

The GHS English Department chooses books for readers 9-12 based upon the following criteria:

- **Grade/class-appropriateness/Lexile score**—books are chosen for a given grade based upon both Lexile scores and content. A Lexile measure is a valuable piece of information about either an individual's reading ability or the difficulty of a text. The idea behind The Lexile Framework for Reading is simple: if we know how well a student can read and how hard a specific book is to comprehend, we can predict how well that student will likely understand the book. For example, if a reader has a Lexile measure of 600L (600 Lexile), the reader will be forecasted to comprehend approximately 75% of a book with the same Lexile measure (600L). The 75% comprehension rate is called “targeted” reading. This rate is based on independent reading; if the reader receives help, the comprehension rate will increase. The target reading rate is the point at which a reader will comprehend enough to understand the text, but also will face some reading challenges. At this point, a reader is not bored by text that is too easy, but also does not experience too much difficulty in understanding. Lexile measures to monitor a reader's growth in reading ability over time.
- **Vocabulary**--Learning vocabulary—both assigned and through contextual reading--is a very important part of learning how best to work with the English language. The more words you know, the more you will be able to understand what you hear and read; and the better you will be able to say what you want to when speaking or writing.
- **Thematic resonance**--Authors want to share their impressions and understandings of life and human experience. Story structure involves characters going up against a problem—with proposed solutions, interruptions and intensifications to solving the problem, and final resolutions. Sharing thematic impressions along the way while studying a literary work might help someone identify or open up to new ways of thinking and feeling. The theme is the message or what can be taken away from the story and reflected on in one's real life.
- **Flexibility for essay assignments**—typically, the purpose of a literary analysis essay is to carefully examine and sometimes evaluate a work of literature or an aspect of a work of literature. As with any analysis, this requires that the student break the subject down into its component parts. Examining the different elements of a piece of literature is not an end in itself but rather a process to help the student better appreciate and understand the work of literature as a whole. All of this involves logical thinking, organization, style, and delivery—communication skills that will serve the student in all walks of life and education. It is also an assessment that allows the student to go beyond the classroom's discussion, allowing the student to individually pursue an argument.
- **Opportunities for a variety of assessments (literary analysis, literary devices, etc.)**—The essay is simply one assessment tool used by the English Department; these assessments are built upon developmental skills, which may range from understanding and using complex sentences to analysis of symbolic/nuanced language. The goal is to further, in a number of different ways, the student's facility with the English language and with reading.
- **Student engagement**--students need to be engaged with their education through different dimensions of student life: academically, socially, and emotionally. Students are growing

up in an active, ever-changing world. The books that are chosen in English courses are an extension of the School District's mission, which seeks to broaden students in lessons involving tolerance, diversity, respect, inquiry, skill obtainment, and a depth of understanding.