

Senior Summer Reading List 2017

Book 1: Gone Girl by Gillian Flynn

Book Summary: On a warm summer morning in North Carthage, Missouri, it is Nick and Amy Dunne's fifth wedding anniversary. Presents are being wrapped and reservations are being made when Nick's clever and beautiful wife disappears. Husband-of-the-Year Nick isn't doing himself any favors with cringe-worthy daydreams about the slope and shape of his wife's head, but passages from Amy's diary reveal the alpha-girl perfectionist could have put anyone dangerously on edge. Under mounting pressure from the police and the media—as well as Amy's fiercely dotting parents—the town golden boy parades an endless series of lies, deceits, and inappropriate behavior. Nick is oddly evasive, and he's definitely bitter—but is he really a killer?

Essay Prompt: Men and women see the world differently. Well, everyone sees the world their own way, don't they? Anyway, this novel's plot relies heavily on the two character's perceptions. In a well-constructed 3-page essay explain how Nick and Amy's perceptions of right and wrong affect their decision-making processes. In other words, what decisions do they make, and how do they both justify their decisions? Please focus on the bigger decisions made in the book, and not on smaller choices that are inconsequential to the plot.

Book 2: The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo by Stieg Larsson

Book summary: Mikael Blomkvist, a once-respected financial journalist, watches his professional life rapidly crumble around him. Prospects appear bleak until an unexpected (and unsettling) offer to resurrect his name is extended by an old-school titan of Swedish industry. The catch--and there's always a catch--is that Blomkvist must first spend a year researching a mysterious disappearance that has remained unsolved for nearly four decades. With few other options, he accepts and enlists the help of investigator Lisbeth Salander, a misunderstood genius with a cache of authority issues. Little is as it seems in Larsson's novel, but there is at least one constant: you really *don't* want to mess with the girl with the dragon tattoo.

Essay Prompt: The author of this novel, Stieg Larsson, died just a few days before it was published and this was his first book. The novel became an overnight sensation! It has been translated into dozens of languages and is wildly popular. It's a shame the author never learned how famous he became, but more importantly, he had a different title for the book. This book is the first book in a trilogy. The author originally titled the trilogy: *Men Who Hate Women*. Would this have been a better or more appropriate title for the book? Explain in a 3-page essay which title you prefer: the original title, or the current title, and use evidence from the text to support your claim. Please take note of: character motivations, character choices, theme, plot, and structure when you construct this essay.

DO NOT reiterate the plot (I have read the novel, I know what happens) Pretend your audience is someone who read the entire book, but does not understand it as well as you do. Work to analyze WHY and FOR WHAT PURPOSE the events take place, when you answer the essay prompt. There are no contractions in formal essays. Have the introduction and conclusion complement each other. The author's name and title of novel need to appear in the introduction. The essays **must** be submitted onto TurnItIn.com the first week of school. Mr. Hewitt will give you the code for TurnItIn.com on the first day of school.