

Summer Reading for *Advanced Studies in American Literature: Bearing Witness*

Hello, and welcome to your next adventure in the MPH English Department. Having taught many of you in eighth grade, I'm so excited to work with you at this new stage in your literary and intellectual journeys!

For this summer, your assignment includes reading to prepare for the class but **no writing**. If you'd like to do some writing, see the notebook-keeping suggestions at the end of the summer reading selections for all US students. You might also experiment with poetic forms. Use this [article](#) from *Book Riot* to get started.

The Reading: (3 books total)

Choose at least **two books from the list** of selections offered to US students. Make sure that at least one is fiction and that both are either by American authors or set in America. If you'd like to propose substitutes, email me: pbentley@mphschool.org

Also, pick **one of these classics of American literature** to read: *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway, and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain. During the year, we'll be reading stories, poems, plays, and books that approach American life from different perspectives, works that ask us to reconsider the assumptions embedded in mainstream rhetoric and narrative about America. These four summer reading options are generally considered to be part of the canon of American literature, the works that you would find on most any list of American literature must-reads. In class, we'll consider whether or not they, too, provoke reconsideration of the myths and ideals that underlie a traditional understanding of American culture.

We'll have some structured conversations about the summer reading when you get to school in the fall. Feel free to make reading groups this summer and share your thoughts with each other even before school begins.

While this might seem like a lot to read, note that you have choices in each instance, and keep in mind that the course is intended for students seeking a challenge and those with a deep interest in literature and writing. Feel free to reach out with any questions.

Have a great summer!

Ms. Bentley Hoke