful husband who is a journalist. And while there are cracks beginning to show in Acapulco because of the drug cartels, her life is, by and large, fairly comfortable. Even though she knows they'll never sell, Lydia stocks some of her all-time favorite books in her store. And then one day a man enters the shop to browse and comes up to the register with a few books he would like to buy—two of them her favorites. Javier is erudite. He is charming. And, unbeknownst to Lydia, he is the jefe of the newest drug cartel that has gruesomely taken over the city. When Lydia's husband's tell-all profile of Javier is published, none of their lives will ever be the same. Forced to flee, Lydia and eight-year-old Luca soon find themselves miles and worlds away from their comfortable middle-class existence. Instantly transformed into migrants, Lydia and Luca ride *la bestia*—trains that make their way north toward the United States, which is the only place Javier's reach doesn't extend. As they join the countless people trying to reach *el norte*, Lydia soon sees that everyone is running from something. But what are they running to?