

Sacramento Waldorf School High School Summer Reading List

Fiction

Achebe, Chinua *Things Fall Apart* (1994) A proud leader is driven to murder and suicide by European changes to his traditional Ibo society.

Adams, Douglas *A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979) Hilarious travel guide to the universe.

Alcott, Louisa May *Little Women* (1868) Four teenage girls struggle with poverty and individual problems but are sustained by their affection for one another.

Allende, Isabel *House of the Spirits* (1982) Ghosts and strange occurrences in the life of an upper class family in South America.

Anaya, Rudolfo *Bless Me Ultima* (1972) A growing-up novel set in the Hispanic culture of Eastern New Mexico; poetic.

Asimov, Isaac *The Foundation Series* (1942) Stimulating trilogy about the future of the human race in the grip of social engineers.

Atwood, Margaret *The Handmaid's Tale* (1999) Near the end of the twentieth century, birth control and the effects of nuclear fallout have caused fewer births; the biblical story of Rachel is invoked to counter the declining birthrate.

Oryx and Crake (2003) Canadian author Atwood populates this unusual, post-Apocalyptic book with human like creatures known as "Crakers." The mystery of the catastrophe is revealed through the eyes of "Snowman" as the reader glimpses his life before and after the disaster.

The Blind Assassin (2000) This is the story of two sisters, Iris and Laura, as told through the eyes of Iris at the end of her life. She recounts Laura's death/suicide at the end of World War II, and the plot of a wildly popular novel, *The Blind Assassin*. It soon becomes evident that the book parallels the real life events of the characters.

Austen, Jane

Pride and Prejudice (1813) Can Mrs. Bennet find husbands for her five daughters?

Emma (1815) A young Victorian woman with not much upstairs tries to play cupid for everyone but herself.

Northanger Abbey (1817) A wry portrait of a young woman with an active imagination and an eagerness for romantic adventure.

Baldwin, James *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953) Semi-autobiographical novel by a leading American author, poet, playwright, and civil rights activist; early 20th century.

Balzac, Honore de (1843) *Lost Illusions* A young poet tries to make it in Paris society but he is ill-served by his aristocratic patrons.

Banks, Russell *Rule of the Bone* (1995) One year in an adolescent boy's life – gritty novel of contemporary street life.

Bradbury, Ray

Fahrenheit 451 (1953) Reading is a crime and firemen burn books in this futuristic society

R is for Rocket (1962) Space cadets, sea serpents, life on Venus and Mars, and time travel are explored in seventeen short stories.

The Illustrated Man (1951) Magical tattoos become living stories.

October Country (1955) Macabre Halloween twist in this anthology of stories.

Bronte, Charlotte *Jane Eyre* (1847) An impoverished young woman finds love when she becomes the governess of brooding Mr. Rochester's ward.

Bronte, Emily *Wuthering Heights* (1847) Heathcliffe is the brooding outcast.

Buchan, John

The Thirty-Nine Steps (1915) Exciting World War I spy thriller.

Greenmantle (1916) A follow up to *The Thirty-Nine Steps* – the scene shifts to the Continent and the East.

Buck, Pearl S. (1931) *The Good Earth* Peasants' lives in China in time of war during the reign of the last Emperor; won the Pulitzer Prize in 1932.

Bunyan, John *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) A 17th century classic; Christian makes his way to the Celestial City; most widely read spiritual book after the Bible.

Burnford, Sheila *The Incredible Journey* (1961) A Siamese cat, an old bull terrier, and a young Labrador retriever make a difficult journey together through the wilderness of Canada to find the family they love.

Burns, Olive *Cold Sassy Tree* (1984) Will Tweedy's entrance into manhood in a small southern town at the turn of the 20th century.

Calvino, Italo *The Baron in the Trees* (1977) An aristocratic heir refuses to climb down from his tree for dinner because of a quarrel with his father; delightful fantasy of escape.

Camus, Albert

The Stranger Existential novel by Nobel Prize winning author about a pointless murder.

The Plague Perhaps an allegory of France during the occupation by the Nazis.

Card, Orson Scott

Ender's Game A young boy is trained with military games to save the world from alien attack.

Speaker for the Dead Sequel to *Ender's Game*; combination of anthropology and science fiction; different life forms learn to overcome their fears and prejudices; two other novels complete the set of four.

Carter, F. *Education of Little Tree* Cherokee Indian remembers his Indian boyhood with his grandparents; some controversy attends this book because the author was a segregationist and the story is fictional although presented as autobiography.

Cather, Willa *My Antonia* Saga of an immigrant girl and her family, who came from Czechoslovakia to Nebraska, by one of the finest writers of the twentieth century.

Chabon, Michael *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* (2000) Quintessentially American superhero comic tropes collide with a compelling Jewish immigrant story to form one of the most lauded narratives of the last decade.

Chandler, Raymond *The Big Sleep* Famous detective story by important American writer of the genre; Philip Marlowe is the tough-guy detective with a strong sense of morality.

