

## **Pre-A.P. English II Summer Reading Assignment**

Dear Scholars and Parents:

Welcome to Pre-A.P. English II! I would like you to start immediately with your novel for summer reading and your assignment. This summer you will be reading one of the following novels:

*Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott

*The Chosen* by Chaim Potok

*The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel

*A Separate Peace* by John Knowles

I recommend that you purchase your own novel so that you can write in the margins and highlight meaningful quotes. However, if you would rather check a novel out from me, I have copies available for your use.

Your assignment: Read closely and carefully one novel from the list. When you return from your summer break, you will be tested over the novel of your choice. I recommend that you take notes while reading so that you can review before taking your test.

By completing your summer reading assignment, your grade for the first six weeks will reflect your commitment to achieving success in Pre-AP English II. Please, please, PLEASE, do not procrastinate and think that you can read the novel the first week of the school year and do well on your test. PLEASE do not rely on summaries that you find on the internet or on movies which seldom follow the novel faithfully. You will have difficulty on your test over the elements of fiction (on which I test heavily).

As Charles Wilson once so aptly stated, "Putting off an easy thing makes it hard. Putting off a hard thing makes it impossible."

If you should have any questions, you may email me at my school address: [vrowe@taylorisd.org](mailto:vrowe@taylorisd.org)

I am looking forward to being your teacher and sharing many academic adventures. Have a great summer and HAPPY READING! ☺

Sincerely,

Mrs. Rowe

Attachment: Novel synopses

## Summer Novel Synopses Pre-AP English II

### *Little Women* – Louisa May Alcott

“The novel follows the lives of four sisters—Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy March—detailing their passage from childhood to womanhood, and is loosely based on the author and her three sisters. Four sisters live with their mother, facing Christmas without their father as the Civil War is underway. The family is settled in a new neighborhood, living in genteel poverty after the father lost their money. Meg and Jo March, the elder sisters, both work outside the home for money to support the family. Meg teaches four children in a nearby family, while Jo aids her grand-aunt March, a wealthy widow whose strength is failing. Beth helps with housework, and Amy attends school. Their nearest neighbor is a wealthy man whose orphaned grandson lives with him.” Amazon.com

### *The Chosen* – Chaim Potok

“Few stories offer more warmth, wisdom, or generosity than this tale of two boys, their fathers, their friendship, and the chaotic times in which they live. Though on the surface it explores religious faith--the intellectually committed as well as the passionately observant--the struggles addressed in *The Chosen* are familiar to families of all faiths and in all nations. In 1940s Brooklyn, New York, an accident throws Reuven Maltzer and Danny Saunders together. Despite their differences (Reuven is a Modern Orthodox Jew with an intellectual, Zionist father; Danny is the brilliant son and rightful heir to a Hasidic rabbi), the young men form a deep, if unlikely, friendship. Together they negotiate adolescence, family conflicts, and the crisis of faith engendered when Holocaust stories begin to emerge in the U.S., loss, love, and the journey to adulthood. The intellectual and spiritual clashes between fathers, between each son and his own father, and between the two young men, provide a unique backdrop for this exploration of fathers, sons, faith, loyalty, and, ultimately, the power of love.” Amazon.com

### *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles

“Set at a boys’ boarding school in New England during the early years of World War II, *A Separate Peace* is a harrowing and luminous parable of the dark side of adolescence. Gene is a lonely, introverted intellectual. Phineas is a handsome, taunting, daredevil athlete. What happens between the two friends one summer, like the war itself, banishes the innocence of these boys and their world.

A bestseller for more than thirty years, *A Separate Peace* is John Knowles’s crowning achievement and an undisputed American classic.” Amazon.com

### *Life of Pi* – Yann Martel

“Yann Martel's imaginative and unforgettable *Life of Pi* is a magical reading experience, an endless blue expanse of storytelling about adventure, survival, and ultimately, faith. The precocious son of a zookeeper, 16-year-old Pi Patel is raised in Pondicherry, India, where he tries on various faiths for size, attracting "religions the way a dog attracts fleas." Planning a move to Canada, his father packs up the family and their menagerie and they hitch a ride on an enormous freighter. After a harrowing shipwreck, Pi finds himself adrift in the Pacific Ocean, trapped on a 26-foot lifeboat with a wounded zebra, a spotted hyena, a seaisk orangutan, and a 450-pound Bengal tiger named Richard Parker ("His head was the size and color of the lifebuoy, with teeth"). It sounds like a colorful setup, but these wild beasts don't burst into song as if co-starring in an anthropomorphized Disney feature. After much gore and infighting, Pi and Richard Parker remain the boat's sole passengers, drifting for 227 days through shark-infested waters while fighting hunger, the elements, and an overactive imagination.” Amazon.com

