

2026-2027 Film and Journalism Summer Reading and Viewing

Fiction: Pop Culture, Consumerism, and Media (Choose 1)

- *The Plot* by Jean Hanff Korelitz
- *The Circle* by David Eggers
- *Fight Club* by Chuck Palahniuk
- *High Fidelity* by Nick Hornby
- *The Last Tycoon* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* by Stieg Larsson
- *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin
- *The Running Man* by Stephen King

Nonfiction: Memoirs by Media Figures and Entertainers (Choose 1)

- *The Storyteller* by Dave Grohl
- *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah
- *Standing Up* by Steve Martin
- *A Very Punchable Face* by Collin Jost
- *Unscripted* by Ernie Johnson Jr.
- *Truth Worth Telling* by Scott Pelley
- *Amusing Ourselves to Death* by John Carreyrou
- *Stringer: A Sportswriter's Memoir* by Robert Garrett

Film: Coming of Age Film (Choose 1)

- *The Breakfast Club* (1985)
- *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986)
- *The Dead Poets Society* (1989)
- *Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012)
- *Stand By Me* (1986)

Film Viewing Challenge: American Film Institute Top 100 (optional extra credit)

Watch 5 movies from 5 different decades of the 20th century. Write a one-paragraph response for each film in which you do your best to determine why the film is on the all-time list of best films.

Simply Google the list (*AFI Top 100 List*). The year each film was released will be listed next to each title.

Summer Reading Directions:

1. Pick one book off the *fiction and nonfiction* list to read this summer (2 books in total). Both the fiction and nonfiction lists focus on media personalities, stories, or film in general.
2. Pick one movie to watch off the film list. The film list corresponds to our first unit, which will tie into personal narrative writing and coming of age stories.

Reading Journal:

- Every student must complete a HANDWRITTEN journal
- The journal will consist of pre-reading for your fiction, non-fiction, and the film, 4 entries for each book, and 1 entry for the film
- You are encouraged to know your reading rate and break up the reading into 20-30 minutes a day
- Please make sure the journal is formatted appropriately, as seen on the next page

Pre-Reading:

Before reading your books or watching the film, you must complete the following:

1. Research the author or director. Write 1 paragraph that explains their background, where they grew up, their contributions to film and mass media, and other works they have written/directed.
2. Provide a 1 paragraph response that explains why you chose this book or film, and if you have heard anything about this specific work. If you know nothing of it, explain why you chose this piece of literature. Look at the cover of the book or the film poster- what does it tell you about the literature or hint at?

Journal for the Film:

1. Complete the pre-reading as listed above.
2. Select **one** of the coming-of-age films from our film list above. These movies will focus on our first unit about the Coming-Of-Age film genre.
 - a. Coming-of-age movies are about the transition from childhood or adolescence into adulthood. They often explore the emotional, psychological, and moral growth of a young protagonist as they face challenges, make important decisions, and discover who they are.
3. After watching the film of your choice, write 1 journal as formatted below in which you analyze:
 - a. On the **left side** of the journal, look at specific filmmaking techniques in the film.
 - i. Examples: camera angles & cinematography, storytelling techniques (e.g., narration, flashbacks, pacing), characterization (how characters are developed through dialogue, behavior, or visual cues)
 - b. Also on the **left side** of the journal, identify the central theme(s) of the film. Explain how the film communicates these themes through the techniques listed above.
 - c. On the **right side** of the journal, reflect on how the film's message or character journey connects to real-life experiences or to your own understanding of growing up.
 - d. Also on the **right side** of the journal, pick a big question and explore how the central idea of the film relates to the big question.

