

Edgemont Junior/Senior High School English Department Summer Reading 2025

In preparation for next year's English class, please follow the directions below that apply to your upcoming class. In most cases, you will be asked to read at least two books over the summer. One of those books will be a core book at each grade level, giving you a head start on a text that will become important in next year's English class; the second book will be one of your own choosing. It might come from the provided list of wonderful books (starting on page 10), it might be the book you heard your friend raving about, or it might be something you've found lying around the house. Wherever you find it, have fun selecting the second book (and maybe the third, fourth, fifth ...), and read!

Please find your grade core books listed below, along with a few guiding questions or note-taking suggestions and/or requirements. **Please remember that reading this book IS required.** It will be the focus of discussion, activities, and writing early in the new school year, so you will want to know it well. In addition, your teacher may elect to assess your completion of the reading early in the year. Be sure to check the requirements for the class you will be entering next year, as different levels and different classes may have different assignments.

If you are a rising eleventh or twelfth grader who plans on taking selective courses, you will not be sure which class you will be enrolled in for the first semester. Therefore, we have selected a book that will be relevant in any selective class in which you are enrolled.

Phaedrus students, please adhere to the separate requirements shared with you by your Phaedrus teachers– this list does not apply to you (except in that there are some terrific titles at the end that you might be interested in).

Enjoy your summer reading!

Grade-Level Core Books

Grade Seven:

***Red Kayak* by Priscilla Cummings** - Life has been good for eighth-grader Brady and his friends J.T. and Digger on the Chesapeake Bay, until the arrival of rich folks and developers angers some family and friends. The tragic overturning of a kayak raises questions, and Brady soon faces difficult moral decisions.

Please take notes or use post-its to mark points of interest, major characters, important events, significant settings, and key ideas.

As you consider your second Summer Reading book choice, please work closely with a parent/ guardian to select a title that feels appropriate for both your sensibility and reading level.

Grade Eight:

English 8:

***Refugee* by Alan Gatz -**

- Josef is a Jewish boy in 1930s Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps looming, he and his family board a ship bound for the other side of the world...
- Isabel is a Cuban girl in 1994. With riots and unrest plaguing her country, she and her family set out on a raft, hoping to find safety and freedom in America...
- Mahmoud is a Syrian boy in 2015. With his homeland torn apart by violence and destruction, he and his family begin a long trek toward Europe...

All three young people will go on harrowing journeys in search of refuge. All will face unimaginable dangers—from drownings to bombings to betrayals. But for each of them, there is always the hope of tomorrow. And although Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud are separated by continents and decades, surprising connections will tie their stories together.

As you read, please take notes, either through the use of post-it notes/highlighting or by keeping a reading journal. Be prepared to work with these notes during the first weeks of our English class.

While reading *Refugee*, consider the following questions:

1. Consider the reasons that Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud's families have for leaving their homes. What are the situations in each of their lives that force them to flee? How are their situations similar and how are they different?
2. Discuss the personalities of each of these young people: Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud. Each of them has to take charge of their families' plights at different points in their story. Describe the points at which each young person has to act as an adult.
3. Compare the method of travel for each of these refugee families. How does Josef's sea voyage compare to those of Isabel and Mahmoud? What is the most threatening part of each of these voyages, and how do those threats create obstacles for the families as they travel?
4. What is the theme of this book as expressed through the central characters?

Grade Nine:

English 9: (Please note the different assignment for English 9/Lab below.)

The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls - In this memoir, Walls narrates the story of her spirited, frustrating, and fascinating adventures as the child of two brilliant but irresponsible parents who wind up homeless in New York.

Trigger warning: While this memoir does have some frank portrayals of mature situations, and it does depict abusive behavior of parents toward children, its value as an excellent and complex coming-of-age story makes it a worthwhile read.

As you read this memoir, please do the following:

1. Use post-its or highlighting to mark your text, noting significant passages and commenting/asking questions about the text.
2. Pay particular attention to these points:
 - a. the various settings and the effects of these settings on the characters
 - b. the deeper meaning(s) of "the glass castle"
 - c. the positive and negative sides of the parents and their effects on their children

3. A movie of the novel came out a few years ago. If you watch it, be ready to discuss what you think translates well from the page to the screen and what doesn't. In what ways does the movie differ from the book?

English 9/Lab:

Select one book from the list below. Please take notes or use post-its to mark points of interest, major characters, important events, significant settings, and key ideas.

1. *Heat* by Mike Lupica

Michael Arroyo has a pitching arm that throws serious heat along with aspirations of leading his team all the way to the Little League World Series. But his firepower is nothing compared to the heat Michael faces in his day-to-day life. Newly orphaned after his father led the family's escape from Cuba, Michael's only family is his seventeen-year old brother Carlos. If Social Services hears of their situation, they will be separated in the foster-care system—or worse, sent back to Cuba. Together, the boys carry on alone, dodging bills and anyone who asks too many questions. But then someone wonders how a twelve-year-old boy could possibly throw with as much power as Michael Arroyo throws. With no way to prove his age, no birth certificate, and no parent to fight for his cause, Michael's secret world is blown wide open, and he discovers that family can come from the most unexpected sources.

2. *Free Lunch* by Rex Ogle

Free Lunch is the story of Rex's efforts to navigate his first semester of sixth grade—who to sit with, not being able to join the football team, Halloween in a handmade costume, classmates and a teacher who takes one look at him and decides he's trouble—all while wearing secondhand clothes and being hungry. His mom and her boyfriend are out of work, and life at home is punctuated by outbursts of violence. Halfway through the semester, his family is evicted and ends up in government-subsidized housing in view of the school. Rex lingers at the end of last period every day until the buses have left, so no one will see where he lives.

