



2009-2010 SUMMER READING

Summer reading in the High School is designed to promote pleasure in reading, enabling students both to explore intellectual interests related to their course work and to discover books and subjects they might not otherwise encounter.

To accomplish these goals, each student is asked to read three books from the lists for his or her grade level next year. At least one of these books must be chosen from the English list; the other two books may be chosen from either the general list or the English list.

Advanced Placement courses, intended to be more rigorous than courses in the regular curriculum, may require additional summer assignments.

Twelfth Grade English Summer Reading List

Students who plan to take AP English should read at least one starred book. Titles followed by a + are plays—please read two of these selections in lieu of a novel. We strongly urge you to investigate as many of these books as possible through your favorite library, bookstore or website.

Classics of World Literature

Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
*Austen, *Emma*
Camus, *The Plague*
Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard* +
*Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*
Dumas (fils), *Camille*
*Eliot (George), *Middlemarch*
*Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*
Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*
*García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*
Goethe, *Faust, Part I*
*Grass, *The Tin Drum*
Ibsen, *The Wild Duck* +
*Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
Kafka, *The Trial*
Lampedusa, *The Leopard*
Nabokov, *Invitation of a Memory*
Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* +
Soseki, *Botchan*
Stendhal, *The Charterhouse of Parma*
Strindberg, *A Dream Play* +
*Woolf, *Orlando*

Contemporary Voices in World Literature

Adiga, *The White Tiger*
Allende, *Daughter of Fortune*
Amis (Martin), *Time's Arrow*
Byatt, *Possession*
Dalby, *The Tale of Murasaki*
Dorfman, *Death and the Maiden* +
Foer, *Everything is Illuminated*
Hijuelos, *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*
Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*
Lahiri, *Unaccustomed Earth*
Murakami, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*
Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*
Narayan, *The Guide*
Ondaatje, *Anil's Ghost*
*Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*
Saramago, *Blindness*
Smith (Zadie), *White Teeth*
*Soyinka, *Aké*
Tsukiyama, *The Samurai's Garden*
Walcott, *Omeros*

Twelfth Grade General Summer Reading List

Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*

In a book which is less an autobiography than a cultural, scientific, and political history of the times in which he lived, Adams describes changes during his life and explains what one must do to be successful in the rapidly changing modern world. Adams is the grandson and great grandson of American presidents. (Steve Robins)

Isabel Allende, *La casa de los espíritus* (Spanish version for students of Spanish IV and AP)

Allende, niece of the assassinated Chilean president Salvador Allende, tells the life of a family in an unnamed South American country during moments of political upheaval and economic instability. Allende uses magical and realistic elements and a multi-generational plot to develop the story. (Lourdes Cuellar)

Natalie Angier, *The Beauty of the Beastly*

A book of essays about organisms on which we do not normally dwell, divided into seven chapters: "Loving," "Slithering," "Dancing," "Dying," "Adapting," "Healing," and "Creating." (Tamara Berthel)

Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*

In prison awaiting his execution, this learned and once powerful man wrote what became a central text on the importance of philosophy in an uncertain world. (Steve Robins)

Chris Bohjalian, *The Double Bind*

While attempting to recover both physically and emotionally from a vicious attack, college student Laurel Estabrook begins to work at a homeless shelter. There she meets a former photographer who possesses a box of old pictures, pictures he had taken of some of the past rich and famous, like Jay Gatsby, Daisy Buchanan, Chuck Berry and Robert Frost. (Some of these characters we recognize from history; some we recognize from fiction.) Laurel's obsession with this man and his work takes her on a journey to the truth, not just about the photos and their owner but also about her own life. (Maura Rankin and Elizabeth Coble)

Bill Bryson, *A Short History of Nearly Everything*

After interviewing scientists in a number of fields, Bryson wrote this engaging overview of scientific understanding of our world, intended for the general reader. His framework follows the history of the earth, but along the way he touches on fields like quantum physics and astronomy as well as the natural sciences. (Ann Wheeler)

Augusten Burroughs, *Running with Scissors*

In this hilarious but brutal memoir, Burroughs describes growing up with an alcoholic father, an unstable mother who gives him up for adoption to her therapist, and an adolescence spent as part of the therapist's eccentric extended family. Burroughs's perspective achieves a crucial balance for a memoir: emotional but not self-involved, observant but not clinical, funny but not deliberately comic. (Katie Greenebaum)

