

## Rising Eleventh Grade Summer 2026 Reading List

### Required Reading for Honors and AP Students

Read and annotate *True Grit* by Charles Portis. It's the old west, a time when the population was spread over large pieces of land with too few lawmen to keep life civilized. That's when Mattie's father is murdered. She can't believe it when people turn a blind eye. She knows it is her duty to act, and she sets out on a quest to avenge her father.

As we discuss this novel by Charles Portis, we'll wade into some of the themes we'll be talking about all year in eleventh grade English. What does it mean to be an American? Does it just mean that you were born in this country? Is being American associated with any specific traits, values, or dreams? Mattie and the characters we'll read about this year will help us as we discuss those questions, and we will consider how different characters, authors, and works of literature reflect our history, our national identity, and who we hope to become.

### Additional Resources

- Donna Tartt is a novelist who won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2019. [Read her essay about \*True Grit\*.](#)
- Close Reads Podcast: This podcast, affiliated with the CiRCE Institute (Center for Independent Research on Classical Education), discusses many great works of literature. They have a series of podcasts discussing the novel *True Grit*. [Here is the first episode.](#)

### Additional Required Reading for Honors Students

In addition to reading *True Grit*, honors students should choose ONE of the following short works:

- *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James. This gothic novella was influenced by *Jane Eyre* and tells the story of a governess caring for two children in a remote country house. \*\*Note: This novel is in the public domain, so there are a lot of badly printed editions on Amazon. Choose one from a more reliable publisher such as the [Norton Critical Edition](#).
- *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller. This play by Arthur Miller is set during the Salem Witch Trials but serves as an allegory of the Red Scare during the 1950's.

**Assignment:** Students should purchase a copy of their choice novel/play and annotate as they read. Mrs. Turnbull will collect annotations on the first day of school. Annotations should be thorough enough to demonstrate interaction with the work, including margin notes and tracking of themes. [For help on annotating a work, download this document.](#)

### Additional Required Reading for AP Students

In addition to reading *True Grit*, AP students should read at least ONE of the following novels of their choice. Both will be useful on the AP Literature exam.

- *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte
- *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy

**Assignment:** Students should purchase a copy of their choice novel and annotate as they read. Mrs. Turnbull will collect annotations on the first day of school. Annotations should be thorough enough to demonstrate interaction with the work, including margin notes and tracking of themes. [For help on annotating a work, download this document.](#)

### **Additional Suggested Works**

- *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville
- *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver
- *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- *O Pioneers!* by Willa Cather