

English I Summer Work

Reading Assignment: *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

Welcome to your first high school assignment! I'm Mrs. Holler, and I'll be teaching your Ancient Literature course next year. In English I, you will read through some of the earliest recorded works of Western literature. In my opinion, the first works of literature contain the best stories!

Your summer reading assignment is to read through the first work of Western literature, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. The Epic of Gilgamesh is a great story about two brave characters who set out to fight monsters in order to win fame and protect their city. If you think this premise sounds similar to the plot of a superhero movie, you're not wrong. Superheroes like the Avengers or the Justice League have many similarities to the heroes of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (and many of the other works you'll be reading in 9th grade. This story also contains the first threat of a zombie apocalypse (if you're reading carefully enough to catch it). So this is far from a "boring" work.

In addition to being an entertaining read, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* wrestles with several important issues concerning what it means to live as a human being. Some of the questions this book raises include:

- What does it mean to be a civilized human being?
- What does it mean to be a hero?
- What does a virtuous friendship look like? How can one find virtuous friends?
- How should we cope with the death of a friend?
- How do we overcome our fear of death?

There are many different translations of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. I recommend you use the N.K. Sanders translation of the work (ISBN: 978-0140441000), which you can find on Amazon here: <https://www.amazon.com/Epic-Gilgamesh/dp/014044100X/> Most online booksellers should carry this version, and you may even be able to find it in the library system. Just make sure that you are using the N.K. Sanders translation.

I look forward to discussing the big ideas of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* with all of you come August.

-Mrs. Holler

Writing Assignment

There will be an in-class writing assignment and a quiz within the first two weeks of school.