

Dear Students—

Welcome to high school and 9th Grade Humanities! This summer, you must read *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, a set of poems preserved on clay tablets surviving from ancient Mesopotamia (from the third millennium B.C.E.). The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is one of the important pieces of epic poetry from human history, predating even Homer's *Iliad* by roughly 1,500 years. *Gilgamesh* tells of the various adventures of a hero-king, including his quest for immortality, and an account of a great flood similar in many details to the story of Noah from the *Torah*. It is a buddy/adventure story, and is one of the oldest things you can read on planet Earth.

There are many translations and editions available in bookstores, libraries and online. However, for this class we will use the Penguin Books edition translated by N.K. Sandars.

As you read, you are to write a summary for each chapter of the book. I've included an example of what it should look like on the following page.

In addition to *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, you will be required to read two additional essays by C.S. Lewis:

- (1) "On Stories"
- (2) "The Necessity of Chivalry"

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The Epic of Gilgamesh – Summarized

Chapter 1

Gilgamesh is a horrible king who is cruel to his people. He takes what he wants and forces the people to build the walls of the city, Uruk. He is so strong that he takes the brides of the other men on their wedding nights. The people in Uruk plead for the gods to help them. As a result, the gods hear and command the goddess, Aruru, to create someone with enough strength to counter Gilgamesh.

Chapter 2

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(The remainder of your summaries should look like this.)