Free Lunch is a story of hardship threaded with hope and moments of grace. Rex's voice is compelling and authentic, and *Free Lunch* is a true, timely, and essential work that illuminates the lived experience of poverty in America.

3. *Anything but Typical* by Nora Raleigh Baskin

Jason Blake is an autistic twelve-year-old living in a neurotypical world. Most days it's just a matter of time before something goes wrong. But Jason finds a glimmer of understanding when he comes across PhoenixBird, who posts stories to the same online site as he does.

Jason can be himself when he writes and he thinks that Phoenix Bird—her name is Rebecca—could be his first real friend. But as

desperate as Jason is to meet her, he's terrified that if they do meet, Rebecca will only see his autism and not who Jason really is.

By acclaimed writer Nora Raleigh Baskin, this is the breathtaking depiction of an autistic boy's struggles—and a story for anyone who has ever worried about fitting in.

4. ***Ghost* by Jason Reynolds**

Running. That's all Ghost (real name Castle Cranshaw) has ever known. But Ghost has been running for the wrong reasons—it all started with running away from his father, who, when Ghost was a very little boy, chased him and his mother through their apartment, then down the street, with a loaded gun, aiming to kill. Since then, Ghost has been the one causing problems—and running away from them—until he meets Coach, an ex-Olympic Medalist who sees something in Ghost: crazy natural talent. If Ghost can stay on track, literally and figuratively, he could be the best sprinter in the city. Can Ghost harness his raw talent for speed, or will his past finally catch up to him?

5. ***Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli**

Stargirl. From the day she arrives at quiet Mica High in a burst of color and sound, the hallways hum with the murmur of “Stargirl, Stargirl.” She captures Leo Borlock's heart with just one smile. She sparks a school-spirit revolution with just one cheer. The students of Mica High are enchanted. At first.

Then they turn on her. Stargirl is suddenly shunned for everything that makes her different, and Leo, panicked and desperate with love, urges her to become the very thing that can destroy her: normal. In this celebration of nonconformity, Newbery Medalist Jerry Spinelli weaves a tense, emotional tale about the perils of popularity and the thrill and inspiration of first love.

Grade Ten -

Please note that each class in tenth grade has a different assignment.

Global Perspectives:

***All Quiet on the Western Front*, by Erich Maria Remarque**

Often called “the best war novel ever written,” this classic gives readers a vivid experience of the Western front of World War I, what was at the time the most deadly conflict in human history. We follow Paul, a German soldier, as he navigates petty superior

officers, poor provisions, and above all the terror that accompanies being in the trenches, facing fire and gas as he tries to make it to the end of the war alive.

As you read, please use post-it notes or a reading journal to record your impressions. Please be prepared to discuss the novel in detail in the opening days of your class's study.

Trigger warning: This novel contains scenes of and discussions of violence.

English 10:

***Zeitoun*, by Dave Eggers**

The true story of one family, caught between two of America's biggest disasters of the early 2000's: the war on terror and Hurricane Katrina. Abdulrahman and Kathy Zeitoun run a house-painting business in New Orleans. In August of 2005, as Hurricane Katrina approaches, Kathy evacuates with their four young children, leaving Zeitoun to watch over the business. In the days following the storm he travels the city by canoe, feeding abandoned animals and helping elderly neighbors. Then, on September 6th, police officers armed with M-16s arrest Zeitoun in his home. Told with eloquence and compassion, *Zeitoun* is a riveting account of one family's unthinkable struggle with forces beyond wind and water.

Please take notes or use post-its to mark points of interest, major characters, important events, significant settings, and key ideas. Be prepared to work with these notes during the first weeks of our English class.

English 10 Honors:

- ***Behind the Beautiful Forevers* by Katherine Boo and either**
- ***Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson or**
- ***The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck and**
- **one other book***

*If you do not choose *The Grapes of Wrath* as your second book, please read a work of fiction for your third book.

Written by Pulitzer Prize winning *New Yorker* staff writer Katherine Boo and winner of the National Book Award, ***Behind the Beautiful Forevers*** is a vivid portrayal of slum life in Mumbai, India. It follows the story of Abdul, who supports his family as a trash reclaimer, and who is accused of a vicious crime and has to navigate the corruption of the Mumbai law enforcement and judicial systems. Along the way we meet his family and neighbors in Annawadi, a slum near the airport, and learn about the depths of their poverty and the many obstacles to their daily survival. This work of journalistic nonfiction is frank in its sometimes colorful portrayal, but also very moving and uplifting in its depiction of the improbable hopefulness of these complex, hard-working people.

See what connections you find between *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* and one of these two narratives: the fictional account of dispossessed landowners who leave Oklahoma during the Great Depression and head for the “promised land” of California in John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*, or Bryan Stevenson’s non-fiction work, ***Just Mercy***, in which the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative comments on the American criminal justice system as he presents stories of legal cases fought to defend people, usually members of marginalized groups.

Use post-its and/or mark your text to note significant passages and to comment or ask questions about the texts.

Grades Eleven and Twelve:

English Selective Courses (11th and 12th graders)

You will not receive your schedule until August, so please read ***The Anthropocene Reviewed by John Green*** (described below) and one other book.

(PLEASE NOTE: Students entering the honors-level 11th and 12th grade courses, please see the separate listings and assignments below.)