Chopin, Kate *The Awakening and Selected Stories* Selection of stories about people on the Grand Isle and in New Orleans in the late nineteenth century.

Christie, Agatha *Ten Little Indians* Ingenious whodunit set on a remote island; the guests are murdered, one by one, in ways foretold by a child's chant.

Clarke, Arthur C. *Childhood's End* The Overlords' conquest of the earth is peaceful until...

Clavell, J. *Shogun* An adventurous Englishman, a powerful Japanese warlord, and a beautiful woman; saga of medieval Japan.

Collins, Wilkie *The Moonstone* The first detective story ever; set in Victorian England. Who stole the mysterious moonstone from the country house by the sea?

Conrad, Joseph

Heart of Darkness Marlow journeys by boat into Colonial Africa and finds the evil lurking in human nature.

Victory Alex Heyst, a loner in the South Seas, learns the importance of love and human relationships in what might be the first existential novel.

Cooper, James Fenimore

The Deerslayer Set in 1740 during the French and Indian Wars; the adventures of Natty Bumppo on the colonial frontier.

The Last of the Mohicans Hawkeye and his Mohican father and brother escort the two daughters of the British commander through hostile country.

Cooper, Susan *Over Sea, Under Stone* Children enter the world of King Arthur; four other novels

complete the adventures in the series *The Dark is Rising*.

Courtenay, Bruce *The Power of One* A young white boy growing up in South Africa deals with racial and other issues while he strives to be a boxing champion.

Cornwell, Bernard

Rebel First of four-volume Civil War series about Nate Starbuck, a Yankee who fights for the South.

Sharpe's Rifles First of multi-volume series about Richard Sharpe, a soldier in Wellington's army in Spain then France; Old Boney is a worthy match for the Iron Duke.

Crane, Stephen *The Red Badge of Courage* An unvarnished Civil War novel.

Craven, Margaret *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* Young minister spends his last year with the Kwakiutl Indian tribe in the Canadian wilderness; only the reader knows that he is dying and that this is his time to understand what life is for.

Crichton, Michael

Sphere A huge spaceship is discovered on the ocean floor.

The Andromeda Strain A terrifying biological nightmare is unleashed when sterilization procedures for returning space probes prove inadequate.

Danticat, Edwidge. *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) Written in first person narrative, this story recounts a young girl's move from Haiti to New York and her longing for home and those who raised her.

Defoe, Daniel *Journal of the Plague Year* Daily life in London during the terrible plague of 1664.

Dickens, Charles

David Copperfield Dickens's most autobiographical novel (note the initials); funny, sad, and complicated.

Great Expectations Pip suffers from unrequited love as he moves up in the world.

Hard Times Dickens explores materialism and the brutality of industrialization in this story of factory life in Victorian England.

Nicholas Nickleby One boy's life in Victorian England – amusing friends, horrible villains; will Nicholas persevere?

Oliver Twist Poignant but comic story of young boy in Victorian London also starring the unforgettable Fagin and the Artful Dodger.

The Pickwick Papers Amusing escapades; Dickens's first fictional work catapults him to literary success.

Didion, Joan *The Book of Common Prayer* A mother's struggle to reach her daughter-turned-revolutionary in a fictional Central American country.

Dorris, Michael *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water* Three generations of native-American women recount their searches for identity and love.

Dostoevsky, Feodor

Notes from the Underground "I'm a sick man, a mean man," the reclusive narrator begins.

The Brothers Karamazov Required for Seniors; the story of three Russian brothers and their father – a sensualist, an intellectual, and a priest.

Crime and Punishment A terrible crime haunts the perpetrator.

Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan *The Hound of the Baskervilles* Sherlock Homes to the rescue.

Dreiser, Theodore

An American Tragedy Written in 1925; ambitious Midwestern youth takes to the road and ends up committing murder.

Sister Carrie Innocent small town girl is seduced by the Big City; controversial when published in 1900.

DuMaurier, Daphne

Rebecca A young woman, haunted by the spirit of her first husband's wife, discovers the shocking secret of the earlier marriage.

My Cousin Rachel A romance novel set in Cornwall.

Jamaica Inn Danger and love on the British moors.

Eliot, George

Daniel Deronda Saga of the noble Jewish orphan Daniel Deronda, the vapid but valiant Gwendolyn, and others painted broadly.

Middlemarch Love and gossip in a small English town.

Mill on the Floss Young woman comes of age in a stultifying Victorian setting.

Ellison, Ralph *Invisible Man* Published in 1952, this is a leading work of American fiction; a young man's journey from the Deep South to Harlem.

Fast, Howard *April Morning* Fast-moving story of the American Revolution.

Faulkner, William *The Reivers* Three thieves, including 11-year-old Lucius Priest, set out for Memphis in a stolen car; Faulkner won the Pulitzer Prize for this most accessible and humorous of his novels.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott

Babylon Revisited and Other Stories Tragic, romantic views of life and American character.

The Great Gatsby Fitzgerald's most brilliant novel of the American dream set in the Roaring Twenties.

