



SAINT IGNATIUS

Cleveland • Jesuit • 1886

May 1, 2021

Dear Class of 2023,

This summer the English Department is requesting that you spend some time engaged in reading. Students enrolled in English III will have a choice of five books, including fiction and non-fiction texts.

Text Choices

Students may read any of the following texts. For more detailed descriptions of each book, please see the attachment to this letter..

1. A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman
2. Grendel by John Gardner
3. Doing School by Denise Clark Pope
4. The Dead Fathers Club by Matt Haig
5. The Buried Giant by Kazuo Ishiguro

Availability

If obtaining a copy of your assigned book is a financial challenge for your family, please contact me via email at tcaputo@ignatius.edu. Please be sure to have a copy of the text with you during the opening weeks of school. E-books are also acceptable.

Summer Reading Assessment

Students will be assessed in two ways:

1. Summer checkpoints
2. An essay or project. This project will be discussed in your class at the beginning of the year.

Summer Checkpoints:

For summer reading this year, a significant part of your grade for your reading will be based on satisfying checkpoints during summer break. The logic behind this imposition is so that you do not feel a time crunch, stress, or the need to wait until immediately before school begins to read your book so as to have it fresh in your mind for a test. We want you to challenge yourself in your reading and have the time and space to make your reading meaningful to you by encouraging you to reflect on the text and its issues that may affect your life or push you to engage with new ideas.

Completing these checkpoints will prepare you for assessments based on the text, and identifying major themes, actively reflecting on your reading, and articulating your thoughts intelligently are essential skills for English III.

To that end, there are two checkpoints to meet that involve you reflecting and making meaning out of your text:

Checkpoint One on July 16th: Finish *one-third* of your book and complete the corresponding activity.

Checkpoint Two August 1st: Finish *two thirds* of your book and complete the corresponding activity.

When School Starts: Have your book finished.

Here is what is expected of you for each Checkpoint. You will submit your work to the Turnitin.com class that corresponds with your last name.

Checkpoint One on July 16th:

1. Find your top five favorite passages or the passages that you think are the most significant and compile them into a document with correct citations: (Lastname #) as in (Smith 50) for a quotation on page 50 from a book written by John Smith. Think about why these quotations are important to you.
2. After compiling these quotations, identify and reflect on *two* themes or “big ideas” in the text. You may wish to consider what the protagonist is struggling with or against or what the author is trying to “say” about the major ideas in the text. Each theme should have a solid paragraph of reflection at a minimum. This reflection can be informal, but the more text-based analysis you do, the better served you will be for the assessment when you return to school. *The paragraphs should use correct grammar and punctuation.*

Checkpoint Two on August 1st:

1. Find and compile five new favorite or significant passages from the second third of the text with correct citations (Lastname #) as in (Smith 50) for a quotation on page 50 from a book written by John Smith. Think about why these quotations are important to you.
2. After compiling these quotations, reflect on your two themes or big ideas identified in Checkpoint One. Did these turn out to be major ideas? If so, what is the text trying to say about these themes or big ideas? This reflection should be two solid paragraphs at a minimum. This reflection can be informal, but the more text-based analysis you do, the better served you will be for the assessment when you return to school. *The paragraphs should use correct grammar and punctuation.*

Turnitin.com Class Sections for Each Checkpoint’s Work

A-F Class ID = 29030594 A-F enrollment key = E3AF	G-O Class ID = 29030614 G-O enrollment key = E3GO	P-Z Class ID = 29030618 P-Z enrollment key = E3PZ
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Active Reading Strategies

The English Department recommends that students keep a reading journal and/or that they annotate their personal copies of their assigned summer reading text. An effective active reading process may include:

Recording chapter summaries. Take some time at the end of each chapter to write, in your own words, what the chapter was about.

Annotating while reading. Make notes on important events, character developments, symbols, use of literary elements, and your own observations.

Asking critical thinking questions. What questions do you have after reading your book? What are the issues, viewpoints, and themes of the book? How does the content of this book apply to your life or the lives of others?

We hope that the summer break provides you with some time to rest, reflect, and prepare for the new academic year at Saint Ignatius High School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Terra Caputo".

