



# ST. JOHN'S

COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL | Est 1851

Dear Class of 2028,

We cannot wait to meet you!

St. John's College High School is a truly special place to be. We are thrilled that you have chosen to bring your talents, interests, and unique perspectives to our community.

9th grade English will challenge you to become more inquisitive, critical thinkers. It will motivate you to grow as a writer, a reader, a speaker and, overall, a successful learner. While we study several classics, you will also find opportunities to read more books of your own choosing, develop your literary analysis, delve into creative writing and poetry work, build resumes and writing portfolios and ultimately find confidence in swiftly adapting to different audiences and purposes.

We ask that you choose **one** of the following texts and write a letter to accompany your choice. We will build community in our classrooms this fall using these texts. You will turn in your letter the first day of school and there will be additional assignments relating to the book of your choosing.

### **Details for assignment completion:**

- All work should be your own. We want to know what YOU think. Base your writing task on the novel, and do not use internet sources.
- Type and save your writing task. You will submit it electronically once the year starts.
- Expect a test and class activities on the novel, so make sure that your annotations\* are thoughtful.
- You are expected to purchase a hard copy of your text. If you have any questions, please email [cgannon@stjohnschs.org](mailto:cgannon@stjohnschs.org).

## 2024 Book Choices:

**Suggestions for while you are reading:** Interact with the text/annotate to help you prepare for your written task as well as for the work we will do in class. Be ready to share your annotations\*. Highlight or mark key passages and write notes, especially regarding:

- Anything that connects to present-day issues, problems, or trends
- Any interesting language or parts that make you reread to find deeper meaning
- Any meaningful moments in which the protagonist learns, changes, or grows

\*When we say “annotate” we mean underlining or highlighting key passages on every page AND writing down reasons for your attention to each passage. Your reason for an annotation could be: unfamiliar vocabulary, characterization, conflict, connections to the bullet points above, or even just a question about something you find confusing. This is a great way to track your own thinking, address your own confusion, and to engage emotionally with the characters of the story. “Huh?” and “What a jerk!” can be very helpful annotations!

### Choices (summaries taken from goodreads):

***Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury: This has been the St. John’s summer read for decades. For the dystopian/science fiction fans:**

Guy Montag is a fireman. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden. Montag never questions the destruction and ruin his actions produce, returning each day to his bland life and wife, Mildred, who spends all day with her television “family.” But when he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people didn’t live in fear and to a present where one sees the world through the ideas in books instead of the mindless chatter of television, Montag begins to question everything he has ever known.

***I Must Betray You* by Ruta Sepetys. For the historical fiction fans:**

**Romania, 1989.** Communist regimes are crumbling across Europe. Seventeen-year-old Cristian Florescu dreams of becoming a writer, but Romanians aren’t free to dream; they are bound by rules and force.

Amidst the tyrannical dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu in a country governed by isolation and fear, Cristian is blackmailed by the secret police to become an informer. He’s left with only two choices: betray everyone and everything he loves—or use his position to creatively undermine the most notoriously evil dictator in Eastern Europe.

Cristian risks everything to unmask the truth behind the regime, give voice to fellow Romanians, and expose to the world what is happening in his country. He eagerly joins the revolution to fight for change when the time arrives. But what is the cost of freedom?

***I am Malala with Patricia McCormick - Young Readers Edition For the nonfiction fans:***

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education.

On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive.

Instead, Malala's miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she has become a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest nominee ever for the Nobel Peace Prize.

I AM MALALA is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons.

I AM MALALA will make you believe in the power of one person's voice to inspire change in the world.

**Written Task: 250-300 words**

Once you have completed your book, you need to write a letter to your future teacher. You will want to include things like: Why did you choose the book that you did? What did you enjoy about your chosen book? What did you connect with? What stood out to you? Would you recommend this book to your classmates? Why or why not? Does this remind you of any book that you read in middle school? What do you like about reading? What intimidates you about English at the High School level? These are just suggestions; please feel free to share all of your thoughts.

The document is to be typed out in a Word Document and will be submitted on the first week of school.