Six Tales of the Jazz Age and Others Light, witty, humorous short stories have delighted readers since

the Jazz Age of the 1920s.

Tender Is the Night American expatriates live it up on the Riviera.

Forester, C. S. *Mr. Midshipman Hornblower* First of the Hornblower series; naval yarns in the age of the great frigate captains.

Forster, E. M.

A Room with a View Following a trip to Italy, Lucy Honeychurch realizes that she must choose between her conventional fiancé and the entirely unconventional George Emerson.

Passage to India The elusive probability of friendship across the racial divide in India under the Raj.

Gaines, Ernest J.

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman In her 100 years Miss Jane Pittman experiences it all, from slavery to the civil rights movement.

A Gathering of Old Men Aging African American men each claim to be the sole murderer of a Southern white farmer, confounding the law

Golding, William *Lord of the Flies* English schoolboys marooned on an uninhabited island turn savage.

Gordimer, Nadine *July's People* A prophetic drama of human relationships and politics in South Africa.

Grey, Zane *Riders of the Purple Sage* The first Western novel to hit the bestseller list, by the master of the genre.

Guest, Judith *Ordinary People* A disturbed boy of an ordinary family discovers the event in his life that is extraordinary

Guterson, David *Snow Falling on Cedars* The novel opens with the murder trial of Dabuo Miyamoto but takes forays into the pasts and presents of many central characters; Guterson deals with themes such as teen love, racism, war, and confronting the past.

Hammett, Dashiell *The Maltese Falcon* First of the Sam Spade detective stories; hard-boiled characters in a suspenseful plot.

Hardy, Thomas *The Mayor of Casterbridge* Drunk and exasperated by bad luck, Michael Henchard sells his wife at a county fair; his deed returns to haunt him 18 years later.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel *The Scarlet Letter* Adultery and shame in colonial New England; Hester wears the letter for all to see; her partner is consumed by his undisclosed guilt.

Heller Joseph *Catch-22* (1961) Absurd novel about World War II; ...or is it a comic novel about life? At the heart of this novel resides the incomparable, malingering bombardier Yossarian, a hero endlessly inventive in his schemes to save his skin from the horrible chances of war.

Hemingway, Ernest

The Old Man and the Sea An old fisherman fights an agonizing battle with a giant marlin.

The Sun Also Rises Post World War I generation seeks meaning in the war's aftermath.

For Whom the Bell Tolls

A Farewell to Arms Novels about the Spanish Civil War.

In Our Time Some of Hemingway's most personal and engaging stories.

Herbert, Frank *Dune* A masterpiece of science fiction; set in a land of deserts and of the long-awaited Messiah.

Hersey, John *A Bell for Adano* Pulitzer Prize winning novel about an Italian-American major who searches for a replacement for the 700-year-old town bell melted down by the Fascists.

Hesse, Herman *Siddhartha* Siddhartha, a boy living at the time of Buddha, ascends to a state of peace and mystic holiness.

Huxley, Aldous

Brave New World (1932) Set in London in 2540, this novel anticipates developments in reproductive technology and sleep-learning that combine to change society.

Point Counter Point (1928)

Irving, John *A Prayer for Owen Meany* Poignant yet hilarious story of two young men at a New England boarding school.

James, Henry *The Turn of the Screw* Oscar Wilde describes this work as "a most wonderful, lurid, poisonous little tale."

Jones, Edward P. *The Known World* (2004 Pulitzer prize winner) Henry Townsend, a black farmer, boot maker, and former slave, has a fondness for *Paradise Lost* and an unusual mentor—William Robbins, perhaps the most powerful man in antebellum Virginia's Manchester County. Henry becomes proprietor of his own plantation, as well as of his own slaves.

Joyce, James *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* An autobiographical novel written in multiple styles which each mirror the subject's age and growing consciousness.

Kafka, Franz

The Trial (1925) The story of a man arrested and prosecuted by a remote, inaccessible authority. The nature of his crime is revealed neither to him nor the reader.

The Castle (1932) Dark and often surreal. Alienation, bureaucracy, and the endless frustrations of man's attempts to stand against the system plague the protagonist.

Kingsolver, Barbara

The Bean Trees A single young woman in the American Southwest becomes a mother to a homeless young child.

Animal Dreams Codi Noline learns secrets about her past that change her future when she returns home to care for her ailing father and to teach high school biology.

The Poisonwood Bible (1998) A missionary family moves from Georgia to the Belgian Congo in 1959.

Kipling, Rudyard *Kim* In late 19th century India, Kimball O'Hara joins a Buddhist lama in search of the River of Healing.

Lee, Harper *To Kill a Mockingbird* Lawyer Atticus Finch defends a black man accused of raping a white woman in a small Alabama town.

L'Engle, Madeleine *A Wrinkle in Time* Charles, Wallace, and Meg make a difficult journey to find their vanished father and free him from the hateful force that holds him captive; first volume of the Time Quintet.

Lewis, Sinclair *Main Street* Story of Carol Kennicut who rejects the life of a small town as an intellectual wasteland.