Dr. Terra Caputo
Chair, English Department

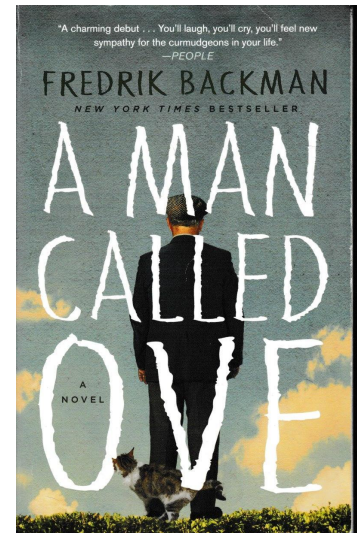
Choice 1: *A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman (fiction)

Read the *New York Times* bestseller that has taken the world by storm!

Meet Ove. He's a curmudgeon—the kind of man who points at people he dislikes as if they were burglars caught outside his bedroom window. He has staunch principles, strict routines, and a short fuse. People call him “the bitter neighbor from hell.” But must Ove be bitter just because he doesn't walk around with a smile plastered to his face all the time?

Behind the cranky exterior there is a story and a sadness. So when one November morning a chatty young couple with two chatty young daughters move in next door and accidentally flatten Ove's mailbox, it is the lead-in to a comical and heartwarming tale of unkempt cats, unexpected friendship, and ancient art of backing up a U-Haul. All of which will change one cranky old man and a local residents' association to their very foundations.

A feel-good story, Fredrik Backman's novel about the angry old man next door is a thoughtful exploration of the profound impact one life has on countless others. “If there was an award for ‘Most Charming Book of the Year,’ this first novel by a Swedish blogger-turned-overnight-sensation would win hands down” (Booklist, starred review).



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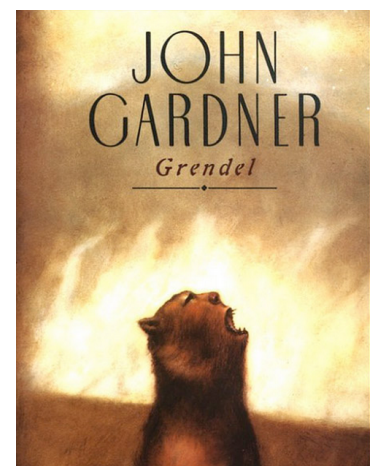
A Note to Parents and Readers: One of the plot points in *A Man Called Ove* is that Ove is suffering from depression because of the recent death of his wife and losing his job after more than forty years of service. Ove, as a result, is contemplating suicide. Backman introduces a variety of characters who help Ove see that even though he feels hopeless at times, he is loved and his life matters. We encourage parents whose sons are interested in reading *A Man Called Ove* to review the book in order to be a part of the decision-making process. We are also including two articles one from [America Magazine: The Jesuit Review](#) and [another from National Catholic Reporter](#) that can assist in discussing this sensitive topic with your sons.

-- Mr. Lauer '77

Choice 2: *Grendel* by John Gardner (fiction)

Read *Grendel* if you want to be more thoroughly prepared for a major text in the first semester, *Beowulf*. While *Grendel* is likely the most challenging text offered over the summer, it has the most direct connection to what you will be studying in class. It will acclimate you to the Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon world of *Beowulf* that can seem quite foreign.

I still remember reading this book during my junior year. I loved and still do love its humanizing and moving portrayal of a character otherwise relegated being a two-dimensional monster. It is also a catalogue of a victim's isolation and the suffering that comes from exclusion. *Grendel* longs for meaning and



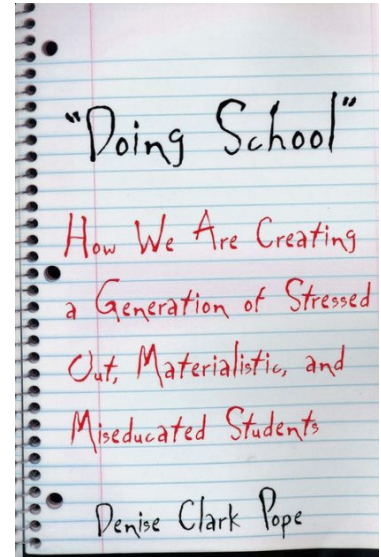
to

definition in his life that can seem cruel and painful just as we all do, but he faces the sting of hatred and rejection more acutely than many of us can imagine. This text will challenge you to see the humanity in everyone you encounter and to challenge those who turn to evil even if they have faced injustice and scorn. If you can see it in Grendel, you can see it in your fellow humans.

