Welcome to the class! Your decision to challenge yourself in a college-level course indicates your good work ethic and academic focus, and I look forward to teaching you. The summer reading assignment is designed to help you prepare for college and the AP exam, where skills developed by avid reading are essential. The summer assignment is due on the first day you are scheduled to take this class (August for fall students, January for spring enrollees). If you cannot afford to buy the books, see me before the summer break about your difficulty because I can provide copies for you.

**The Assignment:** You are required to read *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (*Barnes and Noble Classics Edition*) and *1984* by George Orwell (*Signet Classics*). You will have an objective exam and a composition over both works during the first week of class; these will be your first two major grades for the course. Bring both books to the first day of class.

- At the senior level, you should be prepared to take the test and write the composition without the usual class discussion, so we are strongly recommending interactive annotation as you read the selections. Students will be allowed to use their annotated books during the test over the summer reading, so the prudent student will annotate thoroughly.

- **Test:** Relying on SparkNotes or similar “aids” will impede your success on the test and the essay, which are two major grades in the first 9 weeks. I have specifically designed test questions to foil those who read SparkNotes or view a movie instead of reading the novel, so be sure you actually read the books and prepare for detailed test questions.

- **Good Annotation:** Good annotation should help you perform well on the test, on the composition, and on the other graded activities related to the summer reading. Strong written interaction with the novels will help you score a higher grade on all of the work connected with summer reading, so I encourage you to make note of the significant moments in the stories and annotate well. Be sure you note thematic ideas throughout the stories for potential essay topics you can write about later; note moments in each novel that connect to the themes you identify. See the attached annotation guide for help with other aspects of good annotation.

- **Tracing Themes:** You would be wise to trace 3 themes throughout each novel. This means you identify a theme and mark moments in the story where it is continues to appear or is developed. Use a Post-It note for each theme you trace, writing the theme topic and all the page numbers where aspects of that theme appear. (Post-It notes can be attached to the first page in your book.) I suggest you write notes in the book on those pages you list on the Post-it note; these notes should clearly show how the information on the page relates to the theme.

- **Advice:** Pay attention to the recommended methods and strategies for annotating your books that are attached. Annotations are highly recommended for improved comprehension and review, especially for spring students who will have to remember the books months later for the major-grade test and composition. College students have been annotating books for years as a successful preparation for compositions and tests over literature because it works, and I am encouraging you to annotate because I want you to succeed in a challenging English class.

- **Final Note on Theme:** A theme statement is not a topic (such as death, love, greed, etc.) but a statement about that topic; it is never a cliché expression. Good theme statements express profound insight on a topic that is then developed as strong content in a composition. You will need an insightful understanding of the novel that can be expressed in a strong theme statement in your essay in the first week of class. Good luck, and happy reading!
Novel Blurbs:

*Pride and Prejudice:* Jane Austen’s masterpiece of wit that examines what divides and what unites people in successful or unsuccessful relationships. A great story that doesn’t require monsters to stand the test of time.

*1984:* Orwell’s disturbing examination of the potential consequences that follow the loss of all that makes us human. Prophetic and cautionary, the story considers the effects technology, government, economics, war, and community have in this futuristic story of disillusionment and truth. *(Note: The novel 1984 contains mature content.)*

Focus for Reading: Some Questions to Consider

- **Pride and Prejudice**
  - In the story, what character traits allow pride/prejudice to be created and fostered in a person?
  - What enables a person in the novel to overcome the detriments of pride and prejudice?
  - Why do some characters overcome pride/prejudice while others do not?
  - How do first impressions influence our judgments?
  - What qualities distinguish good marriages from poor ones in this story?
  - What does *Pride and Prejudice* suggest about how to live a happy, successful life?

- **1984**
  - What are the benefits and problems with a society structured like the one in the novel?
  - What role should government play in our personal lives, and where should we draw the line?
  - How are our lives and our society similar to those depicted in *1984*?
  - In America today, how much does the media influence/control what we think?
  - What does the novel suggest we avoid or do about the deluge of information and the roles of the media and government? What does the novel warn us against?
  - What is the psychological purpose behind the concept of *Two Minutes Hate*? What rights should “hate” groups like the KKK have?