The Anthropocene Reviewed by John Green

Our current geologic age— that is, the period of the earth's life we are currently in— is called the "anthropocene," which, roughly translated, means the "age of humans." In this witty collection of essays, the popular author of *The Fault in Our Stars* and *Turtles*

All the Way Down, John Green, "reviews" many features of this period, from Liverpool soccer to *Penguins of Madagascar*. To each, he gives up to five stars. (The opening sequence of *Penguins* gets 4 ½). *The Anthropocene Reviewed* gives us not only much to consider about our world and our species, but also serves as a terrific model of essay writing, and the creation of an authentic writing voice. This summer, read the wonderful, engaging essays collected in this book. As you read, use post it notes or highlighting to mark ideas that are particularly interesting to you. Pick a favorite essay, and a least favorite, and be prepared to discuss this book in the opening weeks of your selective.

English 11 Honors:

Pachinko by Min Jin Lee **and** ***Pride and Prejudice*** by Jane Austen and one other book.

Pride and Prejudice follows the Bennett sisters as they pursue both marriage and independence, in a time when middle class women had few options for social class advancement outside of finding a husband. Beginning with the line, "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife," the novel is both funny and insightful, exploring tensions between class, gender, attraction, and marriage.

Pachinko is a novel from 2017 about Korean immigrants to Japan and their descendents between the 1880s and 1980s. The characters struggle to survive and thrive in Japan, while dealing with prejudice, economic hardship, and family secrets. Lee, the author, was inspired by Victorian novels (like *Pride and Prejudice*), so be attuned to possible similarities in terms of structure, setting, and character development.

Please make a note about at least five moments in each text when the voice and tone strikes you as especially significant, and five in which you are aware of the idea of secrecy and its effects on people's lives. Be prepared to discuss these.

English 12 Honors:

Demon Copperhead, by Barbara Kingsolver and one other book.

Demon Copperhead: Set in Southern Appalachia, this Pulitzer Prize winning novel depicts Damon Fields, also known as Demon Copperhead, who navigates the world of foster care, drug addiction, school, and young love. Written in the first person, Demon tells us his tragic, yet resilient story with an unforgettable voice that has readers rooting for him from the very beginning.

Please note the two attached lists of recommended books, one for grades seven and eight, the other for grades nine through twelve. Again, your second book does not have to come from this list, but you may want to peruse the selections and see what strikes your interest.

Enjoy!!

**Suggested Titles for
Grades 7-8**

Last Name- Author	First Name- Author	Title	Blurb
Aronson	Marc	<i>Sugar Changed the World: A Story of Magic, Spice, Slavery, Freedom and Science</i>	This book explores the history and impact of sugar on our world, from slavery to revolution to human rights.
Bascomb	Neal	<i>The Nazi Hunters: How a Team of Spies and Survivors Captured the World's Most Notorious Nazi</i>	This nonfiction narrative tells the story of the seven-year search for Nazi leader, Adolf Eichmann.
Blundell	Judy	<i>What I Saw And How I Lied</i>	Evie must accept her stepfather's rush to expand his business fortune right after WWII, her mother's promiscuity, and a summer crush ending in a trial for murder.
Card	Orson Scott	<i>Ender's Game</i>	Ender Wiggins is a very bright young boy with a powerful skill. One of a group of children bred to be military geniuses and save the Earth from an inevitable attack by aliens, Ender becomes unbeatable in war games and seems ready to lead Earth to victory.
Chao	Gloria	<i>American Panda</i>	Chao explores an Asian American experience with a fun and bright story about Mei, a Taiwanese American girl who started college at seventeen and is beginning to figure out who she wants to be separate from her parents. Though she is pre-med, she doesn't actually want to be a doctor, and may have a crush on a Japanese American classmate. Sweet and light!
Christie	Agatha	<i>Death on the Nile</i>	Famous detective Hercule Poirot has his suspect, but his suspect has an airtight alibi. Can Poirot prove Jackie de Bellefort committed a crime of passion? After all, Linnet Ridgeway did steal Jackie's fiancé and wed him herself—a strong motive for murder.

Christie	Agatha	<i>The Murder of Roger Ackroyd</i>	A mystery. A full cast of characters. Many clues – both real and misleading – cleverly woven together into a story with a stunning finale that no reader could expect.
Dickens	Charles	<i>Oliver Twist</i>	Classic tale of the orphan who falls in with thieves in 19th-century London.
Du Maurier	Daphne	<i>Rebecca</i>	In this novel of mystery and passion, Maxim de Winter and his frightened new wife try to live with the haunting legacy of Maxim's first wife.
Federle	Tim	<i>Better Nate Than Never</i>	Nate travels to NYC, intent on auditioning for a Broadway production of E.T. He winds up discovering a lot about the city, himself, and both funny and serious sides of growing up.
Flake	Sharon	<i>The Skin I'm In</i>	Having suffered the teasing of classmates for everything from her clothes and grades to her skin color, Maleeka is astonished by the strength of new teacher Miss Saunders, who loves herself and life despite her blotched face.
Hansberry	Lorraine	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	In this play set in post-World War II Chicago, the Younger family deals with racism and unrealized dreams. Will they be able at last to leave their cramped apartment and move into their own home?
HEILLIG	HEIDI	<i>The Girl from Everywhere</i>	Nix has grown up on her father's pirate ship, hopping across time using maps from other eras. They finally make it to 1868 Honolulu, around the time that Nix was born and that her mother died. Nix has to deal with the historical uprising of the white plantation owners, the worry that she might no longer exist if they go back to prevent her mother's death, and her father's erratic behavior. Cleanly written and an under-represented setting.
Hinton	S.E.	<i>Rumble Fish</i>	This coming-of-age novel tells the story of Rusty, who wants to be just like his older brother, Motorcycle Boy; but life in a gang can take unexpected turns, and growing up isn't exactly what Rusty had planned.
Hunt	Irene	<i>No Promises in the Wind</i>	In 1932, America was in the depths of a deep depression. A job, food, a place to sleep, and shoes without holes were, for millions of people, nothing more than dreams. The protagonist, fifteen-year-old Josh, leaves home because of conflicts with his father. He has to make his own way through a country of angry, frightened people. This is the story of a young man's struggle to find a life for himself in the turbulent 1930s.

