

# **Winchester Thurston School**



## **SUMMER READING 2026**

Upper School

## WT Upper School Summer Reading

In addition to any summer reading or summer work assignments, we encourage students to read for pleasure over the summer. All Upper School students are invited to **compete in the [2026 Summer Reading CHALLENGE](#)** (full details at the link), where students can track their reading and compete for prizes to be awarded when we come back to school in the fall!

When choosing a great summer read, there are many resources available to help you and your child find high-interest, high-quality book recommendations. A few notable resources include:

- [2025 Best Fiction for Young Adults \(YALSA\)](#)
- [2025 Teens' Top Ten \(teen choice\)](#)
- [Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Summer Reading Program](#)
- [New York Public Library Book Lists](#)
- [New York Public Library's "Books for All" program](#)
- [Brooklyn Public Library's "Books Unbanned" program](#)

Don't forget that you need not purchase any books for summer reading unless you choose to. The public library is a wonderful resource that allows you to easily access most any book, in a variety of formats, for free! Browse or search here: [Allegheny County Library Online Catalog](#).

**\*\*Students only need to complete Summer Reading for the below classes if they are enrolled in the class for the 26-27 school year\*\***

**\*\*Finalized schedules for the 26-27 school year will be released in mid-July\*\***

**\*\*All reading requirements must be completed before August 25, 2026\*\***

Upper School Librarian Contact Information:

Elsa Buehler  
e.buehler@winchesterthurston.org



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## Incoming Ninth Grade Reading Requirements

English 9: Literature of Journeys and Discoveries

**Read 5 or more choice books and keep track of them. Be prepared to hand in your bibliography and to discuss your selections on the first day of school.**

Read a minimum of 5 books over the summer. Students are encouraged to read as many books as they have time for over the summer.

Select any reading materials you are interested in, such as:

[25 Essential High School Reads From the Last Decade | Edutopia](#)

[Best Books for Teens 2025 | The New York Public Library](#)

[Spring 2026 Picks for Teens | The New York Public Library](#)

[NY Times readers pick best book of past 125 years](#)

Prepare an [MLA-style](#) reading bibliography. Alphabetize your citations. Include the number of pages.

Sample Entries:

Anderson, Laurie Halse. [Speak](#). Puffin. 2006. 224 p.

Van Pelt, Shelby. [Remarkably Bright Creatures](#). Ecco. 2022. 368 p.

Zevin, Gabrielle. [Elsewhere](#). Square Fish. 2007. 304 p.



### **Incoming 10th Grade Summer Reading**

English 10: American Voices and American Foundings 2026

Dear (soon to be) 10th grade student, the week we return to class, we will be using our summer independent reads for one of our first in-class essays, so come back prepared with your annotations completed.

As the bingo card indicates, your books you select for the Annotated Bibliography \*\*\***must be written by American authors.**\*\*\* The idea here is that you'll be reading with an intentional variety while still giving you plenty of room to choose something that interests you.



**PART 1: READ (at least) THREE books over the summer, completing all three before school starts.** While we want you to select your own American texts that interest you, we ask that you use this chart to instill a bit of variety in your choices. **Note:** We ask that you annotate books that *aren't* part of our syllabus, thus you may not choose *The Great Gatsby*.

|                                                                                                          |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                   |                                                                             |                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Complete one book published before 1900 written by an American author.                                   | Complete a book written by an American author who identifies as AAPI (Asian American & Pacific Islander). | Complete a book written by an American author about the colonization and/or founding of America.  | Complete a memoir written by an American author.                            | Complete a winner or finalist of the Printz award or National Book Award for Young People. |
| Complete a nonfiction book based on an American author's research (not memoir).                          | Complete a book written by an American author that foregrounds LGBTQIA+ experiences.                      | <b>FREE SPACE!</b><br>Read a text by any American writer that you're drawn to in some way.        | Complete a collection of poetry written by an American author.              | Complete a book written by an American author about science or mathematics.                |
| Complete a book written by an American author in which an event is retold through multiple perspectives. | Complete a book written by an American author in which most of the characters are women.                  | Complete a book written by an American author that is categorized as historical fiction.          | Complete a book written by an American author who identifies as Indigenous. | Complete a book written by an American author that includes elements of science fiction.   |
| Complete a Pulitzer Prize, or Booker Prize winner by an American author.                                 | Complete a book written by an American author about a religious community or tradition.                   | Complete a book written by an American author that deals with issues of equity or social justice. | Complete a book written by a Black American.                                | Complete a collection of short stories written by an American author.                      |