LeCarre, John *Smiley's People* A modern (late 20th century) thriller centered on the struggle between British and Soviet agents.

LeGuin, Ursula *The Left Hand of Darkness* Superb science-fiction novel of relationships between British and Soviet agents.

London, Jack *The Call of the Wild* Stories about animals and about the men who pioneered the north woods – adventure, survival, and true grit.

Lord, Bette Bao *Spring Moon* Five generations of a family in China.

Lowry, Lois *The Giver* A utopian community, but all is not well.

Macleane, Norman *A River Runs Through It* "In our family there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing." Three beautifully written stories of the West, fly-fishing, and family.

Mahfouz, Naguib *Palace Walk* Fascinating story of a Muslim family in Cairo by Nobel Prize-winning author.

Mailer, Norman *The Executioner's Song* (1980 Pulitzer winner) The events surrounding the execution of convicted murderer Gary Gilmore by the state of Utah.

Marquez, Gabriel Garcia *One Hundred Years of Solitude* The brilliant Colombian writer's most famous novel; a classic of magical realism.

Makine, Andrei *Dreams of My Russian Summers* Growing up in the USSR.

McCarthy, Cormac *The Road* (2006) A boy and his father trudge across the cold, wretched, corpse-strewn, ashen landscape of a post-apocalyptic world.

McCullers, Carson

The Member of the Wedding Fed up with her life in a Mississippi town, Frankie Adams changes her name and plans her escape.

The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter A young girl searches for beauty among lonely outcasts in a small Southern town.

McDermott, Alice *That Night* (1987) Finalist for the National Book Award, the Pen/Faulkner Award, and the Pulitzer Prize.

McMurtry, Larry *Lonesome Dove* The ultimate cowboy novel; this Pulitzer Prize-winner captures life on the frontier.

Morrison, Toni

Beloved (1987) This Pulitzer winner tells the tale of a woman and her daughter attempting to forge a life for themselves after escaping their dehumanizing slave status, but preternatural phenomena begin sowing disruption.

The Bluest Eye (1970) Chronicles the tragic lives of a poor black family in 1940s America. Every night Pecola, unlovely and unloved, prays for blue eyes.

Naylor, Gloria *The Women of Brewster Place* Separate stories of women who live in the same neighborhood are woven together to produce a powerful litany of the black woman's experience.

O'Brian, Patrick *Master and Commander* A dazzling story of the British Navy during the Napoleonic Wars, told from the vantage of Captain Jack Aubry and his mysterious friend Dr. Stephen Maturin, ship's surgeon, naturalist and British spy. If you like this one, you are in luck: there are 17 more.

Orwell, George

1984 Classic portrayal of a totalitarian future.

Animal Farm Animals turn the tables on their masters in this allegory of revolution and totalitarianism.

Homage to Catalonia The Spanish Civil War as a prelude to World War II and communist imperialism.

Pamuk, Orhan *My Name is Red* (2002) This murder mystery, set in 16th century Istanbul and narrated by some unlikely characters – them them a tree, a gold coin, red ink – opened Americans' eyes to Turkish luminary Pamuk before he won the Nobel Prize in 2006.

Pasternak, Boris *Dr. Zhivago* Love, beauty, and tragedy in revolutionary Russia.

Paton, Alan

Cry the Beloved Country This novel, written in free verse, tells of the tragedy of South Africa under apartheid a country Zulu pastor searches for his sick sister and son in Johannesburg only to find that she has become a prostitute and he a murderer.

Too Late the Phalarope Novel of South Africa about a young white police lieutenant who violates apartheid law.

Peacock, Thomas Love *Nightmare Abbey* (1818) A classic and brilliant satire of the Romantic novel.

Peck, Robert Newton *The Day No Pigs Would Die* Growing up as a Shaker boy on a Vermont farm.

Plath, Sylvia *The Bell Jar* Intense semi-autobiographical novel about a young woman's mental breakdown.

Poe, Edgar Allan *Tales* Chilling tales of the supernatural are not for the faint of heart.

Potok, Chaim

The Chosen Masterfully written story of two boys growing up devoutly Jewish in New York City who explore questions of faith, family, and identity--both group and individual.

My Name is Asher Lev Jewish artist paints a crucifix and nearly destroys his family.

Proulx, Annie *That Old Ace in the Hole* (2003) An exhilarating story brimming with language, history, landscape, music, and love. Robust, often bawdy, strikingly original, this novel traces the waves of change that have shaped the American West over the past century.

The Shipping News. (1993) Pulitzer Prize winner. Quoye returns to his native Newfoundland after his life has unraveled in tragic ways.

Pullman, Philip *The Golden Compass* Combines high fantasy with drama and suspense; the sequel is *The Subtle Knife*.

Pushkin, Aleksandr *The Captain's Daughter and Other Stories* Russian realism by influential author of verse novel *Eugene Onegin*.

Rawls, Wilson *Where the Red Fern Grows* Most popular boy-and-dog story ever written; challenge and adventure.