Korman	Gordon	<i>Jake, Reinvented</i>	How does a brilliant but nerdy guy attract the girl of his dreams? Jake has changed his image by joining the football team, throwing beer bashes for the in-crowd, and hiding all evidence of his geek life. For a while, it seems that the act is working—his heart throb, Didi, is cheating on her boyfriend to be with the now ultra-cool Jake. Then, his newly constructed world falls apart.
Law	Ingrid	<i>Savvy</i>	Imagine developing magical powers on your 13th birthday. On the eve of her special day, Mibs Beaumont begins an unforgettable journey after her father is seriously injured in a car accident. Will her magic save her dad in time, and will she be able to control it?
Marsh	Katherine	<i>Nowhere Boy</i>	A timely, poignant tale of family, sacrifice and the friendship between a young Syrian refugee and an American boy living in Brussels.
McManus	Karen	<i>One of Us Is Lying</i>	Of five students in detention, only four survive. Who kills outcast Simon, the creator of a gossip app who was just about to publish profiles on each of the other four? Secrets abound ...
McNeal	Tom	<i>Far Far Away</i>	Jacob Grimm – that’s right, the Grimm of fairy tale fame – mentors teenager Jeremy as he and his friend Ginger jump from one adventure to another, including a journey into the evil lurking in Never Better, where children are missing.

Ness	Patrick	<i>A Monster Calls: A Novel</i>	Thirteen-year-old Conor awakens one night to find a monster outside his bedroom window, but not the one from the recurring nightmare that began when his mother became ill. An ancient, wild creature wants him to face truth and loss.
Paolini	Christopher	<i>Eragon (or Eldest, Inheritance, or Brisingr)</i>	In this fantasy novel, fifteen-year-old Eragon, a common boy—or so he thought—makes a discovery that leads him into a dangerous world of magic, elves, dragons and monsters
Pearson	Mary	<i>The Adoration of Jenna Fox</i>	After waking up from a coma, Jenna realizes her body is too perfect to have survived a car accident that forced her parents to move across the country. She also wonders why she can no longer remember basic facts from her past but can recite passages from both classic literature and American history.
Raleigh Baskin	Nora	<i>The Summer Before Boys</i>	Julia and Eliza are lifelong friends who have shared everything -- until the summer that Julia’s mother is deployed to Iraq, and Julia develops her first real crush. The

			girls find themselves drifting apart until Eliza does something drastic to win back her best friend.
Reynolds	Jason	<i>Long Way Down</i>	Fifteen-year-old Will's big brother has been shot and killed. According to the rules that Will has been taught, it is now his job to kill the person responsible. He easily finds his brother's gun and gets on the elevator to head down from his eighth-floor apartment. But it's a long way down to the ground floor. At each floor, a different person gets on to tell a story. Each of these people is already dead. As they relate their tales, readers learn about the cycle of violence in which Will is caught up.
Sáenz	Benjamin	<i>Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe</i>	This book is about a complex relationship between two boys, one finding it difficult to accept himself and his family. This leads to him being unable to understand or accept love from another boy.
Sepetys	Ruta	<i>Between Shades of Gray</i>	Lina, her brother, and her mother are separated from their father, deported from their Lithuanian home, and sent by the Soviets to a Siberian labor camp. While this grim but heartwarming story is fiction, it reflects true accounts of Lithuanians who were subject to some of the same genocidal conditions as other minorities during the days preceding and during World War II.
Sheinken	Steve	<i>Bomb: The Race to Build- and Steal- the World's Most Dangerous Weapon</i>	In this non-fiction spy tale, the Soviets try to steal the secrets of the atomic bomb that the Americans are trying to build; meanwhile, the Americans are trying to prevent the Germans from building a bomb. Spies dot the pre-WWII 1938 landscape as the fate of the world rests in the balance.
Shmidt	Gary D.	<i>Wednesday Wars</i>	Seventh-grader Holling Hoodhood has several issues to contend with: Wednesday afternoons alone with his teacher while his classmates study religion, Shakespeare assignments, bullies, family needs, and the Vietnam War. Discover Holling's motivation to thrive in this Newbery Honor novel.
Slater	Dashka	<i>The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers</i>	The novel explores race, class, gender, incarceration, and identity. It explains life from two very different parts of Oakland, California, and two very different families. Sasha is a white straight-A student at a small private school in Berkeley and is agender, meaning they do not identify as male or female.

		<i>and the Crime That Changed Their Lives</i>	
Smith	Roland	<i>Peak</i>	Fourteen-year-old Peak Marcello gets the opportunity to climb Mt. Everest with his long lost father. This novel is about what happens on that climb, and how that climb changes everything for him.
Stead	Rebecca	<i>When You Reach Me</i>	Just when Miranda and her best friend, Sal, seem to have things figured out in their New York City neighborhood, weird things start happening, which affect not only their friendship but also their lives. Miranda receives four mysterious letters that lead her to conclude she is the only one who can prevent a tragedy from occurring.
Stiefvater	Maggie	<i>The Raven Boys</i>	This book earned the honor of being one of the Young Adult Library Services Association's Top Ten Best Fiction for Young Adults for 2013. In order to prevent the prophecy that she would kill her "true love" from coming true, Blue Sargent avoids boys, that is until she has a mysterious encounter on corpse road. Then her life is changed forever as she works alongside the Raven Boys in search of ley lines and lost kings.
Stiefvator	Maggie	<i>Scorpio Races</i>	In the Scorpio Races, the riders are mounted on Capaille Uisce, beautiful, bloodthirsty water horses. Sean Kendrick, the returning champion, is a man of few words but has a unique understanding of these creatures. Puck Connolly, the first girl to enter the competition, has to win or her family loses everything. They forge an unusual friendship, but only one can win the race.
Thomas	Aiden	<i>Cemetery Boys</i>	A trans boy is determined to prove his gender to his traditional Latinx family , so he summons a ghost who refuses to leave.
Tolkien	J.R.R.	<i>The Hobbit</i>	Once Gandalf, the wizard, knocks on Bilbo Baggins' door, a normal day turns into an epic adventure for the small hobbit. Bilbo's quest is to reclaim a heap of treasure from an angry dragon, Smaug. Is the tiny hobbit ready for the huge task? Discover the answer in the book that begins the Lord of the Rings trilogy!
Venkatraman	Padma	<i>The Bridge Home</i>	Enter the world of homeless children in Chennai, India, as two sisters escape their abusive father by running away and living on city streets, eventually finding a

