

2026 English Summer Reading Guide:

English 1 Honors

Instructions:

- **Read ONE of the four** books listed on the next page before the first day of school. Also check the “Bookflix” descriptions on the last page.
- **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 annotating while reading and preparing for the in-class assessment. Your English teacher will provide further instructions on the first day of school.

Annotation Guidance:

- Take your time to read and annotate your book. Your annotations should be physically written on the pages of the book OR on post-it notes placed on the pages. Track your thinking and noticings about the following, across the entire book:
 - Important characters and how they develop
 - Plot points
 - Setting details
 - Conflicts
 - Themes
 - A theme is a complex, abstract idea that an author explores or communicates through the telling of the story in the book. Themes should relate to universal human and/or societal ideas. Books have *more than one* theme.

In-Class Assessment:

At the end of the first week of classes you will have an **in-class exam** on your chosen summer reading book. The exam will have two parts: (1) multiple choice and (2) short essay response.

- **Part 1: Multiple Choice.** The first part will be 25 multiple-choice questions over important characters, plot points, setting, conflict and themes. You will not be able to use your book for this part.
- **Part 2: Short Essay Response.** You will write two to three paragraphs in response to a question specific to your novel. For this part of the exam, you can use your book and annotations but no other materials.

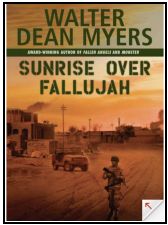
Book Choices:



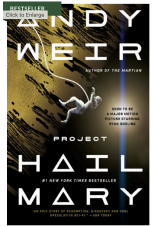
1) *Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel ISBN-13: 978-0385420174

This classic love story takes place on the De la Garza ranch, as the tyrannical owner, Mama Elena, chops onions at the kitchen table in her final days of pregnancy. While still in her mother's womb, her daughter to be weeps so violently she causes an early labor, and little Tita slips out amid the spices and fixings for noodle soup. This early encounter with food soon becomes a way of life, and Tita grows up to be a master chef, using cooking to express herself and sharing recipes with readers along the way.

2) *Sunrise Over Fallujah* by Walter Dean Myers ISBN: 9780439916257

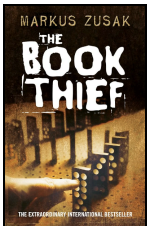


Robin "Birdy" Perry, a new army recruit from Harlem, isn't quite sure why he joined the army, but he's sure where he's headed: Iraq. Birdy and the others in the Civilian Affairs Battalion are supposed to help secure and stabilize the country and successfully interact with the Iraqi people. Officially, the code name for their maneuvers is Operation Iraqi Freedom. But the young men and women in the CA unit have a simpler name for it: WAR



3) *Project Hail Mary* by Andy Weir ISBN 9780593135228

Ryland Grace is the sole survivor on a desperate, last-chance mission—and if he fails, humanity and the earth itself will perish. Except that right now, he doesn't know that. He can't even remember his own name, let alone the nature of his assignment or how to complete it. All he knows is that he's been asleep for a very, very long time. And he's just been awakened to find himself millions of miles from home, with nothing but two corpses for company. His crewmates dead, his memories fuzzily returning, Ryland realizes that an impossible task now confronts him. Hurling through space on this tiny ship, it's up to him to puzzle out an impossible scientific mystery—and conquer an extinction-level threat to our species. And with the clock ticking down and the nearest human being light-years away, he's got to do it all alone. Or does he?



4) *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak ISBN: 978-0375842207

The extraordinary, beloved novel about the ability of books to feed the soul even in the darkest of times.

When Death has a story to tell, you listen.

It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still.

Liesel Meminger is a foster girl living outside of Munich, who scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement.

In superbly crafted writing that burns with intensity, award-winning author Markus Zusak, author of *I Am the Messenger*, has given us one of the most enduring stories of our time.



BOOKFLIX: ENGLISH 1 HONORS SUMMER READING

Read **ONE** of these four books before the first day of school. Choose by vibe, themes, and the kinds of stories you already love.

★ **RIISING
9TH GRADE** ★

1

Like Water for Chocolate

by Laura Esquivel

family, love, tradition, food, magical realism

For readers who like emotional stories, family drama, and a little magic.



VIBE: warm, dramatic, heartfelt, a little magical



IF YOU LIKE...

