10th Grade Summer Reading List

You will be required to read two books over the summer, one from the list below and *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. **Mr. Palmieri has copies of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (ISBN 978-0-14-044100-0) for you in room 257**. Please pick up a copy from him or procure a proper edition. You should think about the essential questions provided below as you read it. However, we suggest that you purchase your own copies so that you can take notes, underline, or make comments in the margins. You will be allowed to use these books while completing graded assignments in September, one of which will be a research paper on *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.

Essential Questions for *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

1. What are epic conventions and how do they help develop the theme in this tale?
2. Almost every culture in history has created an epic tale. Why? And, why do we still read them today?
3. What truly motivates Gilgamesh? What does this motivation say about humanity in general? Why is it important to leave a legacy?

The List- Choose one to read in addition to *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

Howey, Hugh Wool- In a ruined and toxic future, a community exists in a giant silo underground, hundreds of stories deep. There, men and women live in a society full of regulations they believe are meant to protect them. Sheriff Holston, who has unwaveringly upheld the silo's rules for years, unexpectedly breaks the greatest taboo of all: He asks to go outside….An unlikely candidate is appointed to replace him: Juliette, a mechanic with no training in law, whose special knack is fixing machines. Now Juliette is about to be entrusted with fixing her silo, and she will soon learn just how badly her world is broken. The silo is about to confront what its history has only hinted about and its inhabitants have never dared to whisper. Uprising.

Sinclair, Upton The Jungle- Witness a young immigrant family as they are slowly ground down by a merciless society that treats them as animals to be used up and discarded. While Sinclair's main target was the industry's appalling labor conditions, the reading public was most outraged by the disgusting filth and contamination in American food that his novel exposed. As a result, President Theodore Roosevelt demanded an official investigation, which quickly led to the passage of the Pure Food and Drug laws.

Heller, Joseph Catch 22- The modern classic black comedy that satirizes the absurdity of war. Echoes of Yossarian, the bombardier who was too smart to die but not smart enough to find a way out of his predicament, could be heard throughout the counterculture. As a result, it's impossible not to consider Catch-22 to be something of a period piece. But 40 years on, the novel's undiminished strength is its looking-glass logic. Again and again, Heller's characters demonstrate that what is commonly held to be good, is bad; what is sensible, is nonsense.

Kesey, Ken One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest- Cowed by sadistic Nurse Ratched, the inmates of a mental hospital are galvanized by a new patient, the free-spirited McMurphy, who enters a pitched battle of wills with the nurse. Critics are divided on the meaning of the book: Is it a tale of good vs. evil, sanity over insanity, or humankind trying to overcome repression amid chaos? Whichever, it is a great read.

O'Connor, Edwin The Last Hurrah- O'Connor's 1956 account of big-city politics, inspired by the career of longtime Boston Mayor James M. Curley, portrays its Irish-American political boss as a demagogue and a rogue who nonetheless deeply understands his constituents. It's simply the best book ever written about Irish Politics in Boston.

Autobiography of Malcolm X- One of the most important spokesmen for the Civil Rights movement of the sixties went through significant changes in his philosophy, which may have led to his assassination. Malcolm X's searing memoir belongs on the small shelf of great autobiographies. The reasons are many: the blistering honesty with which he recounts his transformation from a bitter, self-destructive petty criminal into an articulate political activist, the continued relevance of his militant analysis of white racism, and his emphasis on self-respect and self-help for African Americans. And there's the vividness with which he depicts black popular culture--try as he might to criticize those lindy hops at Boston's Roseland dance hall from the perspective of his Muslim faith, he can't help but make them sound pretty wonderful.

Morrison, Toni Sula- As girls, Nel and Sula are the best of friends who find in each other a kindred spirit to share in each girl's loneliness and imagination. When they meet again as adults, it's clear that Nel has chosen a life of acceptance and accommodation, while Sula must fight to defend her seemingly unconventional choices and beliefs.

Kingsolver, Barbara Pigs in Heaven- Taylor illegally adopts Turtle to save her from a life of abuse. However, Anawake Fourkiller, a lawyer, insists Turtle be returned to the Cherokee Nation. Kingsolver makes the reader understand and sympathize with both sides of the controversy, as she contrasts Taylor's inalterable mother's love with Annawake's determination to save Turtle from the stigmatization she can expect from white society.