			home of sorts on an abandoned bridge. Life is obviously not easy, but compassion still has its place...
Westerfield	Scott	<i>Leviathan</i>	With the Great War brewing, Aleksandar Ferdinand, prince of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, is running for his life. Unexpectedly he ends up aboard the Leviathan, a British whale airship, where he crosses paths with Deryn Sharp, a brilliant airman who happens to be a girl disguised as a boy in the British Air Service.
Wiles	Deborah	<i>Revolution</i>	The paths of white, twelve-year-old Sunny and “colored boy” Raymond cross several times in Jackson, Mississippi, during Freedom Summer 1964. While Sunny struggles to accept her new stepfamily and Raymond impatiently awaits integration, exciting, dangerous, and historic events surround them.
Wouk	Herman	<i>Marjorie Morningstar</i>	Marjorie rebels against the confining middle-class values of her industrious American-Jewish family and tries to find her own way in the New York social world.
Zusak	Marcus	<i>The Book Thief</i>	In the midst of World War II, Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich, sustains herself by stealing the one thing she can't resist—books. She learns to read and, during bombing raids, shares the books not only with her neighbors but also with the Jewish man hidden in her basement.

Suggested Titles for Grades 9-12

Last Name- Author	First Name- Author	Title	Blurb
Adichie	Chimamanda Ngozi	<i>Americanah</i>	This wonderful novel tells the story of Ifemelu, a Nigerian woman pursuing her academic career in America, who decides to move back to Nigeria, puzzling many of her friends and family but satisfying in her a deep need for home and a reconnection to her first love, Obinze, now a successful Nigerian businessman who has his own questions about the way he's living his life.
Adichie	Chimamanda Ngozi	<i>Purple Hibiscus</i>	15 year-old Kambili lives a privileged life in Nigeria, the daughter of a "Big Man" who is also a devout Catholic, and who imposes on her and her brother a strict lifestyle. But when political troubles at her father's paper cause her to go live with her Aunt, a free-thinking professor, and her two cousins, she inevitably questions her strict upbringing. The ensuing conflict exposes much about her family she did not understand.
Ahmed	Samira	<i>Love, Hate and Other Filters</i>	High school senior Maya Aziz is torn between meeting her parents' expectations that she stay close to home for college and her dreams of attending film school in NYC.
Alyan	Hala	<i>Salt Houses</i>	As it recounts the changing situations and generations of a family displaced through the Palestinian diaspora, this novel explores dilemmas and dynamics of love, family, and loyalty.
Angelou	Maya	<i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i>	In her autobiographical novel, late poet Maya Angelou recounts her difficult childhood and the various influences that led her into a life as a writer.
Atkinson	Kate	<i>Life After Life</i>	The protagonist of this contemporary British novel lives and dies repeatedly over the course of modern British history, inviting readers to wonder: what role can an individual play in the world?
Atwood	Margaret	<i>The Penelopiad</i>	This is a retelling of <i>The Odyssey</i> , from the point of view of Penelope, Odysseus's long-suffering wife. As Atwood says, "The story as told in The

			Odyssey doesn't hold water" –this version answers many questions, primarily, "What was Penelope really up to" while Odysseus was away all those years?
Atwood	Margaret	<i>Cat's Eye</i>	Through a flashback, narrator Elaine recalls the difficulty of navigating the world of adolescence and the social dynamics of girl cliques. Through her recollections, she gains a better understanding of herself and her place and her world.
Austen	Jane	<i>Sense and Sensibility</i>	The story of two sisters in early 19th-century England, one wild and passionate, the other reasonable and mature, and the romantic tribulations they face.
Austen	Jane	<i>Emma</i>	Charming, willful Emma Woodhouse entertains herself by planning other people's lives, but her meddling backfires and Emma learns a valuable lesson.
Barker	Pat	<i>Regeneration</i>	During the First World War an English army psychiatrist treats a group of shell-shocked young men. They explore vivid flashbacks of the war, their feelings about pacifism and masculinity, and conflicts around social class
Beah	Ishmael	<i>A Long Way Gone</i>	Against the backdrop of war-torn Sierra Leone, twelve-year-old Ishmael Beah sets off on foot to flee the violence, only to be forced into becoming a boy soldier. Once freed, he must learn to forgive himself and heal.
Benioff	David	<i>City of Thieves</i>	During World War II, the Germans brutally seized Leningrad and held it for almost three years, oppressing the Russian civilians who tried to survive amidst crippling shortages of food and necessities, as well as the intermittent fighting between the Russian and German armies. This novel tells the fictional story of two young men, a civilian chess champion and an army deserter, who are sent on a mad mission by a colonel who wants to bake a cake for his daughter's birthday: They have a week to find a dozen eggs in the city, or die trying.

