

Summer Reading for US History & History of the Americas

Dear Students Entering 11th grade,

We hope you have a fun- filled and restful summer, but, we also want to encourage you to do some reading over the next 10 weeks. We believe that the summer is a great time to pick up a good book! These books are a great sample of some of the best works of American literature and American history. All of you will be writing a research paper in your history course next year, perhaps one of these books will inspire your chosen topic for research. You don't need to read the whole book. Please review descriptions before choosing to ensure the content is appropriate and of interest.

Happy summer! Happy Reading! We look forward to working with you all next year.,

Mrs. Lewis, Ms. Merritt, Mr. Takach & Mr. Trebach

[A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution by Carol Berkin](#)

Though the American Revolution is widely recognized as our nation's founding story, the years immediately following the war—when our government was a disaster and the country was in a terrible crisis—were in fact the most crucial in establishing the country's independence. The group of men who traveled to Philadelphia in the summer of 1787 had no idea what kind of history their meeting would make. But all their ideas, arguments, and compromises—from the creation of the Constitution itself, article by article, to the insistence that it remain a living, evolving document—laid the foundation for a government that has surpassed the founders' greatest hopes.

[Uncle Tom's Cabin, Stowe, Harriet Beecher](#)

Historical fiction : Set in Kentucky and Louisiana, this famous novel was first published in 1852 ; it was one of the most widely read books in its day. It tells the story of Tom, an old black slave, who suffers at the hand of Simon Legree, a cruel Yankee plantation owner.

[The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead](#)

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, the #1 New York Times bestseller from Colson Whitehead, a magnificent tour de force chronicling a young slave's adventures as she makes a desperate bid for freedom in the antebellum South

Killer Angels--Michael Sharra The book tells the story of the four days of the Battle of Gettysburg in the American Civil War: June 30, 1863, as the troops of both the Union and the Confederacy move into battle around the town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and July 1, July 2, and July 3, when the battle was fought. The story is character-driven and told from the perspective of various protagonists.

[Behind Rebel Lines: The Incredible Story of Emma Edmonds, Civil War Spy Mass Market by Seymour Reit](#)

In 1861, when war erupted between the States, President Lincoln made an impassioned plea for volunteers. Determined not to remain on the sidelines, Emma Edmonds cropped her hair, donned men's clothing, and

Summer Reading for US History & History of the Americas

enlisted in the Union Army. Posing in turn as a slave, peddler, washerwoman, and fop, Emma became a cunning master of disguise, risking discovery and death at every turn behind Confederate lines.

Bury my heart at Wounded Knee, Brown, Dee

A classic account from the Native Americans' viewpoint of the white settlers' westward expansion.

How the Other Half Lives, Riis, Jacob

Jacob Riis was a police reporter and social reformer who documented slum conditions in the 1890s in New York's Lower East Side. This book includes text as well as 100 of his compelling documentary photographs.

Up From Slavery, Washington, Booker T.

The 1901 autobiography of the former slave who battled racism and poverty to educate himself and eventually establish the Tuskegee Institute, an Alabama trade school for blacks.

[They called themselves the K.K.K.: the birth of an American terrorist group By Bartoletti, Susan Campbell](#)

Documents the history and origin of the Ku Klux Klan from its beginning in Pulaski, Tennessee, and provides personal accounts, congressional documents, diaries, and more.

[The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl by Timothy Egan](#)

Following a dozen families and their communities through the rise and fall of the region, Egan tells of their desperate attempts to carry on through blinding black dust blizzards, crop failure, and the death of loved ones. Brilliantly capturing the terrifying drama of catastrophe, Egan does equal justice to the human characters who become his heroes, "the stoic, long-suffering men and women whose lives he opens up with urgency and respect" (New York Times).

Grapes Of Wrath--John Steinbeck Set during the Great Depression, the novel focuses on the Joads, a poor family of tenant farmers driven from their Oklahoma home by drought, economic hardship, agricultural industry changes, and bank foreclosures forcing tenant farmers out of work. Due to their nearly hopeless situation, and in part because they are trapped in the Dust Bowl, the Joads set out for California. Along with thousands of other "Okies", they seek jobs, land, dignity, and a future.

