

*"He who'd know what life's about
Three millennia must appraise;
Else he'll go in fear and doubt
Unenlightened all his days."
-Wolfgang von Goethe, 1819*

Welcome to Humanities 10! Your young student is soon to embark upon a wonderful and challenging intellectual journey. Our goals are ambitious and significant. We will be discovering together the very roots of our culture, exploring our common past, and evaluating our own way of thinking. This rewarding and rigorous program is a unique team-taught course of study which combines the historical and literary achievements of Western Civilization with its cultural development throughout the centuries. The National Endowment for the Humanities offers the following useful, if somewhat intimidating, description:

"Humanities includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism, and theory of the arts; those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of the national life."

Students, Ms. Cornell has reported to us that you are avid readers; this is cause for great joy. The *New York Times* bestseller list seems a great source for summer reading. Since suggested reading may contain *mature themes*, parents/guardians are encouraged to seek reviews to determine the appropriateness for their teenager. Book reviews can be obtained through the local library or by accessing an online bookstore. You may want to try a biography or historical work that has some relationship to Western Civilization. We have attached a list of the curricular works we will be reading together, as well as some suggested reading that you may enjoy tackling this summer. But a popular novel is always a fine accompaniment to the summer sun. The work we

will be diving into in September will be considerably more challenging. It will also be extraordinarily rewarding.

At the bottom of this letter, you will find a list of words/concepts. We ask that, before the start of school in September, you find out anything and everything you can about them. Sound vague? Good! No “vocab” in the traditional sense of the word. You must now begin to think about words on an even deeper level. One of our favorite words is “ponder.” Among our goals for our time together is to encourage you to ponder a host of ideas in a variety of ways. We warn you: there will not always be correct “answers” in our class. To paraphrase Elie Wiesel: We are not seeking answers, because there will be precious few. Our primary objective is to unearth and consider the important questions together.

Please enjoy the leisure that summer offers. We cannot wait to meet you and get started on our scholarly adventure together.

Mrs. Blumm and Ms. Theo

human

humanism

Humanities

culture

Western Civilization

Euro-centrism

multiculturalism

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The following works or major excerpts are studied during the school year:

Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (8th Century BCE)

Sappho poems (630 BCE)

Sophocles (496-406 BCE) *Oedipus the King*

Plato (429-347 BCE) *Allegory of the Cave*

Aristotle (384-322 BCE) *Poetics*

Hebrew Scriptures: *Genesis, Job, Psalms of David* (1000 BCE)

Catullus (84-54 BCE) poems

Virgil (70-19 BCE) *The Aeneid*

Ovid (43 BCE-A.D.17) *Metamorphoses*

The Sermon on the Mount (1st Century)

Augustine (354-430) *Confessions*

Arthur myth

Beowulf (9th Century)

Marie de France (12th Century)

Poetry of the Troubadours

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) *Inferno*

Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) *The Decameron*

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) *The Prince*

Miguel Cervantès *Don Quixote* Part I (1605)

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) *Macbeth*

Sonnets: Petrarch and Shakespeare

Mary Shelley (1797-1851) *Frankenstein*

The Romantic Era: poetry, letters, and *Introduction to the Lyrical*

Ballads:

William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord

Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats

William Butler Yeats: selected poems

Markus Zusak *The Book Thief* (2005)

Elie Wiesel *Night* (1955)

Aldous Huxley *Brave New World* (1932)

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Independent Reading Suggestions:

Geoffrey Chaucer *The Canterbury Tales* (1386)

William Shakespeare (You choose.)

John Milton *Paradise Lost* (1667)

Jonathan Swift *Gulliver's Travels* (1726)

Jane Austen *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma* (1813, 1816)

Emily Bronte *Wuthering Heights* (1847)

Charlotte Bronte *Jane Eyre* (1847)

Gustave Flaubert *Madame Bovary* (1857)

Robert Louis Stevenson *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*
(1886)

Oscar Wilde *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891)

Thomas Hardy *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891)

Franz Kafka *The Metamorphosis* (1915)

Erich Maria Remarque *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1928)

William Golding *Lord of the Flies* (1954)