-- Mr. Boenker

Choice 3: *"Doing School": How We Are Creating a Generation of Stressed Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students* by Denise Clark Pope (non-fiction)

This book follows the day-to-day life of five different students at a California high school. The author explores how students navigate the business of the school day, extra-curriculars, jobs, family life, and more. She asks not only how students find success but also wonders how the students themselves define success. It's clear though reading that these students are overworked, stressed-out, and more. Some students adapt in truly fascinating ways. The book also explores the education system as a whole and forces us to consider what kind of curriculum would be best for students who find themselves at a loss for "doing school."



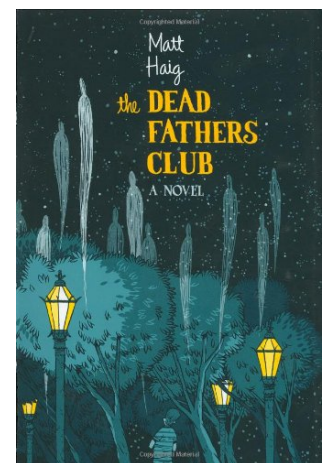
Read this book if you often find yourself wondering, "Does what I'm learning really matter?" or "How does that guy over there always seem to get such good grades and keep his life in order?" It will give you a chance to not only deeply reflect on your own personal education experience, but it will also force you to consider the perspective of what others students might be thinking as they learn by your side.

-- Mr. Yarcusko '12

Choice 4: *The Dead Fathers Club* by Matt Haig (fiction)

Suppose that Hamlet were an 11-year-old modern-day English boy, and his late father not the King of Denmark but the owner of a British pub. That is how *The Dead Fathers Club*, a novel that is part ghost story, part coming-of-age tale begins.

Eleven-year-old Philip Noble is in a crisis. His dad has appeared to him as a member of the Dead Fathers Club, a club for "ghost dads" whose murders are unavenged. His father's car accident, it turns out, was no accident at all.



Uncle Alan is responsible for his dad's death, and if Philip doesn't succeed in killing his uncle before his dad's birthday, just ten weeks away, his dad's spirit will never rest.

Philip then begins his quest to avenge his dad and to save his mom from the creepy clutches of his Uncle Alan, his dad's brother, who wants to take his dad's place. But Philip finds himself both uneasy of his mission and

distrustful of the ghost that claims to be his father. Plus, he's distracted by Leah Polonius, the gorgeous daughter of Uncle Alan's bible-bashing business partner. So what's a young kid like Philip supposed to do?

As he struggles to figure all this out, Philip tries to manage school, a first love, torturing bullies, and his own lack of self-confidence. Not only must Phillip deal with the panic attacks he suffers and mandated meetings with a school counselor, but when Uncle Alan makes it clear he wants to marry his mother, Philip is ready to explode. And you think you have problems!

Arming himself with creative weapons from the school chemistry lab, Philip vows to carry out the ghost's relentless demands for revenge. But can the words of a ghost be trusted any more than the lies of the living? Read on to find out!

--Mr. Bradesca '88

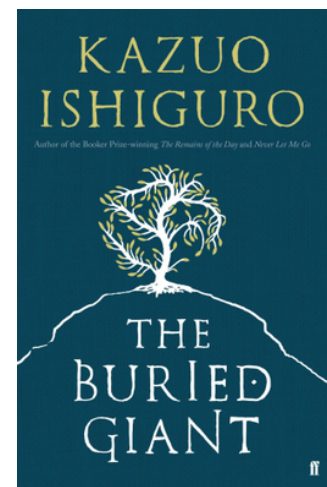
Choice 5: *The Buried Giant* by Kazuo Ishiguro (fiction)

The novel features a misty, war-torn England on the brink. People are suffering mysterious lapses in memories, and there are rumors of a sinister dragon afoot. Ogres and monsters rove the lawless country.

The King is dead. The Saxons and Britons are at odds after a peace secured by King following a brutal war. In the center of all of this chaos, a couple tries to remember the bonds that connect them to each other, their history, their identity, and their country.

Read this book if you like medieval fantasy with an intellectual bite or if you Arthurian myths. This book will also prepare you well for reading *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Beowulf*, which are anchor texts in the first semester.

-- Mr. Boenker



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