Remarque, Erich Marie *All Quiet on the Western Front* Realistic novel of war in the trenches of World War I.

Renault, Mary *The King Must Die* Theseus fights his way to Athens to claim his father and his royal heritage; then to Crete where he becomes a bull dancer and defeats the feared Minotaur.

Rhys, Jean *The Wide Sargasso Sea* How Rochester met and fell in love with a character who reappears in *Jane Eyre*.

Richter, Conrad

The Light in the Forest True Son was taken from his frontier family at a young age by members of the Lenape tribe; at age 15 he is to be given back but does not want to go.

The Trees First of the "Awakening Land" trilogy; chronicles the settling of the Ohio wilderness and the Western Reserve in the early days of the nation.

Roberts, Kenneth

Northwest Passage Historical fiction at its best; the 1760s on the American frontier brought to life.

Rabble in Arms “A rabble in arms, flushed with success and insolence.” General Burgoyne to Lord Rochfort, describing American troops before Boston.

Sabatini, Rafael *Captain Blood: His Odyssey* Swashbuckling on the Spanish Main with Captain Peter Blood.

Salinger, J.D. *The Catcher in the Rye* Armed with sarcasm and daydreams, sixteen-year-old Holden Caulfield leaves prep school for the big city.

Sayers, Dorothy L. *Whose Body?* First of the Lord Peter Wimsey mystery novels; clever, witty, and well written.

Shaara, Michael *The Killer Angels* Pulitzer Prize winning novel of the Battle of Gettysburg; Lee, Chamberlain, Pickett, and others come alive in this meticulous re-enactment of the great battle.

Sinclair, Upton *The Jungle* Cruelty of unregulated industrialization and immigrant life in the early 20th century; popular indignation inspired by this graphic exposé led to significant reforms.

Smith, Betty, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* Young Francie Nolan struggles to obtain an education while living in a teeming Brooklyn tenement.

Smith, Zadie *White Teeth* (2000) An epic novel about race, class and gender.

Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr
Cancer Ward Grim and riveting novel set during the Cold War in Russia.

The First Circle Engineers and scientists are imprisoned in a Soviet work camp and deal with a moral dilemma. Should they co-operate in the hope of re-joining their families, or oppose the system and risk being sent to the Gulag?

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich Exposure of the Russian labor camps.

Stegner, Wallace
The Angle of Repose Stong story of a woman who leaves the East for the West, as revealed by her grandson reading her letters.

The Big Rock Candy Mountain A semi-autobiographical novel of a family migrating west in the lean years of the early 20th century led by the abusive, hapless father, always looking for his next big break.

Steinbeck, John
Of Mice and Men George and Lennie are a mismatched pair with a dream that is doomed.

East of Eden A story based on the Biblical story of Cain and Abel.

Stevenson, Robert Louis *Treasure Island* Young Jim Hawkins searches for pirate treasure while avoiding the clutches of Long John Silver.

Stewart, Mary *The Crystal Cave* The illegitimate son of a Welsh prince becomes the wizard Merlin; the

sequel is *The Hollow Hills* in which Merlin's adventures continue; two more novels complete the set of the Arthurian legend.

Stoker, Bram *Dracula* The definitive vampire novel.

Stone, Irving

The Agony and the Ecstasy Fictionalized life of Michelangelo

Lust for Life Vincent Van Gogh's life.

The Greek Treasure Heinrich Schliemann's remarkable life. The son of a poor minister, he was shipwrecked, became a scholar, a Gold Rush millionaire, and discovered ancient Troy at a time when the city's existence was doubted.

Swift, Jonathan *Gulliver's Travels* Amusing satire of 18th century England.

Tan, Amy

The Joy Luck Club Explores conflict and affection between four women who were born in China and their California-raised daughters.

The Kitchen God's Wife A Chinese-American woman's family history.

Tolkien, J.R.R.

The Lord of the Rings, Volume I, II, or III The great epic of Middle Earth; a heroic quest written with a quiet humor and a logic of detail that delights the reader – if you enjoyed 4th grade Norse myths, this is the book for you.

The Hobbit Adventures of Bilbo Baggins, the hobbit, in a land of wizards, dwarfs, elves, and dragons.

Tolstoy, Leo *Anna Karenina* Famous first sentence: "All happy families are alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." A poll of writers in 2007 declared this the "greatest novel ever written." Move on to *War and Peace*, the sweeping historical novel of Russia during the Napoleonic Wars...and where did the summer go?

Toole, John Kennedy *A Confederacy of Dunces* (1980) A thoroughly realized, not to mention absurd, New Orleans forms the backdrop of this raucous Pulitzer prize-winning tragicomedy about a delusional, lazy grotesque out of step with the insane world around him.

Turgenev, Hugo *Fathers and Sons* Novel of two young men and their fathers by a Russian master; Bazarov, the central character, is a revolutionary and nihilist.

Twain, Mark

The Innocents Abroad Amusing travel narrative published in 1869 and based on Twain's travels to Europe and the Middle East.

