Westhill High School English Summer Reading 2025

Select one summer reading book. The list below provides some recent award-winning suggestions. Click on an image in the bookshelf or scroll down in this document to learn more about the books and the awards.

Spend time reading a good book this summer. While we have provided suggestions for inspiration, feel free to choose a title that does not appear on the list. Chat with your friends, parents, teachers, and librarians about the books they recommend. Browse the shelves in the library and bookstores or read reviews online. Choose a fiction or nonfiction book that interests you and that challenges you. The possibilities are nearly endless. Our purpose is to encourage you to find an enjoyable summer read. Have a great summer! We look forward to celebrating your reading accomplishments upon return to school. *Click here or scroll down for additional requirements for advanced classes*.




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Requirements for Advanced Classes

Juniors taking AP English Language and Composition or AP/ECE (11) and **seniors** taking AP Literature and Composition (12) **have different summer reading requirements.**

Juniors

★ If you are taking AP Language and Composition or AP/ECE please use this link to access your assignment.

Seniors

★ If you are taking AP Literature and Composition please use this link to access your assignment.

Any questions about the summer reading assignments may be directed to Ms. Wheeler, the English Department Leader, via email - cwheeler@stamfordpublicschools.org,


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Book Suggestion Descriptions

How to Solve Your Own Murder by Kristen Perrin

It's 1965 and teenage Frances Adams is at an English country fair with her two best friends. But Frances's night takes a hairpin turn when a fortune-teller makes a bone-chilling prediction: One day, Frances will be murdered. Frances spends a lifetime trying to solve a crime that hasn't happened yet, compiling dirt on every person who crosses her path in an effort to prevent her own demise. For decades, no one takes Frances seriously, until nearly sixty years later, when Frances is found murdered, like she always said she would be. In the present day, Annie Adams has been summoned to a meeting at the sprawling country estate of her wealthy and reclusive great-aunt Frances. But by the time Annie arrives in the quaint English village of Castle Knoll, Frances is already dead. Annie is determined to catch the killer, but thanks to Frances's lifelong habit of digging up secrets and lies, it seems every endearing and eccentric villager might just have a motive for her murder. Can Annie safely unravel the dark mystery at the heart of Castle Knoll, or will dredging up the past throw her into the path of a killer? As Annie gets closer to the truth, and closer to the danger, she starts to fear she might inherit her aunt's fate instead of her fortune. Alex Award Winner 2025

I Feel Awful, Thanks by Lara Pickle

This graphic novel that explores the hardfought journey of self-acceptance in a complex world of swirling emotions and powerful potions, Joana has dragons inside her. Can she tame them before they burn her life down? Joana is a young witch who secured her dream job with a coven in London, her favorite city, where she can dedicate herself to creating potions, her favorite activity! However, she will soon discover the reality of city life is not so idyllic. Finding a flat is an ordeal, her "dream job" is stressful, and she's totally alone. Little by little, she makes her place, but fatigue, sadness, and doubts threaten to topple her hard-earned success . . . until she starts talking to a professional who helps her realize in order to take care of herself, she must know herself. Alex Award Winner 2025

I Was a Teenage Slasher by Stephen Graham Jones

It's the summer before senior year for best friends Tolly Driver and Amber Dennison. They're not in the marching band, they're not in the FFA – they don't really count. Amber's the only Native student in town, and Tolly's only on the radar due to his father's recent death. This is all about to change. Bodies are going to be dropping fast in this small West Texas town. For a few unbearably hot days that will resonate through the decades and even get made into a TV movie, Tolly and Amber will be famous. Notorious even. Finally, everyone will know their names. This is Stephen Graham Jones x-raying the slasher genre, interrogating its motivations over the shoulder and in the voice of the killer itself – from a town he did some growing up in, in a year he was also seventeen. The kills will be poignant, the jokes will hurt, and the violence will be endearing. Everything's turned around for Tolly, for Amber – for all of Lamesa, Texas. Alex Award Winner 2025


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Daughters of Shandong by Eve J. Chung

Daughters are the Ang family's curse. In 1948, civil war ravages the Chinese countryside, but in rural Shandong, the wealthy, landowning Angs are more concerned with their lack of an heir. Hai is the eldest of four girls and spends her days looking after her sisters. Headstrong Di, who is just a year younger, learns to hide in plain sight, and their mother—abused by the family for failing to birth a boy—finds her own small acts of rebellion in the kitchen. As the Communist army closes in on their town, the rest of the prosperous household flees, leaving behind the girls and their mother because they view them as useless mouths to feed. Without an Ang male to punish, the land-seizing cadres choose Hai, as the eldest child, to stand trial for her family's crimes. She barely survives their brutality. Realizing the worst is yet to come, the women plan their escape. Starving and penniless but resourceful, they forge travel permits and embark on a thousand-mile journey to confront the family that abandoned them. From the countryside to the bustling city of Qingdao, and onward to British Hong Kong and eventually Taiwan, they witness the changing tide of a nation and the plight of multitudes caught in the wake of revolution. But with the loss of their home and the life they've known also comes new freedom—to take hold of their fate, to shake free of the bonds of their gender, and to claim their own story. Alex Award Winner 2025

