

ENGLISH 10

Year of the Hangman by Gary Blackwood

Summer reading is meant to keep your mind active, help you keep the ground gained during the previous school year, and prepare you through common reading for discussions and activities when school resumes. Since ENG 10 focuses on the early years of American literature, you will be reading a selection from the time period we will study. You are responsible for getting a personal copy of the novel. It is very inexpensive on Amazon (\$6.99).

Year of the Hangman is not your ordinary summer read. The novel forces the reader to face what life might be like now if history had turned out differently, if Britain had truly crushed the rebellion of its colonies in America. Follow Creighton, the main character, as he is pressed into service by Britain the year after the war begins. Travel with him as he is shipped to America and forced to take up arms against people who seem more like friends than enemies, people like Benjamin Franklin, who is risking everything to defy the authorities and spread truth to the colonies that continues to fuel the rebellion. This is a “what-if” story that will test everything you know about the history of the Revolutionary War.

Task #1: As you read the novel, keep a running journal of “facts” that seem incompatible with your understanding of American history. Make sure to note the page numbers of your found inconsistencies.

Task #2: As you read, create a visual map of Creighton’s travels (the when and where). Your map must include a minimum of ten events you consider life altering for Creighton (page numbers must be included with these additions). Your map must also include when and where he meets famous Americans (page numbers must be included with these additions).

Task #3: When you finish the novel, explain what the year of the hangman is.

Task #4: Last, in a one-page, handwritten, double-spaced paper (no particular format other than your name on it), write your personal reaction to the novel. Do you think Creighton acted courageously? Can one person make a difference? Include in particular how you think the America of today would change had Britain won the war instead of America winning its freedom.

NOTE: We will spend at least two weeks with this novel when school begins. If you choose not to

read it, you will be at a severe disadvantage in earning points for the first quarter. In addition, we will learn and practice all of our classroom procedures (bellringers, discussions, the writing process, using GC, etc.) and connect with a related poem to begin a poetry unit following activities related to the novel.