

Book 1: ALL rising seniors must read *The Night Watchman* by Louise Erdrich. We suggest you read this book in August; please bring your copy to class with you on opening day.

Books 2-3: Choose your second book from this list; your third book may come from this list or may be another book of comparable complexity.

Desert Solitaire by Ed Abbey. *Nonfiction; memoir. 1968.* Abbey's story of his three seasons in the desert at Moab, Utah is a fascinating, sometimes raucous account of a place that has already disappeared but is worth remembering.

Eva Luna by Isabel Allende. *Realistic fiction. 1987.* From nuns to sex workers, poor revolutionaries to gifted transgender artists, Muslim immigrants to privileged elites, orphaned Eva creates families around her--and learns to love--by telling magical stories.

Bastard Out of Carolina by Dorothy Allison. *Realistic fiction. 1992.* With this novel, Allison, who has been likened to Harper Lee, confronts race, class, gender, sexuality, and identity in the lives of poor whites in the South.

Going to Meet the Man by James Baldwin. *Fiction; short stories. 1965.* By turns haunting, heartbreaking, and horrifying, these stories are informed by Baldwin's knowledge of the wounds racism has left in both its victims and its perpetrators.

Visit Sunny Chernobyl: And Other Adventures in the World's Most Polluted Places by Andrew Blackwell. *Nonfiction; journalism. 2012.* Andrew Blackwell describes his travels to the most polluted places in the world.

Silent Spring by Rachel Carson. *Nonfiction. 1962.* One of the most influential books of the 20th Century and a cornerstone of the environmental movement, spurring revolutionary changes in the laws affecting our air, land, and water.

Colors of the Mountain by Da Chen. *Nonfiction; memoir. 2001.* A true story of growing up during China's Cultural Revolution.

The Hours by Michael Cunningham. *Historical fiction; short stories. 1998.* A trio of stories inspired by the writer Virginia Woolf, whose novel *Mrs. Dalloway* is also on this list.

David Copperfield by Charles Dickens. *Classic fiction. 1850.* One of the most autobiographical of all the author's novels, it is a classic coming-of-age story chronicling the struggle between the emotional and moral aspects of his life.

Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. *Classic fiction. 1866.* The poverty and hopelessness of pre-Revolutionary Russian society are tangible in this story of a student who murders two women and then tries to live with his crime.

Finding Nouf by Zoe Ferraris. *Mystery. 2009.* Saudi Arabian desert guide Nayir al-Sharqi is hired to find a girl. When she turns up dead, he forms an unexpected partnership with a female technician at the coroner's office to solve the case.

Hot Comb by Ebony Flowers. *Graphic novel, memoir. 2019.* Autobiographical stories linked by the topic of black women's hair.

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. *Magical realism; classic. 1967.* One of the most influential literary works of our time, tells the story of the rise and fall, birth and death of the mythical town of Macondo through the history of the Buendía family. Inventive, amusing, magnetic, sad and alive with unforgettable characters.

Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul by Eddie Glaude, Jr. *Social Science Journalism. 2016.* A powerful call for "a revolution of value and a radical democratic awakening" aimed at ending America's persistent racial crisis.

Thinking in Pictures: My Life with Autism by Temple Grandin. *Nonfiction; memoir. 1995.* Grandin brings the dual perspectives of scientist and autistic person to this classic, groundbreaking report from "the country of autism."

***The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid.** *Realistic fiction.* 2008. One evening in an outdoor Lahore cafe, a bearded Pakistani man called Changez tells a nervous American stranger about his love affair with America.

***Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro.** *Speculative fiction.* 2020. A deft, dystopian fable about the innocence of a robot that asks big questions about existence.

***The Fifth Season* by N. K. Jemisin.** *Science fiction; Afro-futurist.* 2015. In an imagined world, a woman hides her supernatural ability to bend rocks and embarks on a quest to find her kidnapped daughter, only to find herself tempted to start a new epoch.

***Waiting* by Ha Jin.** *Historical fiction.* 2000. Lin Kong, a man living in two worlds, is struggling with the conflicting claims of two utterly different women as he moves through the political minefields of a society designed to regulate his every move.

***The Trial* by Franz Kafka.** *Classic literature.* 1925. Chilling tale of a respectable bank officer who is suddenly arrested and put on trial for a charge about which he can get no information. If you liked *1984*, this is a good choice.

***When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi.** *Nonfiction; memoir.* 2016. While training as a neurosurgeon, Kalanithi was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. He reflects on being a medical expert, dying patient, and new father all at the same time.

***The Geography of Nowhere* by J.H. Kunstler.** *Nonfiction; journalism.* 1994. The author traces America's evolution from a nation of Main Streets and coherent communities to a land where every place is like no place in particular.

***Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee.** *Historical fiction.* 2017. In the early 1900s, teenaged Sunja, the adored daughter of a crippled fisherman, falls for a wealthy stranger at the seashore near her home in Korea, setting off an epic tale moving from bustling street markets to the halls of Japan's finest universities to the pachinko parlors of the criminal underworld.

***Black Hole Blues and Other Songs from Outer Space* by Janna Levin.** *Nonfiction; science.* 2016. In 1916, Einstein predicted the existence of gravitational waves: sounds without a material medium generated by the collision of black holes. Levin, herself an astrophysicist, recounts the surprising and fascinating story of the search, over the last fifty years, for these elusive waves.

