

# The Books We Will Be Reading...

## CFCA SUMMER READING

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### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Book Choices:

Rising ninth graders are required to complete one book from the following list:

*The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

*The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak

*All Things Great and Small* by James Herriot

*The Fellowship of the Ring* by J.R.R. Tolkien

*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* by Mark Twain

### 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Book Choices:

Rising tenth graders are required to complete one book from the following list\_

*Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy

*Far From the Madding Crowd* by Thomas Hardy

*The Two Towers* by J.R.R. Tolkien

*The Iliad* by Homer

*Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens

**9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students will be required to complete a reading assessment assignment in English class on the first day of school. This assignment requires students to answer questions about the theme, characters and plot of the book they chose to read.**

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## 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Books:

Rising eleventh graders are required to complete at least two books from the following list. Both books must total a minimum of 400 total pages added together:

*Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

*My Antonia* by Willa Cather

*O Pioneers!* by Willa Cather

*Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott

*Little Men* by Louisa May Alcott

*Our Town* by Thornton Wilder

*White Fang* by Jack London

*The White Horse King* by Benjamin R. Merkle

*The Holiness of God* by R. C. Sproul

*1776* by David McCullough

## 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Books:

Rising twelfth graders are required to complete at least two books from the following list. Both books must total a minimum of 400 total pages added together:

*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen

*Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen

*Adam Bede* by George Eliot

*Till We Have Faces* by CS Lewis

*The Screwtape Letters* by CS Lewis

*Return of the Native* by Thomas Hardy

*Hard Times* by Charles Dickens

*Give Me Liberty* by David J. Vaughn

*The Return of the King* by J.R.R. Tolkien

**11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students will be required to complete a reading assessment assignment in English class on the first day of school. This assignment requires students to answer questions about the theme, characters and plot of the books they chose to read.**

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## High School Summer Reading Summaries

### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade:

***The Grapes of Wrath*** by John Steinbeck - First published in 1939, Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prizewinning epic of the Great Depression chronicles the Dust Bowl migration of the 1930s and tells the story of one Oklahoma farm family, the Joads—driven from their homestead and forced to travel west to the promised land of California. Out of their trials and their repeated collisions against the hard realities of an America divided into Haves and Have-Nots evolves a drama that is intensely human yet majestic in its scale and moral vision, elemental yet plainspoken, tragic but ultimately stirring in its human dignity. A portrait of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, of one man's fierce reaction to injustice, and of one woman's stoical strength, the novel captures the horrors of the Great Depression and probes into the very nature of equality and justice in America.

***The Book Thief*** by Markus Zusak - It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will be busier still. By her brother's graveside, Liesel's life is changed when she picks up a single object, partially hidden in the snow. It is The Gravedigger's Handbook, left behind there by accident, and it is her first act of book thievery. So begins a love affair with books and words, as Liesel, with the help of her accordion-playing foster father, learns to read. Soon she is stealing books from Nazi book-burnings, the mayor's wife's library, wherever there are books to be found. But these are dangerous times. When Liesel's foster family hides a Jew in their basement, Liesel's world is both opened up, and closed down.

***All Creatures Great and Small*** by James Herriot - Delve into the magical, unforgettable world of James Herriot, the world's most beloved veterinarian, and his menagerie of heartwarming, funny, and tragic animal patients. For over forty years, generations of readers have thrilled to Herriot's marvelous tales, deep love of life, and extraordinary storytelling abilities. For decades, Herriot roamed the remote, beautiful Yorkshire Dales, treating every patient that came his way from smallest to largest, and observing animals and humans alike with his keen, loving eye.

***The Fellowship of the Ring*** by J.R.R Tolkien - One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them. In ancient times the Rings of Power were crafted by the Elven-smiths, and Sauron, the Dark Lord, forged the One Ring, filling it with his own power so that he could rule all others. But the One Ring was taken from him, and though he sought it throughout Middle-earth, it remained lost to him. After many ages it fell into the hands of Bilbo Baggins, as told in *The Hobbit*. In a sleepy village in the Shire,

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young Frodo Baggins finds himself faced with an immense task, as his elderly cousin Bilbo entrusts the Ring to his care. Frodo must leave his home and make a perilous journey across Middle-earth to the Cracks of Doom, there to destroy the Ring and foil the Dark Lord in his evil purpose.

