



KENNEDY CATHOLIC PREPARATORY SCHOOL

ENGLISH 11: SUMMER 2026

Welcome to your junior year at Kennedy Catholic! Throughout this coming year, we will be reading a variety of renowned American classics from Puritan times to post-war America and beyond. To begin the English 11 curriculum, you are expected to complete the following:

1. Read *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett and write a well-developed five-paragraph essay of about 500–700 words. (It is recommended that you purchase this novel, but, if you borrow it from a local library, please ensure that you have access to it in September.) For the essay, you are required to describe how one narrator (Aibileen, Skeeter or Minny) overcame at least three obstacles throughout the course of the novel. These obstacles can be personal (e.g., related to a death in the family), or they can be obstacles that stem from the demands of society at that time. As you write, you must cite evidence (including 2 to 3 direct quotations) in order to support your claims.

2. Read *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck and write a well-developed five-paragraph essay of about 500-700 words. You are not required to purchase this novella. You will be able to download it on your school-issued iPad in September. For the essay, you are required to describe how three characters did, in fact, attempt to achieve their own version of the American Dream. In doing so, you should answer the questions: Is the American Dream attainable? What struggles did these men and women attempt to overcome in order to reach their dreams? Were they successful? Why or why not? What do these attempts say about the time period in which the novella is set? Like your previous essay, you must cite evidence (including 2 to 3 direct quotations) in order to support your claims.

Both essays must be computer-generated and submitted to Canvas. You will not be able to upload the essays until the beginning of the school year. However, you should complete your essays over the summer so that they can easily be submitted once the portal is made available. Upon your return to school, you will have other assessments based on these texts (following class discussion).

These novels do contain some language and viewpoints that may be upsetting and do *not* reflect the values of our school community. We study them because of their historical significance and literary merit, and we approach them with care, critical reflection, and respect for the diverse experiences of our students.

If you have any questions about the assignments, please contact Mr. Spelman via email at wspelman@kennedycatholic.org or Mrs. Keating via email at: alexandria.keating@kennedycatholic.org. Enjoy the summer!