Brownstone: A Graphic Novel by Samuel Teer

Almudena has always wondered about the dad she never met. Now, with her white mother headed on a once-in-a-lifetime trip without her, she's left alone with her Guatemalan father for an entire summer. Xavier seems happy to see her, but he expects her to live in (and help fix up) his old, broken-down brownstone. And all along, she must navigate the language barrier of his rapid-fire Spanish—which she doesn't speak. As Almudena tries to adjust to this new reality, she gets to know the residents of Xavier's Latin American neighborhood. Each member of the community has their own joys and heartbreaks as well as their own strong opinions on how this young Latina should talk, dress, and behave. Some can't understand why she doesn't know where she comes from. Others think she's "not brown enough" to fit in. But time is running out for Almudena and Xavier to get to know each other, and the key to their connection may ultimately lie in bringing all these different elements together. Fixing a broken building is one thing, but turning these stubborn individuals into a found family might take more than this one summer. Printz Honor Winner 2025

Wild Dreamers by Margarita Engle

Ana and her mother have been living out of their car ever since her militant father became one of the FBI's most wanted. Leandro has struggled with debilitating anxiety since his family fled Cuba on a perilous raft. One moonlit night, in a wilderness park in California, Ana and Leandro meet. Their connection is instant—a shared radiance that feels both scientific and magical. Then they discover they are not alone: a huge mountain lion stalks through the trees, one of many wild animals whose habitat has been threatened by humans. Determined to make a difference, Ana and Leandro start a rewilding club at their school, working with scientists to build wildlife crossings that can help mountain lions find one another. If pumas can find their way to a better tomorrow, surely Ana and Leandro can too. Pura Belpre Honor Book 2025


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A Greater Goal: The Epic Battle for Equal Pay in Women's Soccer-and Beyond by Elizabeth Rusch

With the passage of Title IX in 1972, the doors opened for young women to play sports at a higher level. But for the women on the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team, being able to compete at an international level didn't mean fair treatment and fair compensation.From economy-class airplane seats and inadequate lodging to minimal marketing and slashed wages, the women representing the United States at the Olympics, the World Cup, and other tournaments had reason to be fed up. They were expected to—and did—win, but they weren't compensated for their talent and dedication. With the help of their union and in collaboration with the men's team, they secured an equitable contract in 2022 that ultimately benefited both national teams as well as athletes of the future.This book chronicles how members of the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team fought to receive fair treatment and equal pay despite the intense pushback they received from U.S. Soccer, the governing body of soccer in the United States. With a narrative that includes player profiles and vignettes framed from team member perspectives, A Greater Goal illuminates the work, support, and grit needed to be treated with equality in a world that often undervalues the contributions of women. YALSA Excellence in Nonfiction Finalist 2025

Shackled: A Tale of Wronged Kids, Rogue Judges, and a Town that Looked Away by Candy J. Cooper

In the early 2000s, Judge Mark Ciavarella and Judge Michael Conahan of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania were known as no-nonsense judges. Juveniles who showed up in their courtrooms faced harsh words and even harsher sentencing. In the post-Columbine era, many people believed that was just what the county needed to ensure its children and teens stayed on the straight and narrow path. But as more and more children faced shocking sentences for seemingly benign crimes, and a newly built for-profit detention center filled up further and further, a sinister pattern of abuses and bribery emerged. Through extensive research and original reporting leading into contemporary times, award-winning journalist Candy J. Cooper tells the story of a scandal that the Juvenile Law Center calls "one of the largest and most serious violations of children's rights in the history of the American legal system. YALSA Excellence in Nonfiction Finalist 2025

The Great Cool Ranch Dorito in the Sky by Josh Galarza

Ever since cancer invaded his adoptive mother's life, Brett feels like he's losing everything, most of all control. To cope, Brett fuels all of his anxieties into epic fantasies, including his intergalactic Kid Condor comic book series, which features food constellations and characters not unlike those in his own life. But lately Brett's grip on reality has started to lose its hold. The fictions he's been telling himself – about his unattractive body, the feeling that he's a burden to his best friend, that he's too messed up to be loved – have consumed him completely, and Brett will do anything to forget about the cosmic-sized hole in his chest, even if it's unhealthy. But when Brett's journal and deepest insecurities are posted online for the whole school to see, Brett realizes he can no longer avoid the painful truths of his real-life narrative. As his eating disorder escalates, Brett must be honest with the people closest to him, including his new and fierce friend Mallory who seems to know more about Brett's issues than he does. With their support, he just might find the courage to face the toughest reality of all. National Book Award Finalist for Young People's Literature 2024


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Black Girl, You Are Atlas **by Renée Watson**

In this semi-autobiographical collection of poems, Renée Watson writes about her experience growing up as a young Black girl at the intersections of race, class, and gender. Using a variety of poetic forms, from haiku to free verse, Watson shares recollections of her childhood in Portland, tender odes to the Black women in her life, and urgent calls for Black girls to step into their power. *Black Girl You Are Atlas* encourages young readers to embrace their future with a strong sense of sisterhood and celebration. Coretta Scott King Honor Book 2025