***A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court*** by Mark Twain - Cracked on the head by a crowbar in nineteenth-century Connecticut, Hank Morgan wakes to find himself in King Arthur's England. After using his knowledge of an upcoming solar eclipse to escape a death sentence, Hank must then navigate his way through a medieval world whose idyllic surface masks fear, injustice, and ignorance.

## **10th Grade:**

***Anna Karenina*** by Leo Tolstoy - Acclaimed by many as the world's greatest novel, Anna Karenina provides a vast panorama of contemporary life in Russia and of humanity in general. In it Tolstoy uses his intense imaginative insight to create some of the most memorable characters in all of literature. Anna is a sophisticated woman who abandons her empty existence as the wife of Karenin and turns to Count Vronsky to fulfil her passionate nature - with tragic consequences. Levin is a reflection of Tolstoy himself, often expressing the author's own views and convictions. Throughout, Tolstoy points no moral, merely inviting us not to judge but to watch. As Rosemary Edmonds comments, 'He leaves the shifting patterns of the kaleidoscope to bring home the meaning of the brooding words following the title, 'Vengeance is mine, and I will repay.

***Far From the Madding Crowd*** by Thomas Hardy - Independent and spirited Bathsheba Everdene has come to Weatherbury to take up her position as a farmer on the largest estate in the area. Her bold presence draws three very different suitors: the gentleman-farmer Boldwood, soldier-seducer Sergeant Troy and the devoted shepherd Gabriel Oak. Each, in contrasting ways, unsettles her decisions and complicates her life, and tragedy ensues, threatening the stability of the whole community.

***The Two Towers*** by J.R.R. Tolkien - Frodo and his Companions of the Ring have been beset by danger during their quest to prevent the Ruling Ring from falling into the hands of the Dark Lord by destroying it in the Cracks of Doom. They have lost the wizard, Gandalf, in a battle in the Mines of Moria. And Boromir, seduced by the power of the Ring, tried to seize it by force. While Frodo and Sam made their escape, the rest of the company was attacked by Orcs. Now they continue the journey alone down the great River Anduin—alone, that is, save for the mysterious creeping figure that follows wherever they go.

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***Oliver Twist*** by Charles Dickens - Starved and mistreated, empty bowl in hand, the young hero musters the courage to approach his master, saying, "Please, sir, I want some more." *Oliver Twist's* famous cry of the heart has resounded with readers since the novel's initial appearance in 1837, and the book remains a popular favorite with fans of all ages. Dickens was no stranger to the pain of hunger and the degradation of poverty. He poured his own youthful experience of Victorian London's unspeakable squalor into this realistic depiction of the link between destitution and crime. Oliver escapes his miserable servitude by running away to London, where he unwillingly but inevitably joins a scabrous gang of thieves. Masterminded by the loathsome Fagin, the underworld crew features some of Dickens' most memorable characters, including the juvenile pickpocket known as the Artful Dodger, the vicious Bill Sikes, and gentle Nancy, an angel of self-sacrifice.

***The Iliad*** by Homer - Dating to the ninth century B.C., Homer's timeless poem still vividly conveys the horror and heroism of men and gods wrestling with towering emotions and battling amidst devastation and destruction, as it moves inexorably to the wrenching, tragic conclusion of the Trojan War. Renowned classicist Bernard Knox observes in his superb introduction that although the violence of the *Iliad* is grim and relentless, it coexists with both images of civilized life and a poignant yearning for peace.

## **11th Grade:**

***The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*** by Mark Twain - A nineteenth-century boy from a Mississippi River town recounts his adventures as he travels down the river with a runaway slave, encountering a family involved in a feud, two scoundrels pretending to be royalty, and Tom Sawyer's aunt who mistakes him for Tom.

***My Antonia*** by Willa Cather - Through Jim Burden's endearing, smitten voice, we revisit the remarkable vicissitudes of immigrant life in the Nebraska heartland, with all its insistent bonds. Guiding the way are some of literature's most beguiling characters: the Russian brothers plagued by memories of a fateful sleigh ride, Antonia's desperately homesick father and self-indulgent mother, and the coy Lena Lingard. Holding the pastoral society's heart, of course, is the bewitching, free-spirited Antonia.

***O Pioneers!*** by Willa Cather - No other work of fiction so faithfully conveys both the sharp physical realities and the mythic sweep of the transformation of the American frontier—and the transformation of the people who settled it. Cather's heroine is Alexandra Bergson, who arrives on the wind-blasted prairie of Hanover, Nebraska, as a girl and grows up to make it a

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prosperous farm. But this archetypal success story is darkened by loss, and Alexandra's devotion to the land may come at the cost of love itself.

