



Cherokee Christian

H I G H S C H O O L

11th Grade Summer Reading 2026 - 2027

Required: *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

In addition to the required reading, choose one of the following:

The Last of the Mohicans by James Fenimore Cooper

The Sketchbook by Washington Irving

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

You will need a clean, physical copy of each book, so that you can make your own annotations – library books or an older sibling’s copy will not do. Audiobooks are permissible (even encouraged), provided you are reading along and annotating in your physical book.

Summer Reading Assessments: Prepare for tests on *The Scarlet Letter* and your chosen secondary title in the first full week of school.

How and why to surface-level annotate: Annotation is essential when studying any text – as a teacher or as a student. Reading with a pen in hand and following these guidelines will ensure you engage with a text, help you retain what you’ve read, and create a roadmap of your thoughts when you return to a book later.

Often students fall into one of two ditches regarding annotation:

1. They don’t know what to annotate/underline, so they do nothing.
2. They end up highlighting everything (so in essence have highlighted nothing) and/or get so bogged down in annotating that they take FOREVER to read – which can be discouraging too.
(We don’t want that for you.)

The goal of the surface-level annotation that CCS expects throughout your academic career is simply to engage the text. Light annotating will keep your mind active and provide road-marks along the way that will help you as we revisit the text for future class exercises. It keeps the pages from being simply meaningless rectangles of text. It truly is helpful -- many students of the present and bygone era will confirm the value.

General reading tips:

- Always read with a pen in hand. Just making little ticks as you go keeps you engaged in the text and checks your understanding.
- Don't be overly obsessive about note taking, but if a passage interests you, underline it, or if it's a long one, put a bracket by it in the margin. Perhaps jot a note about why that interests you.
- If you're confused, put a question mark in the margin. If you're amused, put an LOL. If you're shocked, put an exclamation point!
- Underline words you don't know and jot a short definition in the margin.
- Note in the margins if a passage/moment reminds you of something else you've read/seen/heard. Simply use a similar sign (two squiggles) from geometry and write a title, author, character – whatever.
- For novels/plays, go back to the beginning of a chapter/scene and jot a short note about what happened in that chapter -- 2-3 lines tops. Some authors (Mark Twain, Cervantes) do a bit of this for you, but sometimes they are vague, and making your own summary will help you reflect and retain.
- Stop every page or so and jot a BRIEF (2-8 words usually) summary of what is going on, in general trying not to let too many pages go by with no marks from you.

Below is a surface-level annotation rubric.

Surface-level annotations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Does not meet expectations
Underlining or bracketing	Fairly consistent. Not too many pages going by without some marks.	Occasional marks, but many pages going without any marking.	Very few or none.
Quick notes by underline or bracketed passage	Nearly every underlined or bracketed passage has a brief comment or symbol.	Occasional comments or symbols by marked passages.	Very few or none.
Summary at the start of chapters	Every (or practically every) chapter has a brief (1-3 sentence) student-written summary.	Summaries are inconsistent in frequency or too brief in length.	Very few or none.
Use of quick symbols or comments	Fairly consistent throughout.	Occasional use of quick comments and symbols.	Very few or none.

Other good things to do:

- Define unknown words
- Jot other thoughts that occur. Anything, really. "I have felt this way before." God can speak to us as we read. Ex. "This reminds me of my pastor's sermon on _____ last Sunday."
- Note connections to other things you've read, seen, or experienced. Ex. ≈ The Wizard of Oz, ≈ Mark Antony's speech in J.C. ≈ my dad
- Emojis and doodles (ex. A doodled whirlpool at the Scylla and Charybdis scene in *The Odyssey*.)
- Shorthand: LOL, *gasp*, sad! No way!
- Punctuation: !!!! (for shocking parts) ??? (for confusing parts to ask the teacher about) A star for something that seems especially important.