SUMMER READING 2026

The Clarence High School English Department's recommended reading list has been created to present relevant, high-interest literature that fosters reading for pleasure among young adults. Here you'll find a list of titles in a variety of genres to appeal to a wide audience at all levels. Some of these titles kept us up far past our bedtimes when we were teenagers ourselves, and others have become favorites more recently. Some titles for our older students may contain mature content, and we recommend using reviews to make informed decisions when selecting books. Our goal is to provide parents and students with ample resources to sustain the development of skills and a lifelong love of reading. While students will not be assessed when we return to school, their reading will benefit them in countless ways. We all look forward to hearing about our students' reading journeys and hope that each of them will find something perfect among the titles listed here. Please note that the following list does not reflect REQUIRED READING LISTS for any ADVANCED PLACEMENT or SUPA courses.

Some Books We Love:

Ms. Adams -
Theo of Golden, by Allen Levi
Remarkably Bright Creatures, by Shelby van Pelt
The Rest is History, by Tom Holland and Dominic Sandbrook

Mr. Aquilina -
The Syringa Tree, by Pamela Gien
Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life, by Anne Lamott
The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay, by Michael Chabon

Mrs. Bieler -
The Bluest Eye, by Toni Morrison
The Sun and Her Flowers, by Rupi Kaur
Educated, by Tara Westover

Mrs. Boyle -
Legend, by Marie Lu
Throne of Glass, by Sarah J. Maas
Scythe, by Neal Shusterman
A Good Girl's Guide to Murder, by Holly Jackson

Mr. Chambers -
The Anxious Generation, by Jonathan Haidt
Open, by Andre Agassi
The Art of Fielding, by Chad Harbach

Mr. Everett -
The Perks of Being a Wallflower, by Stephen Chbosky
Ender's Game, by Orson Scott Card
A Wizard of Earthsea, by Ursula K. Le Guin

Ms. Fromwiller -
All My Rage, by Sabaa Tahir
Watch Us Rise, by Renée Watson and Ellen Hagan
I'll Give You The Sun, by Jandy Nelson

Mr. Johnston (CHS Library/High School Librarian) -
Dr. No, by Percival Everett
Dungeon Crawler Carl, by Matt Dinniman
The Martian Chronicles, by Ray Bradbury

Mr. Jowett -
Bird Dream: Adventures at the Extremes of Human Flight, by Matt Higgins
The History of Science Fiction: A Graphic Novel Adventure by Xavier Dollo
We Are the Weather: Saving the Planet Begins at Breakfast by Jonathan Safran Foer

Ms. LaVigne -
Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, by Douglas Adams
And Then There Were None, by Agatha Christie
Station 11 by Emily St. John Mandel
Circe, by Madeline Miller

Mrs. Leiser -
We Were Liars, by E. Lockhart
Eleanor & Park, by Rainbow Rowell
Hot Zone, by Richard Preston

Ms. Rohe -
The Nightingale, by Kristin Hannah
The Green Mile, by Stephen King
Interview with the Vampire, by Anne Rice

Mr. Runfola -
1984, by George Orwell
The Mosquito Coast, by Paul Thoreaux
How to Win Friends & Influence People, by Dale Carnegie

Ms. Rzepka -
The Summer I Turned Pretty by Jenny Han
Daring Greatly by Brené Brown
Blackout by Dhonielle Clayton, Tiffany D. Jackson, Nic Stone, Angie Thomas, Ashley Woodfolk, and Nicola Yoon

Mrs. Sorrels -
Rebecca, by Daphne DuMaurier
The Poisonwood Bible, by Barbara Kingsolver
The Firm, by John Grisham

Mrs. Tederous -
Atmosphere, by Taylor Jenkins Reid
Heart Talk, by Cleo Wade
Such a Fun Age, by Kiley Reid

***1984,* by George Orwell** - Written more than 70 years ago, *1984* was George Orwell's chilling prophecy about the future. And while 1984 has come and gone, his dystopian vision of a government that will do anything to control the narrative is timelier than ever. This book is a timeless classic.

***All My Rage,* by Sabaa Tahir -** Bestselling author Sabaa Tahir explores the lives of two Pakistani-American teenagers named Sal and Noor who are more than just friends, but each other's family. Both characters are thrown into the mix of adulthood at a young age, and navigate life alongside each other.

***And Then There Were None,* by Agatha Christie** - The world's best-selling mystery begins with eight guests lured to an isolated island mansion off the coast of England. The housekeeper and butler welcome them, but their hosts are suspiciously absent. The mystery grows as, one by one, people begin dying.