***Little Women*** by Louisa May Alcott - Generations of readers young and old, male and female, have fallen in love with the March sisters of Louisa May Alcott's most popular and enduring novel, *Little Women*. Here are talented tomboy and author-to-be Jo, tragically frail Beth, beautiful Meg, and romantic, spoiled Amy, united in their devotion to each other and their struggles to survive in New England during the Civil War. The book explores such timeless themes as love and death, war and peace, the conflict between personal ambition and family responsibilities, and the clash of cultures between Europe and America.

***Little Men*** by Louisa May Alcott - With two sons of her own, and twelve rescued orphan boys filling the informal school at Plumfield, Jo March -- now Jo Bhaer -- couldn't be happier. But despite the warm and affectionate help of the whole March family, boys have a habit of getting into scrapes, and there are plenty of troubles and adventures in store.

***Our Town*** by Thornton Wilder - *Our Town* was first produced and published in 1938 to wide acclaim. This Pulitzer Prize-winning drama of life in the small village of Grover's Corners, an allegorical representation of all life, has become a classic. It is Thornton Wilder's most renowned and most frequently performed play.

***White Fang*** by Jack London - White Fang is part dog and part wolf, and the lone survivor of his family. In his lonely world, he soon learns to follow the harsh law of the North--kill or be killed. But nothing in White Fang's life can prepare him for the cruel owner who turns him into a vicious killer. Will White Fang ever know the kindness of a gentle master?

***The White Horse King*** by Benjamin R. Merkle - Down swept the Vikings from the frigid North. Across the English coastlands and countryside they raided, torched, murdered, and destroyed all in their path. Farmers, monks, and soldiers all fell bloody under the Viking sword, hammer, and axe. Then, when the hour was most desperate, came an unlikely hero. King Alfred rallied the battered and bedraggled kingdoms of Britain and after decades of plotting, praying, and persisting, finally triumphed over the invaders. Alfred's victory reverberates to this day: He sparked a literary renaissance, restructured Britain's roadways, revised the legal codes, and revived Christian learning and worship. It was Alfred's accomplishments that laid the groundwork for Britain's later glories and triumphs in literature, liturgy, and liberty.

***The Holiness of God*** by R.C. Sproul - Central to God's character is the quality of holiness. Yet, even so, most people are hard-pressed to define what God's holiness precisely is. Many preachers today avoid the topic altogether because people today don't quite know what to do

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with words like “awe” or “fear.” R. C. Sproul, in this classic work, puts the holiness of God in its proper and central place in the Christian life. He paints an awe-inspiring vision of God that encourages Christian to become holy just as God is holy. Once you encounter the holiness of God, your life will never be the same.

**1776** by David McCullough - In this masterful book, David McCullough tells the intensely human story of those who marched with General George Washington in the year of the Declaration of Independence—when the whole American cause was riding on their success, without which all hope for independence would have been dashed and the noble ideals of the Declaration would have amounted to little more than words on paper. Based on extensive research in both American and British archives, *1776* is a powerful drama written with extraordinary narrative vitality. It is the story of Americans in the ranks, men of every shape, size, and color, farmers, schoolteachers, shoemakers, no-accounts, and mere boys turned soldiers. And it is the story of the King’s men, the British commander, William Howe, and his highly disciplined redcoats who looked on their rebel foes with contempt and fought with a valor too little known.

## **12th Grade:**

***Pride and Prejudice*** by Jane Austen - Since its immediate success in 1813, *Pride and Prejudice* has remained one of the most popular novels in the English language. Jane Austen called this brilliant work “her own darling child” and its vivacious heroine, Elizabeth Bennet, “as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print.” The romantic clash between the opinionated Elizabeth and her proud beau, Mr. Darcy, is a splendid performance of civilized sparring. And Jane Austen’s radiant wit sparkles as her characters dance a delicate quadrille of flirtation and intrigue, making this book the most superb comedy of manners of Regency England.

***Sense and Sensibility*** by Jane Austen - Marianne Dashwood wears her heart on her sleeve, and when she falls in love with the dashing but unsuitable John Willoughby she ignores her sister Elinor’s warning that her impulsive behaviour leaves her open to gossip and innuendo. Meanwhile Elinor, always sensitive to social convention, is struggling to conceal her own romantic disappointment, even from those closest to her. Through their parallel experience of love—and its threatened loss—the sisters learn that sense must mix with sensibility if they are to find personal happiness in a society where status and money govern the rules of love.

