

2026 English Summer Reading Guide:
English 2 College Prep

Instructions:

- **Read ONE of the six** books listed on the next page before the first day of school.
- **Obtain the physical book, not an ebook.***
 - *Students with specific ebook accommodations should follow their learning plan and can consult with their school learning specialist with any questions about their accommodations.
- **You may purchase the book or get it from the library – but you must have it in your possession each day of class to start the school year.** For most in-class work related to the book, you will *not* be able to use your iPad (except for accommodations), so you need your own physical copy.
- **Follow the instructions below** for reading and preparing for the in-class assessment. Your English teacher will provide further instructions on the first day of school.
- **In-class assessment:** You will need to write about your chosen book on demand during class on one of the first days of school. You will be able to use your physical book and annotations for this but no other resources. Make sure you have carefully and thoughtfully read your book and that your annotations are helpful to you.
- **Our first unit of the year** will be small group reading circles based on your chosen summer reading book. **It is crucial that you read your book and annotate to start your year successfully!**

What to look for and mark in your books:

Annotate directly inside your book or on sticky notes:

Beautiful Words: Highlight and annotate any lines/passages that are...

- written powerfully, beautifully, or just spoke to you in some way throughout the book
- helping you visualize the setting or mood in that scene like a movie inside your head
- making you think about new things about people's experiences or life that you had not thought about before

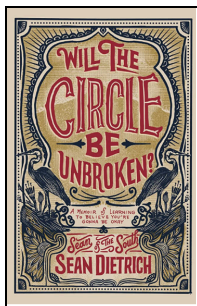
Character: Highlight and annotate any lines/passage where your main character is....

- revealing who they truly are through what they say directly, or what they think/worry about a lot, etc.
- motivated by something (*ex: survival, greed, love, power, acceptance, pressure, etc*)
- struggling with something (*Man vs Man, Man vs. Self, Man vs. Society, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. Technology*)
- discovering or realizing something new about themselves, life, or the world around them
- changing in some way, or is acting unlike themselves all of a sudden
- getting advice or life lessons from someone or something else
- having a flashback to a memory that interrupts the main storyline

Topic: Highlight and annotate any lines/passage where you notice...

- a connection to yourself, the world, or another book or movie
- repeating ideas or topics that may be important (*theme, conflict*)
- a larger "life lesson" or words of advice from another character (*theme*)

List of Book Choices:



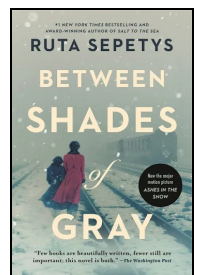
[Will the Circle be Unbroken? by Sean Dietrich](#)

ISBN: 9780310355755

GENRE: MEMOIR, COMING OF AGE, GRIEF, AMERICAN SOUTH

***Content warning: Mention of suicide**

I was not yet twelve when my father removed himself from this world. It had been shaping up to be a good year, but it would never be. My father offed himself in Missouri with a hunting rifle. And the winter of our lives began. The Saturday night before his funeral, a small crowd gathered. It was a strange night. I couldn't speak, let alone eat. Whenever anyone talked to me, I could only look at their mouths and watch their lips move. But I could not hear them. I was too stunned to remember my own name...

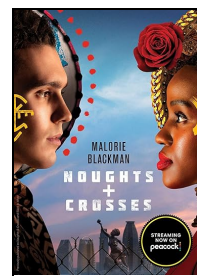


[Between Shades of Gray by Ruta Sepetys](#)

ISBN: 9780142420591

GENRE: HISTORICAL FICTION, WORLD WAR 2, SUFFERING

We weren't sick, but others were. Each day when the train stopped, we'd lean out of the car and try to count the number of bodies thrown. It grew every day. I noticed Jonas kept track of the children, making marks and imagined drawing little heads atop each one – hair, eyes, a nose, and a mouth. People estimated our path traveled south. Whoever was posted at the little window would call out when we passed markers or signs. My feet were numb from the vibration of the floorboards. My head was curdled from the stench, and I itched terribly. Lice were biting down the side of my hairline, behind my ears, and in my armpits...

