English II Acc. Summer Reading List
Summer 2015:

The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger
Animal Farm by George Orwell

You are encouraged to purchase a copy of all textbooks for this class. However, if you choose not to purchase the novels, you may check them out from the SCHS library.

While you do not have a writing assignment due the first day of school, you will be tested on each novel on the first few days of school. To prepare for these tests, think about the focus questions as you read each novel thoughtfully.

Introduction to The Catcher in the Rye
The Catcher in the Rye was written in 1951 and is set post World War II. It is written in first person from Holden Caulfield's point of view, a troubled seventeen year old boy who is tracing the events of a traumatic period of time which occurred when he was sixteen. Although he is not a stellar student by any means, one can tell from the onset of the story that he is actually very intelligent. What then went wrong to account for his being kicked out of three schools? The clues are hidden within his narrative.

As you read, consider the following focus questions:

1. The Catcher in the Rye is considered to be semi-autobiographical. Google J.D. Salinger’s biography before beginning the novel and as you read, find similarities between Holden and Salinger. Given what you know about JD Salinger, why do you think he characterized Holden as someone with so much unmet potential?

2. Recurring symbols in The Catcher in the Rye are Holden’s red hunting hat, the ducks in winter, The Museum of Natural History, the title of the book, and the carrousel. How does Salinger use these symbols to highlight how Holden views himself and life in general?

3. Holden constantly swears and criticizes others yet all he really yearns for is a deep connection with another human being. If this is in fact his goal, why does he continually alienate himself from others in the way he presents himself?

Introduction to Animal Farm
Animal Farm is an allegory of the Russian Revolution and its aftermath. An allegory is a narrative in which characters and events stand for or illustrate abstract ideas, such as compassion, greed, or evil. They are written not only to entertain but also to teach a lesson or moral principle. Below, you will find a list of whom or what each character, place, or thing represents historically to help you better understand the novel:

4. Mr. Jones- Tsar Nicholas II (1868-1918 – overthrown by the Bolsheviks in 1917)
5. Old Major – Karl Marx (German philosopher – developed the ideas that are known as the basis of communism)
6. Snowball – Leon Trotsky (Russian revolutionary leader –deposed from power and exiled by Stalin in 1929)
7. Napoleon (Napoleon was a French dictator in the 18th Century) – Joseph Stalin (Russian dictator after Lenin)
8. Squealer – Pravda (means truth – Communist Party newspaper filled with propaganda and bias)
9. Boxer – Proletariat (the working class)
10. Mollie – White Russians (anti-Communist movement)
11. The pigs – Bolsheviks (leaders of the working class of Communist Russia)
12. Moses – Russian Church (considered to be superstitious by the Bolsheviks)
13. Benjamin – intellectuals
15. Farmhouse – Kremlin (center of Russian government)
16. The windmill – Russia’s rush to industrialize
17. The whip – totalitarian state force

Focus question: What point is Orwell making about Communism and dictatorships as a whole in writing this book and why might he have written an allegory instead of a straightforward indictment?