Bradbury	Ray	<i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	In this science-fiction novel about a bleak, futuristic world, Guy Montag is a fireman who is responsible not for putting fires out but for starting them, using books, which are illegal in this world, as fuel.
Bronte	Emily	<i>Wuthering Heights</i>	The passionate love story of Heathcliff and Catherine explores the degree to which death and time have power over passion and revenge.
Cep	Casey	<i>Furious Hours</i>	This nonfiction work explores the true crime book that Harper Lee, author of <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> , worked on for years but never finished writing.
Cleave	Chris	<i>Little Bee</i>	Husband and wife journalists go to war-torn Nigeria and encounter Little Bee, an orphan who is in danger of being swallowed up by the ravages of her failing country.
Conrad	Joseph	<i>Heart of Darkness</i>	Riveting novella from the turn of the twentieth century, often criticized today for its one-dimensional portrayals of native people, about a European steamboat captain's piloting of a ship down the Congo, into the "heart of Africa," to retrieve a white ivory trader who has reportedly lost his mind.
Dashner	James	<i>The Maze Runner</i>	Thomas wakes up in an elevator, remembering nothing but his own name. He emerges into a world of about 60 teen boys who have learned to survive in a completely enclosed environment. The original group has been in "the glade" for two years, trying to find a way to escape through a maze. They have begun to give up hope, but then a comatose girl arrives with a strange note, and their world begins to change.
Diaz	Junot	<i>The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i>	This humorous and heartbreaking story follows Oscar, an obese, game-playing aspiring fantasy novelist, as he searches for love among his fellow Dominicans in present day New Jersey.
Donoghue	Emma	<i>Room</i>	Told from the perspective of five-year-old Jack, this is the poignant story of the ways his mother shelters him from the horrors of their ordeal as captives in an eleven-by-eleven foot room.

Dostoyevsky	Fyodor	<i>Crime and Punishment</i>	A complex examination of guilt, self-destruction, and repentance. This novel follows the story of Raskolnikov, a man who believes he has the right to commit murder.
Eggers	Dave	<i>Zeitoun</i>	The riveting non-fiction account of one man's experiences as he tries to protect his property in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.
Eggers	Dave	<i>What is the What</i>	This true story follows one of the "Lost Boys" of Sudan. He and many other boys make their way across hundreds of miles of dangerous terrain; when he eventually arrives in America he faces the challenge of adapting to a new culture.
Erskine	Kathryn	<i>Mockingbird</i>	Ten-year-old Caitlin, who has Asperger's Syndrome, must cope with the school shooting that took her brother's life. Caitlin learns social skills in a setting that is both humorous and tragic. Allusions to Harper Lee's <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> , which you will read in the 9th grade, are seen in Caitlin's relationships with her father and deceased brother.
Eugenides	Jeffrey	<i>Middlesex</i>	This novel follows Cal, a man who tells the story of his Greek-American family from the time his grandparents knew each other in the old country to his own adulthood in Berlin. It is an often unsettling, often humorous story of a person who, as an adolescent, is forced to question everything she understands about herself.
Forster	E.M.	<i>Howard's End</i>	Set in Edwardian England, this novel concerns the relationships that develop among the life-loving Schlegel family and tensions they face as they get intertwined with both lower and upper class friends and lovers.
Fowles	John	<i>The French Lieutenant's Woman</i>	An inventive novel about Victorian England (written in the 1970's) in which a wealthy young man falls in love with an ostracized woman who had an illicit relationship with a French soldier.
Gladwell	Malcolm	<i>Outliers</i>	This book sets out to provide an understanding of success. Through case studies ranging from Canadian junior hockey champions to the robber barons of the Gilded Age, from Asian math whizzes to software entrepreneurs to the

			rise of his own family in Jamaica, Gladwell tears down the myth of individual merit to explore how culture, circumstance, timing, birth and luck account for success.
Gyasi	Yaa	<i>Homegoing</i>	Through realistic and moving historical fiction, Gyasi traces the different experiences of eight generations of a family from Ghana: one branch stays in Ghana and includes members who sell others into slavery, while one branch ends up in America and includes both slaves and their descendants.
Harary	Yuval Noah	<i>Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind</i>	A fascinating look at the development of the human species, from its inception to the current day, through anthropological, historical, political, sociological, and economic lenses.
Hardy	Thomas	<i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i>	The moving story of a girl in Victorian England who must cope with being a victim of rape and therefore an outcast. This novel speaks not only to feminist concerns, but to questions of guilt, compassion, and self-image as well.
Hobbs	Jeff	<i>The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace</i>	In this 2014 work of narrative nonfiction, Hobbs writes about his former roommate at Yale, Robert Peace, an African-American student who faced challenges moving between two worlds: the world of poverty and violence where his family and friends live, to the world of an Ivy League university.
Hemingway	Ernest	<i>A Farewell to Arms</i>	This story of Lieutenant Henry, an American soldier, and Catherine Barkley, a British nurse, explores the possibility of love amid the danger and uncertainties of World War I.
Hillenbrand	Laura	<i>Unbroken</i>	This is a true account of a World War II pilot's experience being shot down, surviving at sea for many weeks, and eventually being captured by the enemy. It's packed with action and well-researched historical detail, and it presents a riveting picture of one man's perseverance in the face of the horrors of war. Watch for scenes NOT found in the movie!
Homer		<i>The Iliad</i>	Scenes of warfare, wounds, heroes, gods, and a wide range of human emotions fill the pages of this classic epic of the Trojan War.

