

Summer Reading -- 11th Honors

BOOK ONE: *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne
Required Elements:

- Objective test upon return to school
- Paper to be assigned upon return to school

BOOK TWO: Choose among these three texts:

A. *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood

From Library Journal

In a startling departure from her previous novels, respected Canadian poet and novelist Atwood presents here a fable of the near future. In the Republic of Gilead, formerly the United States, far-right ideals have been carried to extremes in the mono-theocratic government. The resulting society is a feminist's nightmare: women are strictly controlled, unable to have jobs or money and assigned to various classes: the chaste, childless Wives; the housekeeping Marthas; and the reproductive Handmaids, who turn their offspring over to the "morally fit" Wives. The tale is told by Offred (read: "of Fred"), a Handmaid who recalls the past and tells how the chilling society came to be.

B. *Grendel* by John Gardner

The basics of the plot derive from *Beowulf*, a heroic poem of unknown authorship composed in Old English and preserved in a manuscript dating from around 1000 AD. The poem deals with the heroic exploits of a Geat warrior, Beowulf, who battles three antagonists: Grendel, Grendel's mother and, later in life an unnamed dragon. Gardner's retelling, however, presents the story from the existentialist view of his enemy Grendel, exploring the history of the characters before Beowulf arrives. Beowulf himself plays a relatively small role in the novel, but still is the only human hero that can match and kill Grendel.

OR

C. *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway

The quintessential novel of the Lost Generation, *The Sun Also Rises* is one of Ernest Hemingway's masterpieces and a classic example of his spare but powerful writing style. A poignant look at the disillusionment and angst of the post-World War I generation, the novel introduces two of Hemingway's most unforgettable characters: Jake Barnes and Lady Brett Ashley. The story follows the flamboyant Brett and the hapless Jake as they journey from the wild nightlife of 1920s Paris to the brutal bullfighting rings of Spain with a motley group of expatriates. It is an age of moral bankruptcy, spiritual dissolution, unrealized love, and vanishing illusions. First published in 1926, *The Sun Also Rises* helped to establish Hemingway as one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century.

Required Elements:

- Copious notes and/or annotation
- Critical paper to be assigned upon return to school