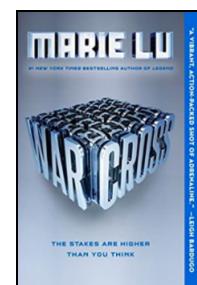


[Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman](#)

ISBN: 9780241817735

GENRE: DYSTOPIAN, SOCIAL JUSTICE, ROMANCE

I might've guessed Mother wouldn't want to get her hands dirty. And with a personal secretary and chauffeur and maids and servants, why should she? But I would've loved it if she'd been interested enough to even ask me what I wanted as a birthday present. Oh, I got birthday and Crossmas presents from Mother and Dad. It's just that they never bought them. They never even chose them. Mother's secretary Sarah had very good taste. But each one of her selected presents sat at the back of my wardrobe or at the back of a drawer or under my bed, unused. And no-one ever asked me if I liked my presents. The presents didn't matter. Maybe because I didn't either. Only one person cared if I lived or died. He'd done so much for me in the past and now it was my turn to do something for him...

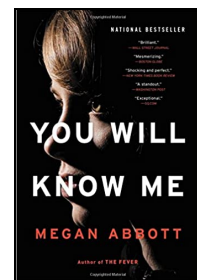


[Warcross by Marie Lu](#)

ISBN: 9780399547973

GENRE: SCIENCE FICTION, TECHNOLOGY, GAMING

My cheeks sting from the wind. The sky beyond the cut of skyscrapers is gray, turning grayer, and in a few hours this flurry of snow will become a steady fall. Cars jam the streets, a nonstop trail of brake lights and honking from here all the way to Times Square. Students coming home from school are easy to spot, their backpacks and fat headphones dotting the crowds. Technically, I should be one of them. This should have been my first year of college. But I started skipping classes after Dad died and dropped out entirely several years ago. (Okay, fine—technically, I was expelled. But I swear I would've quit anyway. More on that later...)

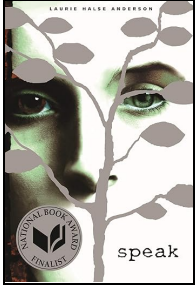


[You Will Know Me by Megan Abbott](#)

ISBN: 9780316231060

GENRE: THRILLER, GYMNASTICS, RELATIONSHIPS, FAMILY SECRETS

Devon: this sensible, sensible girl. A girl who knew how to protect herself. Never a daredevil, never stunting without a safety mat, without spotters. A girl for whom instability was the ultimate enemy. Who'd never known divorce or slamming doors or slamming fists. A girl whose home was a peaceful sanctum, even the basement padded. A life that had to be made safe because of the risks she put her body through. She was the most dangerous thing in her own life. Her body, the only dangerous thing... That was what gymnastics did, though. It aged girls and kept them young forever at the same time. "She has a sense of mystery," she'd heard a judge say once about Devon. "Like a sphinx". And it was true. Where did it come from? A nearly fourteen-year-old girl but with a voice like Minnie Mouse who still slept with her good-luck stuffed animal. Except out there on the competition floor, her eyes like hawk slits, that little girl was gone.



[Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson](#)

ISBN: 9780312674397

GENRE: HIGH SCHOOL TEENAGER, MENTAL HEALTH, PTSD, COMING OF AGE

***Content warning: Sexual Assault, Bullying, Depression**

Older students are allowed to roam until the bell, but ninth-graders are herded into the auditorium. We fall into clans: Jocks, Country Clubbers, Idiot Savants, Cheerleaders, Human Waste, Eurotrash, Future Fascists of America, Big Hair Chix, the Marthas, Suffering Artists, Thespians, Goths, Shredders. I am clanless. I wasted the last weeks of August watching bad cartoons. I didn't go to the mall, the lake, or the pool, or answer the phone. There is no point looking for my ex-friends. Our clan, the Plain Janes, has splintered and the pieces are being absorbed by rival factions. I have entered high school with the wrong hair, the wrong clothes, the wrong attitude. And I don't have anyone to sit with. I am Outcast...