[Tobacco Road by Erskine Caldwell](#)

Unsentimentally realistic, this classic novel is a reflection of the effects of poverty on tenant farmers in the South during the Great Depression. It focuses on the Lester family, former cotton farmers who continue to live on their ancestors' plantation even though it has long ceased to be prosperous. Jeeter and Ada Lester have 17 children, two of whom still live at home: Ellie May, their only unmarried daughter who has a cleft lip, and Dude, their youngest son who is mentally handicapped. The family's antics, while at times vile and perverse, depict the racism and moral ambiguity that existed among some impoverished Southerners at that time and represent

Summer Reading for US History & History of the Americas

Erskine Caldwell's critique of the failed economic system and its consequences.

Esperanza Rising by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Esperanza thought she'd always live a privileged life on her family's ranch in Mexico. She'd always have fancy dresses, a beautiful home filled with servants, and Mama, Papa, and Abuelita to care for her. But a sudden tragedy forces Esperanza and Mama to flee to California and settle in a Mexican farm labor camp. Esperanza isn't ready for the hard work, financial struggles brought on by the Great Depression, or lack of acceptance she now faces. When Mama gets sick and a strike for better working conditions threatens to uproot their new life, Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances-because Mama's life, and her own, depend on it.

Unbroken: Laura Hillenbrand A World War II Story Of Survival, Resilience And Redemption

Autobiography of Malcolm X, Alex Haley A classic biography chronicling the civil rights movement through the life of the Black Muslim leader. Based on tape-recorded conversations with author Alex Haley, the book was completed shortly before Malcolm X's murder in 1965.

X: A Novel by Ilyasah Shabazz

Malcolm Little's parents have always told him that he can achieve anything, but from what he can tell, that's a pack of lies. There's no point in trying, he figures, and lured by the nightlife of Boston and New York, he escapes into a world of fancy suits, jazz, girls, and reefer. But Malcolm's efforts to leave the past behind lead him into increasingly dangerous territory. X follows the boy who would become Malcolm X from his childhood to his imprisonment for theft at age twenty, when he found the faith that would lead him to forge a new path and command a voice that still resonates today.

The Hate You Give

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed. Soon afterward, his death became a national headline. Some are calling him a thug. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros

Told in a series of vignettes – sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous – it is the story of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Few other books in our time have touched so many readers.

Profiles in Courage, Kennedy, John F.

Kennedy wrote this in 1956, before he became President. He profiles a series of famous Americans who took

Summer Reading for US History & History of the Americas

courageous, principled stands in moments of crisis. John Quincy Adams, Sam Houston, and Daniel Webster, are among those included.

[If I Ever Get Out of Here by Eric Gansworth](#)

Lewis "Shoe" Blake is used to the joys and difficulties of life on the Tuscarora Indian reservation in 1975: the joking, the Fireball games, the snow blowing through his roof. What he's not used to is white people being nice to him -- people like George Haddonfield, whose family recently moved to town with the Air Force. As the boys connect through their mutual passion for music, especially the Beatles, Lewis has to lie more and more to hide the reality of his family's poverty from George. He also has to deal with the vicious Evan Reininger, who makes Lewis the special target of his wrath. But when everyone else is on Evan's side, how can he be defeated? And if George finds out the truth about Lewis's home -- will he still be his friend?

[Rad American History A-Z: Movements and Moments That Demonstrate the Power of the People](#) by

Katie Schatz

From the New York Times bestselling team behind Rad American Women A-Z comes an illustrated collection of radical and transformative political, social, and cultural movements in American history.

[No End Save Victory: How FDR Led the Nation into War](#)

While Franklin Delano Roosevelt's first hundred days may be the most celebrated period of his presidency, the months before the attack on Pearl Harbor proved the most critical. Beginning as early as 1939 when Germany first attacked Poland, Roosevelt skillfully navigated a host of challenges—a reluctant population, an unprepared military, and disagreements within his cabinet—to prepare the country for its inevitable confrontation with the Axis.

[Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920](#)

In the half-century between the Civil War and World War I, dreams of spiritual, moral, and physical rebirth formed the foundation for the modern United States. Inspired by imperial ambition, presidents and entrepreneurs; from Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson to Andrew Carnegie; helped usher the nation into the modern era, but sometimes the consequences of their actions failed to match the grandeur of their hopes.

Graphic Novels

[The United States Constitution: a Graphic Adaptation](#) by Jonathan Hennessey, Aaron McConnell

[March: Book 1 and Book 2 by John Lewis](#), Andrew Aydin, Nate Powell

[American Born Chinese](#) by Gene Luen Yang

[They Called Us Enemy](#) Paperback by George Takei

[The Silence of Our Friends](#) by Mark Long