Encanto, Coco, Ratatouille



WHAT IT'S ABOUT

Tita grows up on a ranch in Mexico where strict family rules shape her future. She expresses powerful feelings through cooking, and the food she makes seems to carry emotion into everyone who eats it.



WHY STUDENTS MIGHT LOVE IT

It is dramatic, vivid, and different from a typical love story. The mix of family conflict, food, and magical moments makes it memorable.



CHOOSE THIS IF...

You like strong emotions, family tension, romance, and stories with a unique style.



MAYBE NOT IF...

You want a super fast plot or a totally realistic story.

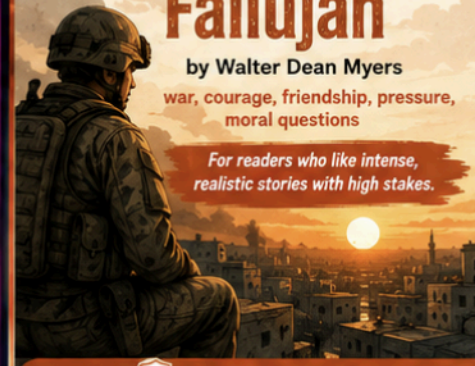
2

Sunrise Over Fallujah

by Walter Dean Myers

war, courage, friendship, pressure, moral questions

For readers who like intense, realistic stories with high stakes.



VIBE: intense, thoughtful, high-stakes



IF YOU LIKE...

Refugee, Grenade, stories about survival and loyalty



WHAT IT'S ABOUT

Robin "Birdy" Perry joins the army and goes to Iraq, where he and his unit try to help civilians while facing danger, confusion, and the reality of war.



WHY STUDENTS MIGHT LOVE IT

It is fast-moving, tense, and thought-provoking. It asks big questions about duty, fear, and what courage really looks like.



CHOOSE THIS IF...

You like action, teamwork, serious topics, and books that make you think.



MAYBE NOT IF...

You want something light or a fantasy or sci-fi story.

3

PROJECT HAIL MARY

by Andy Weir

space, science, survival, mystery, humor

For readers who like smart adventures, puzzles, and space stories.



VIBE: clever, adventurous, funny, suspenseful



IF YOU LIKE...

The Wild Robot, WALL-E, Big Hero 6



WHAT IT'S ABOUT

Ryland Grace wakes up alone on a spaceship with no memory of why he is there. As his memories return, he has to solve a huge scientific mystery to save Earth.



WHY STUDENTS MIGHT LOVE IT

It is funny, suspenseful, and full of problem-solving. The story blends science, danger, and an unforgettable friendship.



CHOOSE THIS IF...

You like sci-fi, humor, creative problem-solving, and stories that keep surprising you.



MAYBE NOT IF...

You want a realistic story or lots of school or family drama.

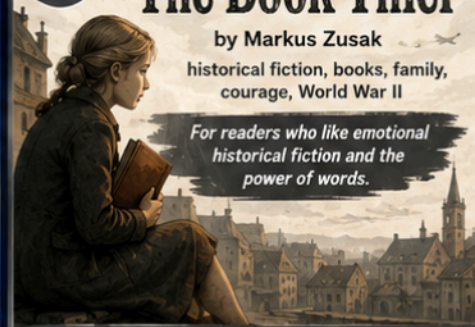
4

The Book Thief

by Markus Zusak

historical fiction, books, family, courage, World War II

For readers who like emotional historical fiction and the power of words.



VIBE: heartbreaking, hopeful, powerful, unforgettable



IF YOU LIKE...

Number the Stars, The Diary of a Young Girl, Wonder



WHAT IT'S ABOUT

In Nazi Germany, Liesel lives with a foster family, learns to love books, and discovers how words can bring comfort and resistance even in dangerous times.



WHY STUDENTS MIGHT LOVE IT

It has unforgettable characters, beautiful writing, and a story that is both heartbreaking and hopeful.



CHOOSE THIS IF...

You like historical fiction, deep emotions, memorable characters, and books about the importance of reading.



MAYBE NOT IF...

You want a fast, action-heavy story the whole time.

**FAST
MATCH**



Magic + food + family drama =
Like Water for Chocolate



Action + war + tough choices =
Sunrise Over Fallujah



Space + mystery + science =
Project Hail Mary



World War II + books + big feelings =
The Book Thief



Before you choose, ask yourself: **Do I want magic, war, space, or historical fiction?**