

Dear Freshman Honors Student,

I would like to welcome you to Tolland High School and to the English Honors Program. As you know, this is a special program for students who have shown both an interest and ability in English. A requirement of the Tolland Honors Program is summer reading. During our course, we will explore several essential questions, designed to focus your study and ensure enduring understandings. You already have the knowledge and judgment to answer any and all of these questions based on prior experiences, opinions, and readings. However, these summer assignments will solidify, alter, or enhance your responses to these essential questions.

Essential Questions for Reading:

- How do we form and shape our identities?
- How does our relationship with ourselves shape our relationships with others?
- In the face of adversity, what causes some people to prevail while others fail?
- What are the causes and consequences of prejudice and injustice, and how does an individual's response to them reveal his/her true character?

Regardless of your assigned semester, you should take some notes as you read, recording your thoughts and any other information that will help you recall the reading. We'll engage in several activities at the start of the semester to recall the essential elements of each text before we take a variety of assessments that ask you to consider how the writers of each text explore answers to the above questions. You should complete all the reading by the second day of class.

Summer reading Texts:

***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 the story of the sometimes dark side of friendship and 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.

***The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho**

This is the story of Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy, who travels from his home in Spain in search of worldly treasure. His journey takes him to the markets of Tangiers and across the Egyptian desert to a fateful encounter with the alchemist who points him in the right direction. What begins as a journey in search of material wealth becomes a discovery of the treasures from within.

***Twelve Angry Men* by Reginald Rose**

This riveting drama was originally written for television and inspired by Rose's own jury duty experience. Eleven jurors believe the defendant in a capital murder trial is guilty, while one juror stands up for what he believes is justice and tries to persuade the others to his side.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me during the summer: my e-mail address is [Hmarks-hamilton@tolland.k12.ct.us](mailto:Hmarks-hamilton@tolland.k12.ct.us).

Have a great summer and enjoy reading these and other good books.

Mrs. Marks-Hamilton  
Honors English I