Amy Tan, The Bonesetter's Daughter- This novel is divided into two major stories. The first is about Ruth, a Chinese-American woman living in San Francisco. She worries that her elderly mother, LuLing, is gradually becoming more and more demented. LuLing seems increasingly forgetful, and makes bizarre comments about her family and her own past. The second major story is that of LuLing herself, as written for Ruth. Several years earlier, LuLing had written out her life story in Chinese. Ruth arranges to have the document translated. Once Ruth learns the details of her mother's past in china, she gains a new understanding of her mother and her seemingly erratic behavior. Answers to both women's problems unfold as LuLing's story is finally revealed in its entirety. Like much of her work, this novel deals with the relationship between an American-born Chinese woman and her immigrant mother.

Herbert, Frank Dune- This Hugo and Nebula Award winner tells the sweeping tale of a desert planet called Arrakis, the focus of an intricate power struggle in a byzantine interstellar empire. Arrakis is the sole source of Melange, the "spice of spices." Melange is necessary for interstellar travel and grants psychic powers and longevity, so whoever controls it wields great influence.

Golding, William The Inheritors- Eight Neanderthals encounter another race of beings like themselves, yet strangely different. This new race, Homosapiens, fascinating in their skills and sophistication, terrifying in their cruelty, sense of guilt, and incipient corruption, spell doom for the more gentle folk whose world they will inherit.

Crane, Stephen The Red Badge of Courage- Is this really about Courage? Is the protagonist really courageous? Crane's novel was published as a complete work in 1895 and quickly became the benchmark for modern anti-war literature. Although the exact battle is never identified, Crane based this story of a soldier's experiences during the American Civil War on the 1863 Battle of Chancellorsville. Many veterans, both Union and Confederate, praised the book's accurate representation of war, and critics consider its stylistic strength the mark of a literary classic.

Wouk, Herman The Caine Mutiny- The story of a rebellion in the modern navy. Upon its original publication in 1951, this Pulitzer Prize-winning novel was immediately embraced as one of the first serious works of fiction to help readers grapple with the human consequences of World War II. In the intervening half-century, Herman Wouk's boldly dramatic, brilliantly entertaining story of life-and mutiny-on a Navy warship in the Pacific theater has achieved the status of a modern classic.

Knowles, John A Separate Peace- The volatile world of male adolescence provides the backdrop for Knowles' engrossing tale of love, hate, war, and peace. Sharing a room at Devon, an exclusive New England prep school, in the summer prior to World War II, Gene and Phineas form a complex bond of friendship that draws out both the best and worst characteristics of each boy and leads ultimately to violence, a confession, and the betrayal of trust.

McCourt, Frank Angela's Ashes- Born in Brooklyn in 1930 to recent Irish immigrants Malachy and Angela McCourt, Frank grew up in Limerick after his parents returned to Ireland because of poor prospects in America. It turns out that prospects weren't so great back in the old country either--not with Malachy for a father. A chronically unemployed and nearly unemployable alcoholic, he appears to be the model on which many of our more insulting cliches about drunken Irish manhood are based. Mix in abject poverty and frequent death and illness and you have all the makings of a truly difficult early life. Fortunately, in McCourt's able hands it also has all the makings for a compelling memoir.

Remarque, Erich All Quiet on the Western Front- Paul Baumer enlisted with his classmates in the German army of World War I. Youthful, enthusiastic, they become soldiers. But despite what they have learned, they break into pieces under the first bombardment in the trenches. And as horrible war plods on year after year, Paul holds fast to a single vow: to fight against the principles of hate that meaninglessly pits young men of the same generation but different uniforms against each other--if only he can come out of the war alive.

Angelou, Maya I Know Why a Caged Bird Sings (or any other title from her four part autobiography) In this first of five volumes of her autobiography, poet Maya Angelou recounts a youth filled with disappointment, frustration, tragedy, and finally hard-won independence. Sent at a young age to live with her grandmother in Arkansas, Angelou learned a great deal from this exceptional woman and the tightly knit black community there. These very lessons carried her throughout the hardships she endured later in life, including a tragic occurrence while visiting her mother in St. Louis and her formative years spent in California--where an unwanted pregnancy changed her life forever.