

# BOOKS SPARK THOUGHT

"I love **ENGLISH** for many of reasons, but most of all because there is so much room for creativity. Literature is an area where nothing is black or white and the grays can come through to enlighten even the most studied scholar."

-Ms. Baumeister

"I love all parts of **ENGLISH**, especially speech with Mr. Thomas."

-Jill Calhoun,  
Foundations of  
Language

Throughout highschool, students are required to read novels for their English class. Although many moan and groan everytime the word reading becomes part of their teacher's vocabulary, by the end the students often like the assignment. "I enjoy reading for English when I have enough time to read the book and it is one with strong characters," sophomore Charu Juneja said. "I don't mind reading the books; its the reports that I mind, especially when its during the summer which should be a break from school."

Some students didn't like the reading too much no matter what novels they read for various reasons. Senior Gagan Singh explained, "I don't enjoy reading for English because it is harder to enjoy a book when you are trying to reach deadlines, and some books chosen do not interest me."

Sophomore Beth Shinkle said, "I like reading for English because I like being exposed to literature I might not ordinarily read. However, I don't like having to look for little details teachers pickup. I believe novels should be read for enjoyment only and not for analysis."

Even though students did not always enjoy reading the standard class curriculum, most found at least one novel they enjoyed. "Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck was easy to follow because I don't like intricate styles of writing when so many other things occupy my mind and time," said Singh.

"I liked the storyline and vivid characters of *Great Expectations* although I wish there was more dialogue and less narrative. I also liked *The Scarlet Pimpernel* but it was very slow in the beginning," Juneja said. "I really liked *Of Pride and*

*Prejudice* because of its strong characters and there was more dialogue than the other books which made it more interesting and fun to read."

If given the chance however, many students would change the standard English curriculum to fit their styles and personal favorites. Senior Susan Bella stated, "I would add *Catcher in the Rye* because this often controversial book is one of the best examples of American literature. J.D. Salinger's work is easy to identify with and is a truly modern classic."

Singh stated, "Any of Piers Anthony's novel should be added because they are mostly fantasy, and I feel that the required reading is usually more serious. Anthony's novels are nice, light, and fantastic reading that makes you use your imagination, which I feel is important."

Some students could not choose a specific novel that should be added, but wanted a general change in the literature. "I would like more of a variety instead of sticking to the classics. I feel that students would get more out of a novel if they could relate to it or if it was more pleasurable to read," Juneja commented.

Although some may find changing the curriculum a difficult process, students found many interesting ways to solve the problems ranging from a list of choices to free choice. Juneja said, "If given the choice to choose, we would be more interested in the book and we would do better."

Even though students found reading for English a drag at some points, most got something out of the long experiences, whether it be conclusions about books or ways to change the curriculum.

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