*“A good liberal arts high school, if it does nothing else, ought to produce graduates who are competent, analytical readers.”*~Mortimer J. Adler

**Advanced Reading and Writing**

1. **Rationale**

In grades 10-12, students should be applying the knowledge and skills that they have developed in their grammar classes from grades 3-9. This is a time for them to cultivate the ability to read deeply—to be more than passive recipients of the written word but to think critically about a text, to evaluate the message for truth, value, and quality, to recognize the implications of ideas and actions, and to respond thoughtfully and creatively to what they read. They should be given opportunities to practice and grow in their ability to articulate their thoughts and feelings in writing that is clear, interesting, and grammatically correct.

1. **Course Description**

In this course, students will read books that have literary and spiritual value, discuss the ideas and values that emerge from the books with the teacher, and write papers on the themes found in the books. In addition, the basics of grammar will be reviewed and reinforced.

1. **Course Objectives**
   1. To become better readers—to read with comprehension, to read critically, to read quickly
   2. To become better thinkers—to summarize, evaluate, and create
   3. To become better writers—to wrestle concepts into sentences and paragraphs that communicate clearly, logically, and persuasively; to use the grammatical and technical elements of language correctly to aid in communication
2. **Books to Read**
   1. *The Screwtape Letters—*C.S. Lewis *The Pearl-Steinback, Jane Eyre? To Kill a Mockingbird?*
   2. *~~Pilgrim’s Progress—~~*~~John Bunyan~~
   3. *The Death of Ivan Ilyich—*Leo Tolstoy
   4. *~~Mere Christianity—~~*~~C.S. Lewis~~ (Read in Bible class)
   5. *Huckleberry Finn—*Mark Twain
3. **Papers to Write (new)**
   1. Research paper
   2. Theme papers (2)
   3. Autobiography
   4. Short story
   5. Five paragraph essay
4. **Procedures**
   1. Classes will begin with checking and grading the grammar assignments and then reviewing a few grammatical concepts; grammar assignments should be done after class
   2. The rest of the class time will be spent reading, analyzing, and discussing good writing—participation is vital!
   3. Short writing assignments will be given approximately once a week
   4. Longer writing assignments will be given at the end of each book
   5. All writing assignments need to follow proper format: Full sheet of paper, heading, double-spaced, standard font and standard size (typing is encouraged but not required)
   6. The content, clarity, and proper grammar and spelling of written assignments will all be considered in the grade
   7. Weekly writings will be peer reviewed in order to gain practice in proofreading (authors will be anonymous)
   8. The proper symbols for editing will be learned as part of the editing/polishing process
   9. Part of each daily reading assignment will be to choose a passage from the text to share with the class the following day. Either have a question prepared to go with the passage or an insight to share.
   10. Mark or write down new or unfamiliar words that you encounter on a daily basis as you read
5. **Grading**
   1. Participation—20%
   2. Daily grammar assignments—20%
   3. Daily writing assignments—20%
   4. Major writing assignments—40%

**Reasons to Read:**

1. To Develop Your Verbal Abilities
2. Improves Your Focus and Concentration
3. God Values It
4. To Develop Empathy
5. It Improves Your Imagination and Boosts Creativity
6. Reading Makes You Smarter
7. To Make Conversation--It Makes You Interesting
8. To Gain Wisdom
9. It Improves Your Memory
10. It Helps You Understand Yourself as well as Other People
11. It Expands Vocabulary
12. Improves Writing Skills
13. To Enlarge your World
14. To Test, Refine, Sharpen your own Beliefs against Others
15. Improves your Discipline
16. To [be Transformed](http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/16110)

Additional Thoughts:

More than anything else, God needs, the church needs, the world needs men and women who are completely surrendered and committed to Christ—to following him and growing into His image. One of the ways that men and women can model Christ is by learning to speak and write clearly and persuasively. These are currently in low supply. God needs ambassadors who can explain their faith logically and eloquently; He needs men who can communicate clearly with their wives and vice versa so that strong marriages can be built. He needs dads and moms who can share their values freely with their children and raise them to be good communicators. He needs men to be church leaders who can boldly and lovingly hold up a vision for growing in God’s grace and working in His kingdom. He needs women who can think powerfully and speak well as they teach Sunday school and answer questions about their beliefs. He needs men who can be pillars in the church, able to teach the Bible effectively, to think through issues clearly and make a compelling argument for what is right and good. He needs carpenters, farmers, and workers of all kinds who are smart, thoughtful, and able to think, speak, and write as well as the college professors, all for His glory.