***The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* by Michael Chambon** Forced to live together in a small New York apartment, two cousins Samuel Clay and Joseph Kavalier bond over their shared interest in comic books and cartoon art. Together, they create 'The Escapist', a Nazi fighting Superhero who journeys across the world to fight for the oppressed. Winner of the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

***Atmosphere* by Taylor Jenkins Reid -** A 1980s-era historical fiction novel. It follows Joan Goodwin, one of NASA's first female astronaut candidates, who navigates sexism, finds her own ambition, and experiences a clandestine, transformative romance while preparing for the stars. LGBTQ+ friendly.

***Bird by Bird,* by Anne Lamott -** Best selling novelist Anne Lamott shares what she knows about the process of writing through funny, relatable stories and memories. One might think that a book about writing could be a snore, but Lamott doesn't disappoint. Many of my students through the years have praised Lamott's quick wit. They will attest that *Bird by Bird* is a real page-turner.

***Bird Dream: Adventures at the Extremes of Human Flight,* by Matt Higgins** - (He's a friend of mine. Great book, cheap plug.)

***Blackout*, by Dhonielle Clayton, Tiffany D. Jackson, Nic Stone, Angie Thomas, Ashley Woodfolk, and Nicola Yoon -** This novel intertwines six different stories of Black couples navigating a power outage in New York City. Through new relationships, bitter exes, and everything in between, this novel will be hard to put down!

***The Bluest Eye,* by Toni Morrison** - This book was the starting point in my obsession with Toni Morrison. *The Bluest Eye* is a beautiful work of fiction that speaks to issues of race, gender, and conformity.

***Circe,* by Madeline Miller** If you enjoy Greek mythology and are familiar with The Odyssey, you will enjoy Circe's female perspective on many of the well-known stories. Born immortal, but seemingly without much power, she discovers that she does possess power–the power to transform rivals into monsters. But there is danger in that, for Circe unwittingly draws the wrath of both men and gods, ultimately finding herself pitted against one of the most terrifying and vengeful of the Olympians.

***Daring Greatly,* by Brené Brown -** This nonfiction book discusses the importance of advocating for mental health. Brown validates the difficulties that come with standing up for oneself, and articulates how to effectively communicate with others. A great read if you are looking to have a summer "restart!"

***Dr. No*, by Percival Everett** - Dr. No is a caper with teeth, a wildly mischievous novel from one of our most inventive, provocative, and productive writers. That it is about nothing isn't to say that it's not about anything. In fact, it's about villains. Bond villains. And that's not nothing.

***Dungeon Crawler Carl,* by Matt Dinniman** - It's like reading a role-playing video game! As the world literally collapses, Carl ventures below ground into a multi-level dungeon filled with monsters. Accompanied by his ex-girlfriend's cat, Princess Donut, Carl must level-up as he encounters stronger and stranger enemies, all while the whole adventure is being broadcast throughout the universe. Just a super fun read across 8 books in the series.

***Eleanor & Park,* by Rainbow Rowell** - Set over the course of one school year in 1986, this is the story of two star-crossed misfits-smart enough to know that first love almost never lasts, but brave and desperate enough to try. When Eleanor meets Park, you'll remember your own first love-and just how hard it pulled you under.

***Ender's Game*, by Orson Scott Card** –The fate of the human race rests in the hands of an unnaturally intelligent six-year-old, Ender Wiggins. Ender is recruited to enroll in the infamous Battle School, which is located in space. There, he will be trained as a military leader to fight an alien race known as the Buggers. Will Ender use his uncommon intelligence, charisma, brutality, and determination to save humanity or will he ultimately reject the pressures and expectations of the people around him and embrace a different path?

***The Firm,* by John Grisham -** a blockbuster, legal thriller which launched the career and Hollywood screen adaptations of John Grisham.

***The Four Winds*, by Kristin Hannah** - a captivating, heartbreaking tale of a family who will do anything for each other — and everything to survive.

***A Good Girl's Guide to Murder,* by Holly Jackson** - Everyone in Fairview knows the story of how pretty and popular high school senior Andie Bell was murdered by her boyfriend, Sal Singh. Five years later, Pip sees how the tragedy still haunts her town, but she can't shake the feeling that there was more to what happened that day. Now a senior herself, Pip decides to reexamine the closed case and discovers a trail of dark secrets.

***The Green Mile,* by Stephen King** - It tells the story of death row supervisor Paul Edgecombe's encounter with John Coffey, an unusual inmate who displays inexplicable healing and empathic abilities.