Tom Sawyer A good book to read before freshmen year. Meet Huck Finn before you study his story in freshmen English.

Pudd'nhead Willson Two children whose identities are switched at birth – humorous and incisive satire

of racism in the 19th century America.

Tyler, Anne *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* Story of the Tull family: a sometimes abusive mother; a missing father; a manipulative son; a troubled daughter; and, finally, the second son, who attempts to be the peace-maker.

van der Post, Laurens

A Story like the Wind Coming of age in Africa.

A Far-off Place Sequel to *A Story Like the Wind*; a young white boy and girl, and their Bushman friend, flee war by crossing a thousand miles of desert.

Vonnegut, Kurt *Slaughterhouse-Five or the Children's Crusade* Billy Pilgrim, free in time, shuttles between the cellars of Dresden during the firebombing of World War II and a luxurious zoo run by aliens.

Walker, Alice

The Color Purple Triumphant story of Celie, a poor girl so lonely at first that she can think of no one to write to except God; she ends by achieving success, independence, and love.

Temple of My Familiar Three generations of relationships. Dreams, memory, and magical realism explore the way we live in the modern world. In some ways, it picks up where *The Color Purple* left off, but can easily be read on its own.

Warren, Robert Penn *All the King's Men* This novel of American politics, winner of the 1947 Pulitzer Prize, is not, according to Warren, based on the life of assassinated Louisiana governor Huey Long; however many critics believe that, in fact, it is.

Waugh, Evelyn *Brideshead Revisited* Although known for satire, Waugh writes a moving account of an aristocratic English family.

Wells, H.G.

The Invisible Man The believable tale of a scientist who discovers a formula for turning invisible, but with a catch: he cannot become visible again, and he is slowly going insane.

The Time Machine Wells invents the concept of a time machine in his first science fiction novel.

Wharton, Edith

Summer A frank work of fiction that deals with a young girl's sexual awakening as she confronts her own maturity.

House of Mirth Tragic novel by a superb artist about a lonely woman without money in a society where there is no guarantee of security.

White, Theodore H. *The Once and Future King* Beloved retelling of the story of King Arthur; source for the Disney movie "Sword in the Stone" and the musical "Camelot."

Wiesel, Elie *Night* A 15-year-old boy survives the horrors of two Nazi concentration camps.

Wilder, Thornton *Bridge Over San Luis Rey* A footbridge in Peru breaks, hurtling five people to their

deaths; Brother Juniper asks why.

Wills, Rebecca, *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* Complex bonds between mother and daughter.

Winton, Tim *Cloudstreet*. (1991) Set in Australia, two families come together to share a house with tragic and celebratory events unfolding. This is a tightly plotted novel crafted with beautiful imagery.

Wister, Owen *The Virginian* Southerner moves to Wyoming and falls in love with the schoolteacher; classic Western with a cowboy who reads Shakespeare and Dostoevsky.

Woolf, Virginia, *To the Lighthouse* Innovative novel explores the relations of men and women, time and death.

Wright, Richard, *Native Son* Set in Chicago, this first major novel by the author of *Black Boy* tells of a young man's victimization by racism and his inevitable lashing out.

Zindel, Paul, *The Pigman* Lorraine and John take turns narrating their friendship with a lonely old man. What starts out as a game turns into something important for each of them.

History and Autobiography

Angelou, Maya *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* African American writer traces her coming of age.

Baker, Russell *Growing Up* Engaging autobiography of syndicated columnist's childhood and teenage years growing up during the first Great Depression.

Branagh, Kenneth *Beginning* An autobiography of the actor's life and career - entertaining and interesting.

Brown, Dee *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* The Native American point of view on the old West and European Westward expansion.

Churchill, Winston S. *My Early Life* Twentieth century hero's vivid younger days.

Conway, Jill Ker *The Road From Coorain* A memoir of a girl who grew up on an isolated sheep farm in Australia during an eight year drought. The story ends with her departure for America, where she will later become the President of Smith College.

Curie, Eve *Madame Curie* Daughter pays tribute to her unique mother, a scientific genius.

Delany, Sara and A. Elizabeth *Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years* Two daughters of educated former slaves tell their stories, from Jim Crow to the Harlem Renaissance to the late 20th century.

Dillard, Annie *An American Childhood* Reminiscence of author's growing up in Pittsburgh in the 1950s; fine writing.

Dinesen, Isak *Out of Africa* Beautifully told account of Danish woman's experiences managing a coffee plantation in colonial East Africa in the early 20th century.

Durrell, Gerald *My Family and Other Animals* Hysterically funny stories about the four children in the Durrell family as they move to Corfu with their comical mother.

Eggars, Dave *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (2000 – Pulitzer finalist) The memoir of a college senior who, in the space of five weeks, loses both of his parents to cancer and inherits his eight-year-old brother.

Feynman, Richard *Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman* Autobiographical anecdotes about “monster minds” from Albert Einstein to Nick the Greek, by the Nobel Prize winning physicist who helped develop the atom bomb during WWII and later discovered the defect in the space shuttle.

