

# Summer Reading 2008

## Classical Literature

Ms. Hyde

Welcome to Classical Literature! Our literary heritage began long ago with works written and read by individuals who lived in entirely different circumstances than we now enjoy. This year, we will explore those archetypal models on which we have built our own modern literary masterpieces, and look for those human connections which transcend time.

Your study begins this summer with a rich fictional imagination of a classic painting set in 17<sup>th</sup> century Holland. This story embodies classic themes such as betrayal, family relationships, the nature of love, and choices—all of these are focal points of the texts we will study throughout the rest of the year. As you read the assigned text you will complete the reading guide assignment describe below. Upon your return to school in the fall, you will be tested on the novel and asked to write about it in essay form. I encourage you to take notes as you read – and if you own the book, mark it up as much as you like. The assignment completed over the summer will account for 25% of your summer reading grade and the test and essay will account for the other 75%.

### Girl with a Pearl Earring by Tracy Chevalier

This imaginative novel offers an introduction to one of the thematic units of study sophomore year, "Class, Gender, and Ethnicity: An Examination of Identity." This engrossing novel will demand your attention with its rich language and emotional tension.

*Through the eyes of its protagonist, the modest daughter of a tile maker who in 1664 is forced to work as a maid in the Vermeer household because her father has gone blind, Chevalier presents a marvelously textured picture of 17th-century Delft. The physical appearance of the city is clearly delineated, as is its rigidly defined class system, the grinding poverty of the working people and the prejudice against Catholics among the Protestant majority. From the very first, 16-year-old narrator Griet establishes herself as a keen observer who sees the world in sensuous images, expressed in precise and luminous prose. Through her vision, the personalities of coolly distant Vermeer, his emotionally volatile wife, Catharina, his sharp-eyed and benevolently powerful mother-in-law, Maria Thins, and his increasing brood of children are traced with subtle shading, and the strains and jealousies within the household potently conveyed (Publishers Weekly).*

### Assignment

Prior to your departure for summer vacation you will receive a reading guide for Girl with a Pearl Earring. You must answer all of the questions in the packet thoroughly and thoughtfully, using complete sentences and neat, legible writing (you may type your answers if you wish).

The completed reading guide must be handed in on **September 2, 2008** .

**Enjoy the book and have a great summer!**