Michael Chabon, *The Yiddish Policeman's Union*

This novel explores the question of what if, instead of Israel being where it is, Alaska had become the new Jewish state after World War II. Containing elements of the detective story, it is full of adventures and written in vivid prose. (Freya Sachs)

Leslie Chamberlain, *Nietzsche in Turin*

By focusing on one crucial year (1888) of Nietzsche's life, Leslie Chamberlain provides a fascinating introduction to the troubled life and troubling ideas of this controversial philosopher. (Ann Wheeler)

Billy Collins, *The Trouble with Poetry and Other Poems*

In his latest collection, Billy Collins explores writing, language, and everyday objects in unique and quirky ways. These poems are at turns comic, at turns serious, and full of wit. (Freya Sachs)

Helen Dewitt, *The Last Samurai*

This novel follows a young boy genius through his obsessions with languages, math and science, Kurosawa's *The Seven Samurai*, and finding a father figure. (Lorna Morris)

David James Duncan, *The Brothers K*

A moving portrayal of four brothers and their conflicted parents as they passionately navigate the politics of the 1960's, religion, and their dreams of professional baseball. (Liz Mask)

Dave Eggers, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*

Eggers' memoir is frantic, quirky, obsessive, and yes, heartbreaking. Eggers is orphaned in his early twenties when both his mother and father die of cancer within months of each other. With humor and poignancy, he describes his struggles to raise his younger brother, to create a career for himself, and to come to terms with the death of his parents. (Mary Prasiit)

Joseph Epstein, *Snobbery: The American Version*

With considerable humor, Joseph Epstein writes about the various excuses we find to make ourselves feel superior to other people: the schools we attend, the amount of money we have, the people we're related to, the intellectual books we read, etc. Ultimately, Epstein is encouraging his readers to treat everyone with equal courtesy and consideration, realizing the superficial nature of all types of snobbery. (Ann Wheeler)

Elizabeth Gilbert, *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia*

The author, a journalist, takes a year away from her work to focus on her life. To aid her in her quest for knowledge, she travels to Italy (for the food!), India and Indonesia (for a way into her inner self), ultimately and surprisingly finding romance. (Maura Rankin and Elizabeth Coble)

Jan Goodwin, *Price of Honor*

A study of the roles of women in the Middle East. (Angy Hilgendorf)

Robert Graves, *Good-bye to All That*

British scholar and poet's autobiography of his youth and experience in WW I. (Mackey Luffman)

Robert Grudin, *Time and the Art of Living*

Robert Grudin writes about the way we experience time: about the quality of our attention to the moments of our lives, about various ways to think about the way we spend our time -- generally about how to live well. The book invites slow, thoughtful reading. (Ann Wheeler)

Brent Haruf, *Plainsong*

In the small town of Holt, Colorado, a high school teacher is confronted with raising his two boys alone after their mother retreats first to the bedroom, then altogether. A teenage girl -- her father long since disappeared, her mother unwilling to have her in the house -- is pregnant, with nowhere to go. And out in the country, two brothers, elderly bachelors, work the family homestead. (Cindy Crenshaw)

Nick Hornby, *About a Boy*

This novel deals with the reluctant transformation of a wealthy, self-absorbed, loner of a young man. With the unwitting aid of a lonely single mom and her floundering adolescent son, Will works to learn how to make and sustain real relationships. Funny yet poignant. (Elizabeth Coble)

Victor Hugo, *Les Miserables*

This sweeping epic is an absorbing story of one man's attempt to live a caring and responsible existence, only to have Fate—and the French Revolution—conspire against him. (Elizabeth Coble)

James Jones, *From Here to Eternity*

A view of the pre-WWII US Army in Hawaii. (Mackey Luffman)

Jon Katz, *Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet out of Idaho*

E-journalist follows the lives of two alienated small-town high school boys--both "geeks"--looking to escape social constraints and create satisfying lives. (Steve Robins)

Adrian Nicole LeBlanc, *Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx*

A decade-long study of one family and the problems engendered by poverty. (Katie Greenebaum)

Alan Lightman, *The Discoveries: Great Breakthroughs in 20th-century Science*

A book chronicling the greatest scientific discoveries of last century, with summary introductions and the original papers heralding the discoveries. (George Flatau)

Mary McCarthy, *The Group*

Follows the lives of a group of seniors from their college days at Vassar during the 1930s into the next decade of their lives. A really interesting study of how a diverse group of friends evolves. (Diane Sorrel)