Frank, Anne *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* Diary kept by a teenage girl as she and her family hide from the Nazis in occupied Holland. An authentic voice from the holocaust.

Franklin, Miles *My Brilliant Career* Dramatic growing-up story of young Australian woman who chooses her own path.

Goodwin, Doris Kearns *Wait Till Next Year* Memoir of childhood and the author's passion for baseball by one of our leading historians.

Green, Hannah *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* With the help of an understanding doctor, a teenage girl struggles to cope with schizophrenia.

Griffin, John Howard *Black Like Me* A white author dyes his skin black and learns what it is like to be black in the American South of the 1940s.

Haley, Alex *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* Malcolm X's story, from street hustler to religious leader. In 2005 historian Manning Marable, talking about his forthcoming book, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*, claimed that Haley worked with the FBI while writing this book with Malcolm.

Huxley, Elspeth *The Flame Trees of Thika* Huxley recalls her childhood on a small farm in Kenya at the turn of the century; unforgettable picture of growing up amid the terror of the jungle.

Karr, Mary *The Liar's Club* East Texas childhood; Karr's mother was a part-time artist, married seven times. Most of the characters are liars of some kind; Daddy, a great story teller, was president of the Liar's Club; Mother avoided the truth entirely.

Kennedy, John F. *Profiles in Courage* President Kennedy's salute to politicians who defied public opinion at fateful moments in U.S. history.

Kuper, Jack *Child of the Holocaust: A True Story* Set in Poland during World War II. An eight-year-old Jewish boy comes home to find that all of his family and friends have been rounded up by the Nazis, leaving him entirely on his own to survive.

Levi, Primo *The Periodic Table* Brilliant memoir by Italian chemist who survived the concentration camps and won the Nobel Prize for literature.

Lovell, Mary S. *The Sound of Wings: The Life of Amelia Earhart* Amelia Earhart's unsolved disappearance still fascinates.

Massie, Robert K. *Nicholas and Alexandra* Popular biography of Russia's last royal family.

Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War

Naval arms race leads to bloodletting on a massive scale.

Mathabane, Mark *Kafir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa* A young, black South African uses his tennis talent to break down racial barriers and escape to a better life in America.

Mattingly, Garrett *The Armada* Masterful narrative of the attempted Spanish invasion of Elizabeth I's England.

McCourt, Frank *Angela's Ashes* Memoir of impoverished Irish childhood; funny and sad.

McCullough David G.

Johnstown Flood Story behind one of America's most devastating natural disasters.

Truman Sweeping biography of Truman from Missouri to Washington, D.C., from civil war heritage to "Fat Boy" and Hiroshima.

Path Between the Seas Amazing story of the building of the Panama Canal.

Mehta, Ved *Sound-Shadows of the New World* Leaving his home, family, and culture behind, a blind Indian boy comes to a school in Arkansas for the blind.

Menchu, Rigoberta I, *Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala* Nobel Peace Prize winner's story; now subject of some controversy on the ground that some of the incidents presented as factual accounts have been doctored and exaggerated.

Milford, Nancy *Zelda* Life of Zelda Fitzgerald; passion and tragedy.

Morris, Edmund *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* Exciting account of a man of destiny – progressive, imperialist, warrior, environmentalist, rancher, and writer; "Bully!"

Mowat, Farley

Woman in the Mists: The Story of Dian Fossey and the Mountain Dian Fossey sacrifices her finances, friends, health, and ultimately her life, to protect the endangered African mountain gorillas.

And No Birds Sang World War II autobiography; coming of age on the field of battle.

Orwell, George *Down and Out in Paris and London* Autobiographical tale of Orwell's own experiences living on the margins of society as a dishwasher and vagabond.

Plato *Apology, Crito and Phaedo* Moving and very readable account of Socrates' last days and an introduction to the philosophical examination of important ideas and themes.

Salzman, Mark *Iron and Silk* An American college graduate goes to China to teach English and learn martial arts.

Sher, Antony *Year of the King: An Actor's Diary and Sketchbook* Tells of one year in the actor's life as he prepares to play the role of King Richard III.

Shirer, William, L. *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* Massive study based on Nazi files and personal observation by a renowned foreign correspondent and historian.

Simon, Kate *Bronx Primitive: Portraits in a Childhood* Simon's difficult Bronx childhood motivates her to become a writer.

Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr *Gulag Archipelago* The brilliant novelist's historical account of Stalin's labor camps.

Tuchman, Barbara

The Guns of August Suspenseful story of how World War I, the "war to end all wars," began.

A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century History of the 14th century told through one feudal family's history.

Vowell, Sarah. *Assassination Vacation* (2005). Vowell recounts the lives and influences of three presidential assassins of Abraham Lincoln, William McKinley and James Garfield. Factual, yet lively through personal anecdotes and reflections.

Wilson, E. O. *Naturalist* Autobiography of a leading socio-biologist.