***Heart Talk,* by Cleo Wade** - An easy summer read! A collection of poetic wisdom and life lessons presented in a relatable and empowering way. It offers a daily pep talk to encourage self-love, self-care, and self-discovery.

***Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy,* by Douglas Adams** - Seconds before Earth is demolished to make way for a galactic freeway, Arthur Dent is plucked off the planet by his friend Ford Prefect, a researcher for the revised edition of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* who is actually an alien disguised as an out-of-work actor. This book will keep you laughing as you journey across the galaxy with the main characters.

***Hot Zone,* by Richard Preston** - The dramatic and chilling story of an Ebola virus outbreak in a suburban Washington, D.C. laboratory, with descriptions of frightening historical epidemics of rare and lethal viruses. More hair-raising than anything Hollywood could think of, because it's all **true**.

***How to Win Friends & Influence People,* by Dale Carnegie** - Dale Carnegie's rock-solid, time-tested advice has carried countless people up the ladder of success in their business and personal lives. One of the most groundbreaking and timeless bestsellers of all time, *How to Win Friends & Influence People* will teach you: Six ways to make people like you; Twelve ways to win people to your way of thinking; Nine ways to change people without arousing resentment…and much more! Achieve your maximum potential—a must-read for the twenty-first century.

***I'll Give You The Sun,* by Jandy Nelson** - Jandy Nelson's award-winning novel is told through alternating perspectives of twin siblings, Noah and Jude. Noah and Jude, who were once inseparable, eventually drift apart due to a devastating event. This book will take you on a self-discovery journey full of exploration and reflection.

***A Long Way Down,* by Jason Reynolds** - This fiercely stunning GRAPHIC NOVEL IN VERSE is written as one story that is told through a series of poems, and it all takes place in sixty seconds—the time it takes Will to decide whether or not he's going to murder the person who killed his brother. As the elevator stops on each floor, someone connected to his brother gets on to give Will a piece to a much larger story.

***The Martian Chronicles,* by Ray Bradbury** - This is my all-time favorite book. From the sci-fi master, this is told in chronological vignettes about the exodus from Earth to Mars. The original stories began in 1999, they have been updated to start in 2030. My favorite tale from this book is 'Usher II' which is actually the influence for *Fahrenheit 451*, where Earthlings burned books and would've escaped Usher II if only they'd read Poe.

***The Mosquito Coast,* by Paul Theroux** - The paranoid and brilliant inventor Allie Fox takes his family to live in the Honduran jungle, determined to build a civilization better than the one they've left. Fleeing from an America he sees as mired in materialism and conformity, he hopes to rediscover a purer life. But his utopian experiment takes a dark turn when his obsessions lead the family toward unimaginable danger.

***The Nightingale*, by Kristin Hannah** - Tells the stories of two sisters, separated by years and experience, by ideals, passion and circumstance, each embarking on her own dangerous path toward survival, love, and freedom in German-occupied, war-torn France—a heartbreakingly beautiful novel that celebrates the resilience of the human spirit and the durability of women. It is a novel for everyone, a novel for a lifetime.

***Open,* by Andre Agassi** - (nonfiction) This is the story of how one of the greatest tennis players of all time became a superstar who hated the sport that made him wealthy and famous. Agassi grew up in the spotlight and overcame personal demons and physical pain to become one of the most beloved figures in professional tennis. It's a sports book (sort of) that is also very real and--at times--critical of sports.

***The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, by Stephen Chbosky –** a frank and honest experience of high school told through letters from an overly empathetic freshman trying to live his life while simultaneously running away from it. I reread this book every couple of years, and it leaves a mark every time.

***The Poisonwood Bible*, by Barbara Kingsolver –** a novel of great beauty and lyricism set in the African Congo on the eve of revolution and narrated by the daughters and wife of a well-meaning but misguided Baptist missionary.

The Rest is History, by Tom Holland and Dominic Sandbrook - This is the companion book to my current favorite podcast. These two professors are completely un-stuffy, and I get so much from listening to them and from reading their work. I find it scholarly but approachable, and I come away genuinely excited to learn more about all kinds of topics.

Rebecca, by Daphne DuMaurier – A Gothic thriller about a young, newly married woman who marries the mysterious Maxim DeWinter and becomes mistress of Manderley, an estate riddled with secrets.

Remarkably Bright Creatures, by Shelby van Pelt - I just totally loved this book. A surprising premise that made me look at the world differently, and the wonderful Netflix movie adaptation scratches the surface of its beauty.