***The Three-Body Problem* by Cixin Liu.** *Science fiction.* 2015. Set against the backdrop of China's Cultural Revolution, a secret military project sends signals into space. A civilization on the brink of destruction captures the signal and plans to invade Earth.

***Deacon King Kong* by James McBride.** *Historical fiction.* 2020. McBride tells the story of a Brooklyn deacon who, one September day in 1969, shoots the South Brooklyn Cause House's local drug dealer. The novel traces the impact of the shooting on all of those affected.

***The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison.** *Realistic fiction.* 1970. Morrison's bestselling first novel, telling the story of Pecola, growing up in Ohio following the Great Depression and struggling to love herself when she believes whiteness is the standard of beauty.

***In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* by Daniyal Mueenuddin.** *Fiction; short stories.* 2009. A stellar linked set of short stories--some funny, some tragic, some adventurous, some lyrical--telling lives of a single extended household in and around modern-day Lahore.

***Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi.** *Nonfiction; memoir.* 2003. Nafisi tells of two years in Iran and the study group she hosted of seven former female students who met every Thursday morning at her house to discuss forbidden Western literature.

***Hamnet: A Novel of the Plague* by Maggie O'Farrell.** *Historical fiction.* 2020. O'Farrell offers a tender and unforgettable reimagining of a boy whose life has been all but forgotten and whose name was given to one of the most celebrated plays of all time.

***A Tale for the Time Being* by Ruth Ozeki.** *Realistic fiction.* 2013. A Hello Kitty lunchbox washes up on the shore of Vancouver Island. Inside are artifacts presenting a puzzle that when put together reveal the unexpected life of a Japanese teenager.

***Snow* by Orhan Pamuk.** *Suspense.* 2005. This political thriller follows an exiled writer who returns to Turkey to investigate a religious youth protest movement, but it ends up being about so much more.

***What I Was* by Meg Rosoff.** *Realistic fiction.* 2008. Finn was a beautiful orphan. He was a prep school misfit. They met on a beach on the coast of England where Finn lived alone in a hut. He recounts, in his old age, the story of their coming of age.

***Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie.** *Fiction; magical realism.* 1981. This iconic masterpiece portrays India's transition from British colonial rule to independence and the partition into India & Pakistan through the magical abilities of the children born alongside their country, at midnight on the day of independence.

***Safe Area Gorazde* by Joe Sacco.** *Graphic novel; nonfiction.* 2002. Sacco spent months in Bosnia in 1995-1996, immersing himself in the human side of life during wartime. The book focuses on the besieged Muslim enclave of Gorazde.

***Kusamakura* by Natsume Soseki.** *Classic fiction.* 1906. The lyrical story of the encounters of an artist on a walking tour of the mountains, its author describes this classic of Japanese literature as "a haiku-style novel that lives through beauty."

***Wild* by Cheryl Strayed.** *Nonfiction, memoir.* 2012. A powerful, blazingly honest, inspiring memoir; the story of a 1,100 mile solo hike that broke down a young woman reeling from catastrophe--and built her back up again.

***Blankets* by Craig Thompson.** *Graphic novel, autobiography.* 2015. A young man comes of age and finds his artistic voice.

***A Complicated Kindness* by Miriam Toews.** *Realistic fiction.* 2004. A 16-year-old rebels against the conventions of her strict Mennonite community and struggles with the collapse of her family in this insightful, irreverent coming-of-age novel.

***The Book of Salt* by Monique Truong.** *Historical fiction.* 2003. Binh is a young, gay, Vietnamese immigrant in 1930s Paris. He is also personal chef to the legendary Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas. Their famous relationship, successful careers, and committed home contrast to and fuel his secret loves, personal losses, and hope-filled ambitions.

***Cutting for Stone* by Abraham Verghese.** *Historical fiction.* 2009. Twin brothers Marion and Shiva Stone come of age in Ethiopia, sharing a bond that helps them survive the loss of their parents and the country's political upheaval.

***The Genius Plague* by David Walton.** *Science fiction.* 2017. What if the pandemic you thought would kill you made you more intelligent instead? In the Amazon, a disease is spreading. It grants enhanced brainpower--to those who survive.

***Sing, Unburied, Sing* by Jesmyn Ward.** *Realistic fiction.* 2017. National Book Award. Jojo struggles with his mother's addictions and his grandmother's cancer before the release of his father from prison prompts a dangerous, hopeful road trip.

***The Piano Lesson* by August Wilson.** *Drama.* 1990. Willie dreams of buying the Mississippi land his family had worked as slaves, selling their antique piano to finance his future. But his sister Berniece sees the piano as their legacy and refuses to sell.

***Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* by Jeanette Winterson.** *Nonfiction; memoir.* 2012. In this memoir, Winterson, an award-winning British novelist, recounts her challenging coming-of-age as the gay daughter of a rigid adoptive mother.

***Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf.** *Classic literature.* 1925. Considered one of the most brilliant novels of its age, the story covers one day in the life of Mrs. Dalloway, but in that one day we see many of the threads that make up her life.

***Native Son* by Richard Wright.** *Fiction. Social realism.* 1940. When a wealthy white family offers Bigger Thomas, a twenty-year-old black Chicagoan, a chauffeur's position, Bigger is torn between gratitude and resentment.