



FAIRFAX COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Herndon High School

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June 10, 2009

Parents, Guardians and Students:

To meet the expectations of the Fairfax County Public Schools for encouraging intellectual growth and critical thinking skills, the Herndon High School English Department requires a summer reading assignment. This assignment, while generally required by Fairfax County, has been shaped by Herndon High to address the needs of our specific Program of Studies and these assignments take the place of the county list in fulfilling this requirement.

The summer reading list for all classes will be sent to area bookstores, including Barnes and Noble, Books-A-Million, and Borders. In addition, it will be available on the Herndon High School web site. If no written assignment is specified, students should bring the book with them on the first day of school in September. If a written assignment is required, it will be due on the first day as well.

We want students to take advantage of this opportunity to start the year successfully. We wish you an enjoyable and enriching summer.

Sincerely,

Janice Jewell, Chair  
English Department

**AP LITERATURE  
SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT - 2009**

Students are expected to read the following selections and complete the accompanying assignments for each piece.

*Slaughterhouse Five* by **Kurt Vonnegut** (1922 - 2007) Vonnegut writes in the first chapter, "It is so short and jumbled and jangled, because there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre." *Slaughterhouse Five* is a modern novel in which the protagonist, Billy Pilgrim, becomes unstuck in time. The audience follows the different stages of Billy's life including the pivotal moment of being taken as a prisoner of war during World War Two and witnessing the firebombing in Dresden. Written in 1969 and interpreted as somewhat autobiographical, the novel explores the psychological effects of modern warfare on the human condition and society.

**Assignment:** *Slaughterhouse Five*

The most important themes in literature are sometimes developed in scenes in which a death or deaths take place. Write a well-organized essay in which you show how a specific death scene helps to illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole.

*No Exit* by **Jean-Paul Sartre** (1905-1980). Sartre, French philosopher and author, is a major figure in Existentialism, a movement that emphasizes the individual's search for meaning and identity in an absurd world in which no universal or inherent values exist. In *No Exit*, first published in 1945, three unlikely companions in a tacky yet comfortable room in Hell, grapple with each other and the lives they led, while we grapple with a multitude of complexities, including the notion suggested in the play, that "Hell is other people."

**Assignment:** *No Exit*

Take notes on:

- ◆ author's style and examples that illustrate this style
- ◆ significant quotes
- ◆ significance of the characters' roles in the play
- ◆ setting
- ◆ conflicts
- ◆ significance of the opening and closing scenes
- ◆ symbols
- ◆ themes

Please contact Mrs. Rudolph, Mr. Liess or Mrs. Jewell if you have any questions.