



11th Grade American Literature 2026- 2027 Summer Reading

Dear Parents and Students,

Congratulations on the completion of another school year! The following is the 11th grade American Literature reading requirement for the summer of 2026. The purpose of summer reading is to enjoy literature as well as prevent students' reading and writing skills from regressing.

This year, 11th grade students in American Literature are required to read ***The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain** and complete the one-pager project **as explained in the following pages**. It is best to use [THIS](#) link to purchase a physical copy of the book so that all students can be "on the same page," but it is not required. However, if you choose to use a book from the library, please **plan to have the book with you in class** for the first few weeks of school because we will be using the book and writing an essay after we return from summer break.

Content note: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* contains several instances of the "n" word as well as some instances of racial stereotyping toward black and native American characters. We do not condone such language and behavior, but we believe it is still important for our 11th graders to read this book because Mark Twain was a passionate abolitionist and used his characters to reflect some of the accepted attitudes and language that were all too prevalent in his day. The essential question that will be explored throughout American Literature next year is "What is America's story?", and we will read several works that deal with difficult themes including *The Crucible* about the Salem witch trials; *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which was Twain's sequel to *Tom Sawyer* delivering his scathing rebuke of slavery; *To Kill a Mockingbird*, in which Harper Lee shows a young girl's realization of the evil actions and attitudes that exist in her town; and *The Great Gatsby*, which examines the struggles of social class structure. Inflammatory and profane language will never be read or spoken out loud in class, and any harder themes will be dealt with *carefully and maturely* through a Biblical lens in which all individuals are created by God in His image and should, therefore, reflect the character of Christ in both word and deed. If you have any concerns about these works, we encourage you to read them with your student and discuss them in the context of their own story. We will be asking, "What is America's story?" but we will also be asking students, "What is your place in it?"

In addition to the summer reading book, students are encouraged to read at least 20 minutes daily throughout the summer. Many times, students will make a lot of progress during the school year, but when they do not read daily over the summer, they often lose reading development. Students who do read tend to gain reading proficiency.

All returning students are required to complete the summer reading assignments regardless of date of re-enrollment.

If you have any questions please direct them to me at the following email address:
nstewart1@parkwaychristian.org

I will check my email periodically throughout the summer.

Have a blessed summer, and we look forward to seeing you back in the fall.

Mrs. Nancy Stewart
English Department Head
Parkway Christian School
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The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
By Mark Twain
Summer Reading Project instructions

For current 10th graders going into 11th grade American Literature in the fall, you will be reading *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain. You need to **obtain and read** an **unabridged** version of this novel and **be prepared to write an in-class essay** about it when you return to school. **While you are reading the novel, you will complete a one-page project that will be due on the first day of school.**

You will be creating a project using art and words to represent *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. High-quality, thorough work is expected. You will be graded on thought, effort, creativity, following instructions, and completion. All thought must be original except where specified in these instructions. Even if you are not artistic, you can be creative with the elements, color, and use of space.

- ☐ ____/3 All of the work must be done **by hand by you alone on one side of a blank white piece of 8.5x11 paper**. You may not use large construction paper or big legal size paper.
- ☐ Your first and last **name** must be written on the back side of the paper.
- ☐ **Elements cannot do double duty**. (Example: The title and author cannot double as the border.)
- ☐ ____/5 Start with a **border** that reflects or represents the story. This can include words, pictures, symbols, or even quotes from the story written around the edge.
- ☐ ____/5 Draw and color a **central (main) image** that represents the story. This could be a character or a moment/scene from the book. Online permission: you may go online to find ideas of images or to find a blackline drawing to trace if you need help with the drawing, but the actual artwork must be done and colored by hand. Source if found online: _____
- ☐ ____/2 Include the **title and author** of the book somewhere on the page.
- ☐ ____/5 Include a **word cluster** around the central image, almost like a picture frame. Use words that relate to the story to highlight the importance of your chosen image.
- ☐ ____/4 Choose **two major characters** and compare and contrast them in some way (a chart, Venn diagram, lists, etc.) Include at least 4 appropriate descriptions for **each** character.
- ☐ ____/8 List **4 children and 4 adults** and **explain** each one's role in the story.
- ☐ ____/8 Write out and analyze **two** of your favorite **quotes** from the story. You must **cite** your quote with the page number- Example: (Twain 126), **and explain** its relevance to the plot. Choose very impactful quotes. The quality of the quotes is important, and these should not be used in the border.

- ☐ ____/10 Identify **two themes or symbols** that can be found in the story and include an example and text evidence with citation. In order to identify themes and symbols found in the story, think of the overall message of the novel or decide if there was an element that represented something else. Online permission: *you may search for a list of themes and symbols for this novel online, but your examples/explanations must be 100% original.* Source if found online: _____
- ☐ ____/5 List 4 **locations** where parts of the story take place (settings) and give an example of something that happened at that location.
- ☐ ____/5 Include a **personal connection** to the book and write 2-3 complete sentences about this connection. This can be something from your own life or something that relates to another book you have read.
- ☐ ____/5 Be **colorful, neat, and creative**. Your entire page should be filled with these elements with **very little empty space**. Everything must be **legible** and **easily readable** if you color over your words.
- ☐ ____/10 The final 10 pts. is reserved for **outstanding effort** over and above the bare minimum of requirements.
- ☐ This project will be due on the first day **at the start of class** and is a **quiz grade** worth a total of **75 points**. (Note: Most quizzes are 25-50 pts., so this is a *significant* grade right at the start of the semester.)
- ☐ Turn in this checklist along with your project after signing the Academic Integrity Statement below.

Academic Integrity Statement: I have read the entire unabridged book *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain and have completed this project entirely by myself by hand without the use of the internet or any type of AI, other than what is specifically allowed (see Online Permission above).

By signing, you verify that the statement above is 100% true, and you understand that serious penalties including, but not limited to, a grade of zero, detention, and suspension may be assessed if it is found that a student has been dishonest or has cheated in any fashion.

Student

Signature _____