Reading Journal Format (done for the fiction and non-fiction book selection):

FORMATTING THE SUMMER READING JOURNAL:

For each 1/4 reading session, the journal must be formatted as follows:

1. The title and author of the book must be written across the top line of every page.
2. The number of the journal entry must follow (Journal Response 1, 2, 3, or 4)
3. The dates of the reading must be recorded (7/10/22-7/15/22, for example)
4. The range of pages must be recorded. If your book is 200 pages, that means you would complete a journal entry every 50 pages.
5. There are two responses required for each 1/4 of the book. Prompt 1 should be completed on the left page. Prompt 2 should be completed on the right page

Heading for Each Journal Response in the Handwritten Journal:

Left Page of Notebook/Journal

Right Page of Notebook/Journal

<i>The Storyteller</i> by Dave Grohl Journal Response 1	7/10/22-7/15/22 Pages 1-54
Prompt 1: Choose ONE “Big Question” from the list that applies best to the section of text you read. In your response be sure to do the following: • Avoid summarizing the story/narration and instead discuss <i>how</i> the writer directly or indirectly conveys a message or makes an argument through the lens of the “Big Question”. • List two quotes from the section you read that provide context for your selection of the “Big Question” • Fiction: analyze literary elements, style elements, & literary devices that the author relies upon to explore the question. • Nonfiction: analyze style elements, rhetorical appeals, & rhetorical devices that the author relies upon to explore the question. • Provide logical commentary to convince the reader that your analysis is accurate.	Prompt 2: Big Questions & Personal Reflection Journal: Following your analysis, reflect personally on the Big Question you chose by examining your own experiences and perspectives as they apply to the question. There are a variety of ways to respond. You may not repeat the use of a prompt below more than once for each book. • Write about a moment in your life that you can connect to the events and narration in the book through the lens of the Big Question. • Connect the events in the book to events happening in today’s society. How do your views or the views of the news media or people posting on social media or even friends and family agree or disagree with the events in the book or the perspectives of the author/characters regarding the Big Question? • Choose a song, book, movie, or TV show that you like that addresses the Big Question • Write advice related to the Big Question to your future self as a reminder of some early wisdom you’ve discovered • Write a letter to a friend (real or imaginary) who needs advice related to the Big Question. • Write a letter to the author in which you agree or disagree with his/her perspective of the Big Question. • Develop a graphic organizer-chart/graph/infographic to creatively illustrate the Big Question.

List of Big Questions:

What makes someone feel like an outsider?
What does it take to be a survivor?
Can ordinary people be heroes?
Can you be from two cultures at once?
Are old ways the best ways?
Can you recover from tragedy?
What is dignity?
Can values be imposed?
Where do people look for truth?
How important is telling the truth?
What drives human behavior?
Do the ends justify the means?
Does knowledge come at a price?
When is a risk worth taking?
Does fate control our lives?
Why do people fear change?
Is emotion stronger than reason?
How can nature inspire you?
What do we learn from experience?
What do we owe others?
Why do people break the rules?
How can we achieve the impossible?
How important is wealth?
Who are the victims of war?
What does a community owe its children?
Who has the right to rule?
How can people honor their heritage?
What breeds terror?
How important is culture?
Why do people seek power?
Should religion be tied to politics?
Which memories last?
What should be sacrificed for justice?
Who really shapes society?
Can allies be opponents?
What if life had a reset button?

Where do we get our values?
Can first impressions be trusted?
What can we learn from stories?
What does one's name really mean?
Is there dignity in silence?
What makes a setting sinister?
Is it better to escape or face reality?
Can your conscience mislead you?
What is cowardice?
Does everyone have a dark side?
What makes a great competitor?
Why are we fascinated by the unknown?
When are the little things a big deal?
What are we entitled to?
When do attitudes need adjusting?
Can we be alone and not lonely?
How do expectations affect performance?
Do we set our own course?
Should you trust your instincts?
Can America achieve equal rights?
Can reporters always stay objective?
How good are you at judging people?
What keeps you on the edge of your seat?
How can we change society?
Is technology taking over?
Is revenge ever justified?
Is fear our worst enemy?
Is privacy an illusion?
Is the price of progress ever too high?
How has science changed our lives?
What is the role of a witness?
What responsibility comes with power?
Can appearances deceive?
What is our place in nature?
Is curiosity a gift or a curse?
What responsibility comes with wealth?