**PART 2: Write an annotated biography to turn in.**

The Annotated Bibliography has two parts for each of your three books-

**Accurate MLA Entry for each book (ALPHABETIZE entries by author last name):**

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. City of Publication, Publisher, Publication Date.

**Write one paragraph describing your experience reading the book:**

Each citation is followed by a brief descriptive paragraph, which should include the student's evaluation of the text rather than a summary of it. Explain which of the characteristics on the Bingo card the book aligns with (even though there may be multiple, pick just one). Rate the book 1-5 (5 being best), say why you ranked it this way, and identify the difficulty of the text (easy, just right, hard, et cetera).

**Example Entry:**

Doerr, Anthony. [\*Cloud Cuckoo Land\*](#). New York, Scribner, 2020.

*Cloud Cuckoo Land* is an ambitious epic novel spanning 1453 A.D. to the future (2100 or so). Although it follows five different main characters, the protagonist actually seems to be a book. It's really about the unlikelihood of any old text surviving. Diogenes apparently wrote a comedy titled *Cloud Cuckoo Land*, which we know existed but it has since been destroyed. This is a story imagining how a book like that might have survived. Although we do not have the original text, the book makes me wonder what all went into the survival of Homer's writings, Shakespeare's writings, writings we find in the Bible and the Koran. In my bingo card, I categorize this book under "book that references a text written before 1800," not only for the references to the long lost *Cloud Cuckoo Land*, but also because it quotes sections from *The Odyssey* at length. And it didn't just reference it, but it made me curious about the *Odyssey*. I give this book a solid 5/5 because it manages to weave together plot lines in a surprising and satisfying way, and also because even though it looks long, it goes really fast. I give this the difficulty of "just right," because even though I came across words I



didn't know and had to force myself to focus, I could also read it at the beach.

Turn in an alphabetized list of the books you read over the summer. This list should include a minimum of 3 books, be **alphabetized** by the author, but **not** numbered. Notice that the annotation for the book is a **reverse indent**.

Here are some helpful lists to consult as you make your selections (you may use books not on the list as well, **so long as they are written by an American author**):

[Pintz award winners and finalists](#)

[National Book Young Readers award winners and longlist/ shortlist](#)

[YALSA Non-Fiction award](#)

[80 YA Books set around the world](#) (remember to confirm that your authors are American!)



## Algebra 2 Summer Math Review

Students entering **Algebra 2** have a required summer review packet. The packet is linked below and **will be collected in the second week of school** and recorded as an assignment.

### How to show your work in math:

1. Read this to understand [why it matters to show my work](#). We don't make you do this because we like it: it is based in neuroscience and helps you to develop stronger communication *and* critical thinking skills.
2. Write out **every step** - if you find yourself automatically doing a computation mentally, figure out how you would write it down to make sense to the reader. This includes things that you might be able to easily do in your head.
3. Show each step on a **separate line**. Avoid the temptation to do multiple steps in one line of your work.
4. Write out all your work clearly in the printed packet or clearly on notebook paper.
5. If you make a mistake in your work, ~~cross out that work clearly~~. Crossing out work is preferable to erasing since you can go back later to learn from your mistake. Mistakes are our best teachers :-)

### Entering Algebra 2:

Students entering Algebra 2 must **complete the Algebra 1 Review Packet**. This packet will help you to review critical Algebra 1 skills that we will build on in Algebra 2.