Nonfiction

Adamson, Joy

Born Free Story of the lion cub named Elsa who comes to live in two worlds.

Living Free Sequel to *Born Free*; Elsa raises her cubs with help from the Adamsons.

Baldwin, James *The Fire Next Time* A civil rights wake-up call.

Campbell, Joseph *The Power of Myth* Themes and symbols from world religions and their relevance to the spiritual journeys of today.

Carson, Rachel *Silent Spring* Often cited as the book that began the environmental movement.

Darwin, Charles *Voyage of the Beagle* Readable account of Darwin's voyage on the Beagle. His observations on the voyage later led him to formulate his revolutionary theory of natural selection.

Foer, Joshua *Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything* (2011) Foer describes his book as participatory journalism. He sets out to investigate the underpinnings behind people with enhanced memory and ends up at the 2005 U.S. Memory Championship to find out people who may possess extraordinary abilities. He returns the following year as a real contender for the grand title, after immersing himself in the techniques of mnemonics developed by the ancient world that he discovered on his first visit.

Gould, Stephen, J.

Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History A recent work about evolution by an eminent scientist with a gift for making science clear and profound.

Bully for Brontosaurus: Reflections in Natural History Essays on evolution and other topics.

Halberstam, David *The Breaks of the Game* Inside look at professional basketball as the author recounts the Portland Trail Blazers' 1979-1980 season. Halberstam has also written an account of Michael Jordan's championship seasons with the Chicago Bulls.

Harr, Jonathan *A Civil Action* Grisham fans will enjoy this true story of a lawsuit that goes awry.

Helfer, Ralph *Modoc* True story of a boy and an elephant caught up in the swirl of 20th century history; the story spans 70 years and takes the reader from a small German circus town to the teak forests of India and eventually to New York City in the 1940s.

Herriot, James *All Creatures Great and Small* Amusing and moving vignettes of a Yorkshire veterinarian's rural practice. First of a series.

Hersey, John *Hiroshima* Six survivors reflect on the aftermath of the first atomic bomb.

Hyerdahl, Thor *Kon Tiki* Six men on a small log raft sail 4,000 miles across the Pacific Ocean to test a theory, based in folklore, as to where the Polynesian people came from; if you like *Kon Tiki*, try *Aku Aku* by the same author.

Kahn, Roger *The Boys of Summer* For baseball lovers, the story of the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Krakauer, Jon *Into Thin Air* The gripping story of a Mount Everest expedition that went tragically wrong.

Lewis, Thomas

Lives of a Cell Elegantly written, extraordinary account of a secret world.

The Youngest Science

Part autobiography of a physician and medical researcher, part history of the changes that the science of medicine has undergone; lively and informative.

Macleon, Norman *Young Men and Fire* Meditation on the terrible Mann gulch fire in which many of the "smoke jumpers" perished.

Mead, Margaret *Coming of Age in Samoa* Classic of anthropology; assesses "nature versus nurture."

McPhee, John

Coming into the Country Alaska, the last frontier. Chronicles McPhee's journeys explorations with bush pilots, prospectors, and settlers, as well as politicians and businesspeople, who each interpret the state in their own way.

Oranges Essays on various topics, all interesting and quirky.

A Sense of Where You Are Profile of Bill Bradley, Princeton basketball phenomenon and candidate for President.

Basin and Range Plate-tectonics revealed in the road cuts of Interstate 80.

Rising from the Plains

Wyoming geology, told in the context of an old-time geologist's life.

Assembling California Geologic origins of the Golden State.

Mowat, Farley

Born Naked A touching memoir of childhood.

The Boat Who Wouldn't Float Funny story of the "Happy Adventure" a porous boat that has sunk eight times.

Never Cry Wolf Mowat is dropped alone to live amongst a wolf pack in the arctic tundra.

The Dog Who Wouldn't Be Boyhood on the Canadian prairie with a dog that climbs trees and ladders and is a hunting genius.

A Whale for the Killing An 80-ton fin whale is trapped then killed by villagers in this plea for a species' survival.

Maxwell, Gavin *Ring of Bright Water* The Scottish highlands and islands and the engaging antics of otters.

Northrup, Solomon *Twelve Years a Slave* A free man is kidnapped and sold into slavery.

Saint-Exupery, Antoine de *Wind, Sand, and Stars* Meditation by famous aviator/writer (author of *The Little Prince*.)

van der Post, Laurens

The Heart of the Hunter Customs of the Bushmen.

The Lost World of the Kalahari An expedition discovers Bushman culture deep in the heart of the Kalahari Desert.

Watson, James D. *The Double Helix* Discoverer of DNA model reveals the competitive side to modern science.

Wilson, Edward O. *The Diversity of Life* Exploration of the threat to biodiversity from human indifference; focus on the rain forest; if you enjoy this work look up the author's Pulitzer Prize winning work, *The Ants*.

Wolfe, Tom *The Right Stuff* Lively account of the early days of the space program.

Yolen, Jane *Favorite Folktales from around the World* Powerful tales with explanations of historical and literary significance.