

PHS English I: Summer Reading 2021

Why summer reading?

Reading is a skill that must be practiced for retention. Research shows that students often lose some of their gains during the summer break. To help students be better prepared for high school, Page High strongly encourages its rising freshmen to practice reading over the summer break.

Summer Reading Assignment

Rising 9th graders who have registered for English I should choose at least one of the following:

- A book from the *Lightning Thief* series by Rick Riordan
- A book from *The Shakespeare Stealer* series by Gary Blackwood
- *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak

Annotation

Annotations are notes written directly in a text to help readers track their thoughts, set a purpose for writing, ask questions, and analyze literary elements. Underlining, making notes, and creating a key of symbols to track literary elements (setting, mood, character, conflict, theme, etc.) are good ways for students to annotate and engage with the text. Please practice annotating the novel as this is a skill that will be used and assessed throughout the year.

Why these books?

***The Lightning Thief* series** is an engaging set of stories that places characters from Greek and Roman mythology in modern-day settings. Students who have read some in this series will be better prepared for our study of Greek and Roman mythology and the epic poem *The Odyssey*. If you have already read the first book in the series, go on to the second book, *Sea of Monsters*, as this book contains characters that also appear in Odysseus' journey in *The Odyssey*.

***The Shakespeare Stealer* series** is also an engaging series that provides background knowledge in the theatre of Shakespeare's time and a foundation for our study of *Romeo and Juliet*. The first book in the series, *The Shakespeare Stealer*, tells the story of Widge, an orphan who is forced to steal a copy of *Hamlet* from Shakespeare's acting troupe, The Lord Chamberlain's Men. In a time when all copies of plays were handwritten, when actors had access only to their own lines, and when only the playwright himself had a full copy of the text of the play being performed, how will a child with no iPhone™ or recording device other than his brain and a quill pen be able to give his masters what they want without being caught?

The Book Thief is set in Germany during World War II. Liesel, a refugee from Hitler's campaign against Communists (among others), is sent into hiding by placing her with an older couple who raise her as though she is an ordinary German girl. When her adopted parents also agree to help hide an old friend who is a Jew, life becomes both more dangerous and more blessed for Liesel and her new family. This story has an unusual narrator: Death. He rescues Liesel's journal when it's about to be destroyed and shares its contents as part of his explanation for his fascination with the mixture of good and bad bound up within the human race. *Note: This is the English I honors summer reading book, as well.*