

2022-2023 Upper School Literature



Thank you for allowing us to partner with you in the education of your Upper School students. We take this responsibility seriously, and we value your trust. As a way of ensuring this trust is earned, we wanted to make sure we are clear about some of the things our students will study at Ascent Classical and their purpose in a classical education.

In presenting our students with classical literature, history, art, and science, there will be times when we encounter content that some may feel is uncomfortable, mature, or even disturbing. While this is never something we wish to study without purpose, we cannot avoid topics that are a part of the human condition simply because it would cause difficult conversations. To do so would be to give students a flawed view of humanity. So many schools around the country mislead their students about what it means to be human and we do not wish to be one of those schools.

Therefore, we will discuss virtue and vice, wisdom and folly, showing both the wonder of humanity and its depravity. Classical literature, in particular, allows students to examine what humans have a capacity to do to each other, and to themselves. A core component of our literary instruction is to encourage students to model their own moral characters off of the virtuous heroes and heroines we read about in our curriculum.

Because these topics and themes are a reality of the human condition, our students will encounter them at various points throughout their lives. Our schools believe it is best to have exposure to these topics in a controlled, safe environment while students are still under the care and guidance of their parents, and within the context of a broader classical education. These conversations provide opportunities to model virtue for our students and help them learn to engage with challenging themes in a respectful and appropriate way, in the home and the classroom with caring and thoughtful adults. It gives students a chance to calibrate their moral compass before they are faced with the tougher choices in life. We as a faculty do not want to encourage our students to dwell on these topics, but rather to understand them within the context of the curriculum as a whole.

When your student encounters something difficult or uncomfortable in a text, we encourage further discussion of these topics with parents and teachers. This will allow for you to have conversations with your students and provide parental instruction that aligns with your beliefs and values. The best way for you to support your child is to read these books alongside them when at all possible, so that you can have wonderful conversations on all of the things they are learning, not only the controversial parts.

We encourage parents and guardians to reach out to the teachers or administration if they have additional concerns.

1984	A Christmas Carol	The Iliad	Paradise Lost
Abolition of Man	The Consolation of Philosophy	Inferno	Pride and Prejudice
Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	Crime and Punishment	Lord of the Flies	Purgatory
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer	Cyrano de Bergerac	To Kill a Mockingbird	Romeo and Juliet
The Aeneid	The Death of Ivan Ilyich	Macbeth	The Scarlet Letter
Amusing Ourselves to Death	Excerpts from Livy and Ovid	Moby Dick	A Separate Peace
Animal Farm	Fahrenheit 451	Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes	Shane
Anthem	Fellowship of the Ring	Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass	Sir Gawain and the Green Knight
The Ballad of the White Horse	Frankenstein	The Odyssey	The Story of Beowulf
Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography	The Great Gatsby	Out of the Silent Planet	The Stranger?
Beowulf (Chickering)	Hamlet		A Tale of Two Cities
Brave New World	Heart of Darkness		The Three Theban Plays