***Adam Bede*** by George Eliot - The story of a beautiful country girl’s seduction by the local squire and its bitter, tragic sequel is an old and familiar one which George Eliot invests with peculiar and haunting power. A bestseller from the moment of publication, *Adam Bede*, although on one level a rich and loving re-creation of a small community shaken to its core, is

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more than a charming, faultlessly evoked pastoral. However much the reader may sympathize with Hetty Sorrel and identify with Arthur Donnithorne, her seducer, and with Adam Bede, the man Hetty betrays, it is George Eliot's creation of the distant aesthetic whole - the complex, multifarious life of Hayslope - which so grips the reader's imagination.

***Till We Have Faces*** by C.S. Lewis - In this timeless tale of two mortal princesses- one beautiful and one unattractive- C.S. Lewis reworks the classical myth of Cupid and Psyche into an enduring piece of contemporary fiction. This is the story of Orual, Psyche's embittered and ugly older sister, who possessively and harmfully loves Psyche. Much to Orual's frustration, Psyche is loved by Cupid, the god of love himself, setting the troubled Orual on a path of moral development. Set against the backdrop of Glome, a barbaric, pre-Christian world, the struggles between sacred and profane love are illuminated as Orual learns that we cannot understand the intent of the gods "till we have faces" and sincerity in our souls and selves.

***The Screwtape Letters*** by C.S. Lewis - *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis is a classic masterpiece of religious satire that entertains readers with its sly and ironic portrayal of human life and foibles from the vantage point of Screwtape, a highly placed assistant to "Our Father Below." At once wildly comic, deadly serious, and strikingly original, C.S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters* is the most engaging account of temptation—and triumph over it—ever written.

***Return of the Native*** by Thomas Hardy - Tempestuous Eustacia Vye passes her days dreaming of passionate love and the escape it may bring from the small community of Egdon Heath. Hearing that Clym Yeobright is to return from Paris, she sets her heart on marrying him, believing that through him she can leave rural life and find fulfilment elsewhere. But she is to be disappointed, for Clym has dreams of his own, and they have little in common with Eustacia's. Their unhappy marriage causes havoc in the lives of those close to them, in particular Damon Wildeve, Eustacia's former lover, Clym's mother and his cousin Thomasin. *The Return of the Native* illustrates the tragic potential of romantic illusion and how its protagonists fail to recognize their opportunities to control their own destinies.

***Hard Times*** by Charles Dickens - Published in 1854, the story concerns one Thomas Gradgrind, a "fanatic of the demonstrable fact," who raises his children, Tom and Louisa, in a stifling and arid atmosphere of grim practicality. Without a moral compass to guide them, the children sink into lives of desperation and despair, played out against the grim background of Coketown, a wretched community shadowed by an industrial behemoth. Louisa falls into a loveless marriage with Josiah Bounderby, a vulgar banker, while the unscrupulous Tom, totally lacking in principle, becomes a thief who frames an innocent man for his crime. Witnessing the degradation and downfall of his children, Gradgrind realizes that his own misguided principles have ruined their lives .

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***Give Me Liberty*** by David J. Vaughn - Historians speak of the shot heard 'round the world, but the American Revolution might better be described in terms of the speech heard 'round the world. For more than two hundred years, the impassioned speech of Patrick Henry - I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death! - has resounded in the hearts and minds of freedom-loving people everywhere. Henry's life embodied the spirit of American courage and patriotism. Give Me Liberty goes beyond the oratory and eloquence to portray this remarkable man, his family, his ideas, and his times.

***The Return of the King*** by J.R.R. Tolkien - As the shadow of Mordor grows across the land, the Companions of the Ring have become involved in separate adventures. Aragorn, revealed as the hidden heir of the ancient Kings of the West, has joined with the Riders of Rohan against the forces of Isengard and takes part in the desperate battle of the Hornburg. Merry and Pippin, captured by Orcs, escape into Fangorn Forest and there encounter the Ents. Gandalf has miraculously returned and defeated the evil wizard, Saruman. Sam has left his master for dead after a battle with the giant spider, Shelob; but Frodo is still alive—now in the foul hands of the Orcs. Meanwhile, the armies of the Dark Lord are massing as the One Ring draws ever nearer to the Cracks of Doom.