Station 11, by Emily St. John Mandel – A deadly pandemic has destroyed civilization, but 20 years later, the main character travels on foot with a company of actors and musicians trying to bring beauty and joy to the people who have survived. Jumping back and forth in time, the author paints a scary yet hopeful picture of how people cope with loss and survive without losing the connections that unite us.

***The Sun and Her Flowers,* by Rupi Kaur** - I bet you've seen Rupi Kaur's poetry and illustrations on Instagram! This is her second collection of poems. They're beautiful, short, and profound. An easy collection to devour this summer!

***The Summer I Turned Pretty*, by Jenny Han** - This book is the first of a three-part series that follows a young girl as she navigates the intricacies of summer romances and friendships! This quick read is accessible, endearing, and the perfect book to kick off your summer!

***The Syringa Tree,* by Pamela Gien** - Set in apartheid South Africa, *The Syringa Tree* tells the stories of two families “separated by racism, but connected by love.” The original form of the story was a one-woman show off Broadway and won the 2001 OBIE for best play. Gien expanded the true memoir into a best-selling novel the following year.

Scythe, by Neal Shusterman - Humanity has conquered hunger, disease, war and has even conquered death. Now scythes are the only ones who can end life—and they are commanded to do so, in order to keep the size of the population under control. Citra and Rowan are chosen to apprentice to a scythe and must master the “art” of taking life, knowing that the consequence of failure could mean losing their own.

***Such a Fun Age,* by Kiley Reid** - An incredible novel that explores the intersection of race and social class, centers on a scene where young Emira is wrongly accused of kidnapping an older, affluent woman’s child while babysitting in a supermarket. The story then follows the aftermath of this incident, examining the dynamics of their relationship and the societal pressures they face.

***Theo of Golden*, by Allen Levi.** An absolutely beautiful book recommended to me by my mom’s 70-something friends as well as my 20-something nieces. A wonderful story of art and generosity and small towns and redemption and the loveliness of relationships and community.

***Watch Us Rise,* by Renèe Watson and Ellen Hagan** - A call to action novel that motivates young adults to speak up for themselves and fight to make their voices heard in society.

***We Were Liars,* by E. Lockhart** - a modern, sophisticated suspense novel. Read it. And if anyone asks you how it ends, just LIE.

***A Wizard of Earthsea*, by Ursula K. Le Guin** – Ged, the greatest sorcerer in all Earthsea, was called Sparrowhawk in his reckless youth. Hungry for power and knowledge, Sparrowhawk tampered with long-held secrets and loosed a terrible shadow upon the world. This is the tale of his testing, how he mastered the mighty words of power, tamed an ancient dragon, and crossed death's threshold to restore the balance.

Additional Suggested Authors:

- Angelou, Maya
- Alexie, Sherman
- Anderson, Laurie Halse
- Atwood, Margaret
- Austen, Jane
- James Baldwin
- Bari, Jennifer Lynn
- Bohjalian, Chris
- Bruchac, Joseph
- Byatt, A. S.
- Cabot, Meg
- Crutcher, Chris
- Dave, Laura
- Diamat, Anita
- Dessen, Sarah
- Doerr, Anthony
- Frank, Anne
- Forman, Gayle
- Fowler, Therese Anne
- Gladwell, Malcolm
- Green, John
- Gould, Stephen Jay
- Haig, Matthew
- Harjo, Joy
- Heller, Miranda Cowley
- Heywood, Claire
- Hannah, Kristin
- Ishiguro, Kazuo
- Jenkins Reid, Taylor
- Keller, Helen

- Kidd, Sue Monk
- King, A. S.
- King, Stephen
- Kostova, Elizabeth
- Krakauer, Jon
- Levithan, David
- Lloyd, Ellery
- Moyes, Jojo
- Myers, Walter Dean
- Ng, Celeste
- Patchett, Ann
- Pearse, Sarah
- Picoult, Jodi
- Reynolds, Jason
- Rooney, Sally
- Rowell, Rainbow
- Sacks, Oliver
- Sayers, Dorothy
- Semple, Maria
- Sepetys, Ruta
- Shusterman, Neal
- Smiley, Jane
- Strasser, Todd
- Amy Tan
- Thomas, Angie
- Tolkien, J.R.R.
- Trueman, Terry
- Turton, Stuart
- Westerfeld, Scott
- Vowell, Sarah
- Whitehead, Colsen
- Yanagihara, Hanya