Ishiguro	Kazuo	<i>Never Let Me Go</i>	A group of friends have grown up together in a strange British boarding school. But where did they come from? Over the course of the novel they all begin to wonder about what purpose they could have in this strange near-future world.
King	Stephen	<i>Elevation</i>	Not only a writer of horror stories, King has moved mostly to characterization and human interactions and is a master of “show, don’t tell.” Presenting a very human interaction between a young married female couple and an older man with a peculiar condition, he brings out the best in people.
Kingsolver	Barbara	<i>The Bean Trees</i>	Outspoken Taylor Greer leaves Kentucky to head west. She becomes mother to an abandoned baby and befriends a young, battered divorcee who also has a little girl. Together they deal with difficult problems, creating a family for themselves.
Krakauer	John	<i>Into the Wild</i>	The tragic true story of a young man’s journey into the wilderness of Mt. McKinley.
Lee	Chang-Rae	<i>On Such a Full Sea</i>	In a futuristic society where everyone is strictly segregated by class, a young woman goes on a quest across boundaries to find the man she loves.
Lee	Harper	<i>Go Set A Watchman</i>	Read Harper Lee's recently discovered second novel, the manuscript for which was found just a few years ago! In this story Scout returns to Maycomb as an adult, facing both personal and political issues and an aging Atticus.
Marquez	Gabriel Garcia	<i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i>	Through the story of the Buendia family, this novel tells the story of the rise and fall, birth and death of the mystical town of Macondo.
McBride	James	<i>The Color of Water</i>	In this combination of biography and autobiography, McBride explores the life of his mother, a woman raised as an Orthodox Jew who marries into an African-American community, as well as his own life as a biracial child.
McCarthy	Cormac	<i>The Road</i>	This novel is set in a post-apocalyptic world of gray skies that drizzle ash. Journeying across this horrific landscape are an unnamed man and his emaciated son whose love for each other helps them survive.
McCourt	Frank	<i>Angela’s Ashes</i>	McCourt’s stirring memoir of his impoverished childhood in Ireland celebrates his mother’s fortitude in raising him and his siblings, almost single-handedly.

McCullough	David	<i>The Wright Brothers</i>	It is hard to appreciate the triumph of the Wright Brothers' accomplishment until one reads of the years of experimentation, discouragement, and persistence that led to their success. The history of the modern world can be divided between time before powered flight and after.
Miller	Madeline	<i>Circe</i>	This novel takes the well-known tale of the sorceress Circe and reframes it from her point of view. A daughter of Helios, Circe is banished to a remote island where she not only turns men into pigs, but casts amazing spells that bring her independence and power. During her eventful life, she meets Daedalus, the Minotaur, Medea, and of course, Odysseus!
Moore	Alan	<i>Watchmen</i>	This graphic novel tells the story of a group of flawed superheroes and the conflicts they face living in a dangerous world that no longer celebrates their accomplishments.
Morrison	Toni	<i>Beloved</i>	In this uniquely-told, powerful novel about the years after the American Civil War, a former slave, Sethe, is visited by a friend of her late husband's, Paul D. As she and Paul D. reveal their tortured pasts, Beloved arrives, a mysterious figure bearing a ghostly secret.
Murdock	Catherine	<i>Dairy Queen</i>	After her father is injured, 15-year-old DJ takes over the lion's share of the work on her family's small dairy farm. Following her summer spent training the rival team's quarterback, DJ decides to go out for the sport herself, not anticipating the reactions of those around her.
Owens	Delia	<i>Where the Crawdads Sing</i>	Part nature story, part coming of age tale, part murder mystery, Owens' novel explores the life of Kya, known as "the Marsh Girl," who from the age of ten raises herself in the marshes of North Carolina, only gradually interacting with others in the nearby community.
Pollan	Michael	<i>The Botany of Desire</i>	How have plants evolved to fit humans' needs and desires? How have we changed, as a result of our relationship to plants? In this compelling work of nonfiction science prose, Pollan explores the symbiotic relationship between humans and plants.

Reinhardt	Dana	<i>The Things a Brother Knows</i>	Traumatized by his experiences as a marine, Levi Katznelson's older brother Boaz comes home and isolates himself. When he leaves, saying that he must do something, Leon follows, trying as they walk and walk to regain the closeness they once shared.
Saks	Oliver	<i>The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat</i>	Saks made a name for himself as a neurologist working on tough cases that seemingly held little hope. His exceptional insights caught the attention of many outside the mental health field.
Saramago	Jose	<i>Blindness</i>	"A city is hit by an epidemic of 'white blindness' that spares no one... As <i>Blindness</i> reclaims the ago-old story of a plague, it evokes the vivid and trembling horrors of the twentieth century, leaving readers with a powerful vision of the human spirit that's bound both by weakness and exhilarating strength." (Goodreads)
Saunders	George	<i>The Tenth of December</i>	Contemporary short story writer George Saunders presents a unique vision of the modern world in these stories, some of which are harrowing and others of which are quite humorous. (You must read all of the stories if you choose this book).
Sedaris	David	<i>Naked</i>	In one of his most highly praised memoirs, Sedaris humorously presents seventeen essays depicting his quirky life. From the plague of nervous tics disrupting Sedaris' school years to the hitchhiking days of encountering a motley mix of characters, <i>Naked</i> is the amusement park of memoirs.
Shamsie	Kamila	<i>Home Fire</i>	In this gripping and touching contemporary novel based loosely on the classic tale of <i>Antigone</i> , two British-Pakistani families wrestle with issues of family and cultural loyalty against a backdrop of ethnic discrimination, international tensions, and identity issues.
Skloot	Rebecca	<i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i>	Combining issues of science, ethics, and race, this bestseller tells the true story of a woman whose cells have become the basis of thousands of medical experiments and discoveries -- all while her family lacks basic health insurance.
Slawenski	Kenneth	<i>J.D. Salinger: A Life</i>	This biography details Salinger's privileged youth, and challenges the rumors surrounding his early years and his later years of solitude. Slawenski reveals