You can find the **review packet** in the folder at this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/yw5t9ubx>

- **It is collected and graded - due 2nd week of class.** No class time will be allotted for working on it.
- There is an **additional document in that folder** that provides resources if you forget any of these skills.
- **You must show all of your work for each problem in order to earn credit.** The packet will be graded.
- **You must do your own work.** Do not rely on someone else's work or effort – this will only make your own work harder in the future.
- There will be an Algebra 1 skills [diagnostic pretest](#) at the beginning of the year to measure your proficiency. This test will not count as a grade, but it will help us to know if you have any knowledge gaps that you need to address - significant gaps will require extra work on your part - individually and with your teacher - so do the extra work this summer!



## Precalculus Summer Math Review

Students entering **Precalculus** have a required summer review packet. The packet is linked below and **will be collected in the second week of school** and recorded as an assignment.

### How to show your work in math:

1. Read this to understand [why it matters to show my work](#). We don't make you do this because we like it: it is based in neuroscience and helps you to develop stronger communication *and* critical thinking skills.
2. Write out **every step** - if you find yourself automatically doing a computation mentally, figure out how you would write it down to make sense to the reader. This includes things that you might be able to easily do in your head.
3. Show each step on a **separate line**. Avoid the temptation to do multiple steps in one line of your work.
4. Write out all your work clearly in the printed packet or clearly on notebook paper.
5. If you make a mistake in your work, ~~cross out that work clearly~~. Crossing out work is preferable to erasing since you can go back later to learn from your mistake. Mistakes are our best teachers :-)

### Entering Precalculus:

Students entering Precalculus must **complete the Review Packet to Prepare for Precalculus**. This packet will help you to review critical Algebra 1 and 2 skills that we will build on in Precalculus.

You can find the **review packet** in the folder at this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/2t5wcn79>

- The Precalculus course prepares students for calculus and college science courses. In order to accomplish this, the course is taught at a significantly faster pace than Algebra 2, and students often find it difficult to adjust.
- You will need to spend time practicing and reviewing the Algebra 1 and 2 topics in this packet.
- There is a formula sheet at the end of the packet.
- **It is collected and graded - due 2nd week of class.** No class time will be allotted for working on it.



- **You must show all of your work for each problem in order to earn credit.** The packet will be graded.
- **You must do your own work.** Do not rely on someone else's work or effort – this will only make your own work harder in the future. If you struggle with a question, attempt the problem, and circle it for discussion.
- If you are unsure how to solve any problem, check for online help, such as Khan Academy <https://www.khanacademy.org/math/algebra2> or other video tutorial sites: <http://www.mrmathblog.com/> or <http://www.mathispower4u.com/>



## Literature and Power

I can't wait to embark on this learning experience with you! Participants in "Lit and Power" will kick off the year with a series of discussions and writing activities centered on **John Steinbeck's 1937 novella [Of Mice and Men](#)**. Over your summer break, please purchase, read, and generously annotate this seminal work of American fiction (think: post-its, marginalia, separate notes to track character names and key passages...). You will need to recall key details in order to participate fully in our first few weeks of class, so I recommend reading the novella over the last few weeks of your break.

Please purchase or borrow [the Penguin edition of this text](#) (ISBN and details below) so that we can all be on the same page (literally); if this poses a financial challenge for you, reach out to me via email ([n.durnan@winchesterthurston.org](mailto:n.durnan@winchesterthurston.org)) and I will make sure that you get a copy!

*Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

- Penguin (1993)
- ISBN-10: 0140177396
- ISBN-13: 978-0140177398
- [Link to borrow \*Of Mice and Men\* from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh](#)



## 12th Grade College Counseling Seminar

All rising seniors must read these for the College Counseling Seminar in the fall.

1. [Teen Vogue: "The In Between"](#) - Fall College Counseling focuses on the transition from the college application process to making a decision about where to attend. We will reference this article early in the semester while editing the Common App.