Gabriel García Márquez, *Cien Años de Soledad*

A Latin American classic, this novel is a fictional account of the lives of the Buendía family. (It may be read in Spanish by AP students; the English translation, found on the "Classics of World Literature" list, also counts as a selection for AP English and the English seminars.) (Rhonda Prater)

Lorrie Moore, *Like Life*

Mordant and incredibly perceptive short stories about contemporary women and their tentative forays into real, messy life. (Katie Greenebaum)

Sylvia Nasar, *A Beautiful Mind: The Life of Mathematical Genius and Nobel Laureate John Nash*

A journalist's moving depiction of John Nash, a leader in the academic world of mathematics who battled schizophrenia through much of his career. (Debbie Davies)

Plato, "Euthyphro," "Apology," "Crito" and "Phaedo" (sometimes published together as *The Last Days of Socrates*)

These four selections from Plato's *Dialogues* tell the story of the trial and death of Socrates, dramatizing the spirit of the independent search for truth for which the great philosopher lived and died. (Ann Wheeler)

Michael Pollan, *The Botany of Desire* OR *The Omnivore's Dilemma*

In *The Botany of Desire*, Pollan examines the way that other species have influenced us, including the human desire for sweetness/apples and our desire for beauty/tulips. (Diane Sorrel)

The Omnivore's Dilemma is a fascinating book about the food industry in the United States. It addresses the agricultural dominance of corn, the artificial 'goodness' of processed foods, and both unsustainable and sustainable agriculture. (Lorna Morris)

Mike Rose, *Lives on the Boundary*

Rose, who eventually was helped to become a successful student (and professor), nearly fell through the cracks as a child growing up impoverished in Los Angeles. In this book, he discusses how students considered weak, deficient, or otherwise unable to learn can become successful if teachers and those who direct public education are able to recognize their potential. (Steve Robins)

Julia Scheer, *Jesus Land*

In the name of religion, Scheeres and her adopted black brother, David, suffer cruel abuse, first in their Calvinist home in Indiana in the 1970s and then when their surgeon father and missionary-minded mother send them to a fundamentalist Dominican Republic boot camp reform school. The tenderness between sister and adopted brother is ultimately uplifting and redemptive. (Katie Greenebaum)

Charles Seife, *Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea*

This quick "biography" traces the effects of the number "0" from its inventors, the Babylonians, through its controversial effects on religion and society to its importance in our belief in quantum physics and the Big Bang. This witty book focuses on ideas behind mathematical concepts and zero's effect on them. Reading this book, you will be asked to play along with Seife as he explains the many wonders zero reveals. (Debbie Davies and Nathan Schine)

Andrew Solomon, *The Noon Day Demon*

Solomon discusses the experience of depression, including the disease's various treatments and the influence of politics and big business on how it is perceived. (Katie Greenebaum)

Neal Stephenson, *Cryptonomicon*

A science fiction ride through coding, World War II, computer hacking, and international e-commerce. (Lorna Morris)

Amy Tan, *The Bonesetter's Daughter*

A story about the relationship between a Chinese-born mother who is losing her memories and her American-born daughter who learns about her mother's past. (Robin Lynn Woo)

James Welch with Paul Stekler: *Killing Custer: The Battle of the Little Bighorn and the Fate of the Plains Indians*

An account of myth-busting and movie-making that helps you understand why, in the words of the bumper sticker, "Custer had it coming." (Mackey Luffman)

Edward O. Wilson, *The Diversity of Life*

A look at the loss of diversity, its effects, and some solutions. (Tamara Berthel)

Simon Winchester, *Krakatoa*

The largest volcanic eruption to hit humankind during the 1800s is only part of a complex story involving the lucrative European spice trade, tsunamis that reverberated around the planet dozens of times over, and possibly the genesis of radical Islam which defines much of the present global political scene. (Steve Smail)

Tobias Wolff, *This Boy's Life*

Novelist Tobias Wolff's memoirs of his tempestuous childhood, as engagingly well-written as it is unsettling. (Katie Greenebaum)

Banana Yoshimoto, *Kitchen*

Love, death, sexual and spiritual coming of age in a story of a contemporary Japanese girl. (Liz Mask)

Carlos Ruiz Zafón, *The Shadow of the Wind*

A young boy, the son of an antique book-seller, becomes fascinated with an author named Julian Carax, only to discover that everything Carax had written seems to have vanished. He tries to discover what happened to Carax's books and why someone destroyed them, but his search causes threats to his own life. (Maura Rankin and Elizabeth Coble)