			"the brilliant, sarcastic, vulnerable son of a disapproving father and doting mother and his entrance into a social world where Gloria Vanderbilt dismissively referred to him as 'a Jewish boy from New York.'"
Smith	Zadie	<i>White Teeth</i>	The sweeping story of two friends, veterans of WWII, and their unusual marriages, explores the racial, ethnic, and religious divides in post-war England.
Spiegelman	Art	<i>Maus I and Maus II</i>	Cartoonist Art Spiegelman, using graphic novel format, documents his father's experiences in Nazi-occupied Poland. Spiegelman twists this chillingly real, Holocaust survival tale by portraying the repressive Nazis as cats and hunted Jews as mice.
Steinbeck	John	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	Powerful novel of dispossessed landowners who leave Oklahoma during the Great Depression and head for the "promised land" of California.
Stevenson	Bryan	<i>Just Mercy</i>	In this non-fiction work, the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative presents stories of legal cases fought to defend people, usually poor and/or minorities, treated unfairly by the criminal justice system. The stories mix heartbreak, humanity, and occasional victory.
Stoker	Bram	<i>Dracula</i>	Evil comes to England from Transylvania. The classic vampire story that started it all, this novel has served as a basis for over thirty films and a Broadway play.
Tammet	Daniel	<i>Born on a Blue Day</i>	This is the autobiography of an autistic savant who explores what it's like to be different from early childhood until adulthood, when he finally realizes his true self.
Thomas	Angie	<i>Concrete Rose</i>	A prequel to <i>The Hate U Give</i> , <i>Concrete Rose</i> focuses on Starr's dad, Maverick Carter, as a late teenager. Trying to take care of his mom, he gets caught up in dealing drugs, until he learns that he's to be a father. Then he decides to go straight -- and has to deal with the gang he left behind. What does it take to be a man?
Thomas	Angie	<i>The Hate U Give</i>	After witnessing the fatal police shooting of her friend Khalil, Starr must figure out how to handle the situation -- along with all of the other social and racial

			issues involved in being a black student at a predominantly white school and growing up in modern-day America.
Thomas	Angie	<i>On the Come Up</i>	Following in her deceased father's footsteps, Bri is working her way up as a rap star while trying to discover who she really is and how her family can survive intact.
Tolstoy	Leo	<i>Anna Karenina</i>	The impossible and destructive triangle of Anna, her husband Karenin, and her lover Vronsky, set in nineteenth-century Russia.
Vance	J.D.	<i>Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis</i>	Vance relates his upbringing in the Appalachian area and Ohio during the 1990s. His experiences may remind you of Jeannette Walls' memoir; his childhood takes place about two decades later than hers...but some of their experiences are not so different.
Vonnegut, Jr.	Kurt	<i>Cat's Cradle</i>	In this science fiction satire, technology, science, religion, and human foolishness combine to destroy civilization on the fictitious island of San Lorenzo.
Walker	Alice	<i>The Color Purple</i>	A novel in letters of a black woman's life and her triumph over abuse and grief in Depression-era rural Georgia.
Walls	Jeannette	<i>Half-Broke Horses</i>	Author of <i>The Glass Castle</i> Jeannette Walls writes about her grandmother, who grew up poor on a ranch and learned how to break wild horses, fly a plane, and teach in a frontier town.
Wamariya	Clemantine	<i>The Girl Who Smiled Beads: A Story of War and What Comes After</i>	In this memoir Clemantine recounts her experiences as a young girl growing up during and after the Rwandan genocide. For six years she and Claire, her older sister, seek safety in other African countries before they are granted asylum in the U.S.; but asylum doesn't answer how one copes with such atrocities.
Westover	Tara	<i>Educated</i>	This memoir tells the story of a young woman growing up in an isolated and abusive family, learning to work in a scrapyard but shamed for her curiosity about the world.
Whitehead	Colson	<i>The Underground Railroad</i>	Cora and Caesar, escaped slaves, are on the run. This intense novel weaves realistic situations with magical realism.

Wingate	Lisa	<i>Before We Were Yours</i>	As the director of an adoption organization, Georgia Tann kidnaps poor children and sells them to rich families. Wingate bases her heart-wrenching but also heart-warming book on a true story.
Woodson	Jacqueline	<i>Red at the Bone</i>	Several generations of a family in Brooklyn bear the impact of a complex family history, marked by typical attitudes toward race and gender, and played out against the backdrop of the difficulties faced by New York City in the early 2000's.
Woolf	Virginia	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	This beautifully written exploration of Clarissa Dalloway, a sophisticated, well-to-do British wife and mother, reveals much about gender, class, psychology, and even the ravages of World War I in early twentieth-century London.
Woolf	Virginia	<i>A Room of One's Own</i>	Woolf explores the role of women in fiction, and the presence or absence of women in the literary canon. The essay argues that, for women to participate in the creation of literature, they must have the time and space to do so.
Wright	Richard	<i>The Man Who Lived Underground</i>	In this novel by one of the most acclaimed African-American writers of the Twentieth Century, published posthumously in 2022, we meet Fred Daniels, a hard-working person of color in 1940's America who is unjustly accused of a vicious murder. To escape the violent police, he descends underground through a manhole cover, and discovers a side of his city-- and of himself-- that he'd never considered.
Zevin	Gabrielle	<i>Elsewhere</i>	Elsewhere is where fifteen-year-old Liz Hall ends up after dying. A place so like Earth, yet completely diverse, Elsewhere is where Liz will age backward from the day of her death until she becomes a baby again and revisits Earth. How can Liz let go of the only life she has ever known and accept a new one?