

What Is the Value of Summer Reading?

University School students stand among thousands of high achieving students from other educational institutions across the nation engaging in summer reading. The Upper School English Department has joined the administration in examining this time honored practice designed to facilitate academic and social growth and has developed a summer reading program that best reflects the needs of our U School students.

We ask that students complete the assigned summer reading before school starts so they will have a valuable and successful opportunity to engage in teacher directed instruction as well as demonstrate understanding of the literature through assessments. The following list provides reasons why the summer reading assignments are so valuable:

- Literature specifically selected for the appropriate age and ability level sharpens analytical skills.
- Reading on a regular basis provides mental stimulation through imagery and recall.
- Reading expands the reader's vocabulary bank and results in increased vocalization of complex sentences and use of a wider variety of words.
- An expanded repertoire of literary experiences will prepare students to write with more depth and complexity in the classroom, on standardized tests, and on the college application essay.
- Long-term independent reading assignments, when combined with guided study packets provide an opportunity for students to continue to exercise their thinking skills at the prescribed level of difficulty (Regular, Honors, AP) of the next year's course work.

The summer reading assignments for each grade and ability level have been designed to enable students to complete the reading and assignment in approximately twenty hours. For students who establish a weekly reading routine, this will equate to two hours a week. Additionally, English teachers will be assisting seniors with their college entrance essays. Seniors will be asked to bring in a double-spaced typed draft of their essay on the first day of school in order to facilitate the early application process.

Students who are taking AP (Advanced Placement) courses should expect to devote approximately ten hours of preparation before school starts for each AP course. Preparatory assignments can be found by accessing the specific instructor's Homework Hero at the University School website.

Summer Reading for English 11 AP

<u>Author</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>ISBN</u>
Matthew Pearl	<i>The Dante Club</i>	Random House	0812971043
Vonnegut	<i>Slaughterhouse Five</i>	any	

Add Slaughterhouse-Five – it doesn't matter what publisher!

The Dante Club

The Dante Club is a literary mystery that incorporates the punishments found in Dante's *Inferno* with an historical interpretation of 1865 Boston in the post Civil War era. While a group of prestigious intellectuals works on an English translation of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, several ghastly Dante-related murders occur. Meanwhile, Pearl depicts conflicts at Harvard University (which he attended before Yale Law School) over Darwin's theory of Evolution, the Fugitive Slave Act, and more, along with a subplot in which Nicholas Rey, Boston's first black police officer, faces racism, as do Italian immigrants.

Assignments:

-As you read, list each of the main characters and briefly describe the person's traits and the role each plays in the plot.

-List the murders in chronological order and give the victims, possible motives, and parallels to Dante's *Inferno*.

-Be sure to explore Matt Pearl's website to learn much more about the novel:
<http://www.matthewpearl.com/>

Slaughterhouse-Five

Slaughterhouse-Five, also known as *The Children's Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death*, is a highly unconventional account of the bombing of Dresden, Germany, in 1945. Vonnegut skillfully blends fact and fantasy in his story of Billy Pilgrim, a meek little man who becomes "unstuck" in time. Alternating between humor and pathos, the novel satirizes America's intermittent preoccupation with war.

1. Go online and print out a map of Dresden and the surrounding areas to refer to in order to facilitate your comprehension of the novel.
2. List the following characters and briefly note their significance in the novel: Kurt Vonnegut and/or Kilgore Trout; Billy Pilgrim, and Robert pilgrim; Roland Weary, Paul Lazzaro, and Edgar Derby; the Tralfamadorians and Valencia Merble.

3. Those of you interested in reading other novels by Vonnegut will perhaps meet characters again – the Trafamadorians, Eliot Rosewater, Kilgore Trout, Howard W. Campbell, Jr., and a Rumfoord family member.

Final Assignment

Terms preparation: Through Homework Hero, go onto my website and study the literary terms you will be using during the year; prepare to be tested on these upon your return.

Through the site, you may also want to review vocabulary and grammar in preparation for the PSAT and SAT testing you will take this year. Trust me- it's an entertaining and excellent source!!!!!!