

## Summer Reading List



**Dear Students:**

Mr. Valdes and I have thought long and hard about the summer reading this year and have put together an eclectic list that should appeal to everyone. We have chosen 15 books from different genres as well as different cultures with the purpose of not only broadening the scope of your reading but to also expose you to both classic and contemporary literature. We have provided you with a short synopsis of the book as well as the ISBN number. This should help you decide what to read. Branch out! Don't just choose a book that you've already read or seen the movie version. Go on that adventure and try something new! Don't delay, choose your book today and get reading! Don't leave it until the day before school starts!

### Directions:

- Every 9th-12th grade student **is required** to read at least one (1) text from the 15 listed below.
- Each student must prepare a 2 sided written report based upon their reading. Avoid just retelling the text but rather focus on what you liked about it, why you chose it and how it fits in with your previous studies in Omnibus. This report is due at the start of the 1st Omnibus period of the new school year. MLA format please!
- Each student should also be prepared to give an oral presentation on the text in front of the class. This oral presentation will need to be no more than 5 minutes long.
- Both the written and oral presentation will form your first grades for the class.
- You are free to read more than one text, and as your teachers, we strongly encourage you to do so. If you choose to read a second text; the same above rules apply but you will also receive a \$20 Starbucks gift card (courtesy of Mr. Valdes).

Have a great summer and let either Mr. Valdes or myself know if we can help you in any way.

Cheers!

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### **1. Adventures of Huckleberry Finn** by Mark Twain **ISBN: 978-0486280616**

Referring to Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, H. L. Mencken noted that his discovery of this classic American novel was "the most stupendous event of my whole life"; Ernest Hemingway declared that "all modern American literature stems from this one book," while T. S. Eliot called Huck "one of the permanent symbolic figures of fiction, not unworthy to take a place with Ulysses, Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Hamlet." The novel's preeminence derives from its wonderfully imaginative re-creation of boyhood adventures along the Mississippi River, its inspired characterization, the author's remarkable ear for dialogue, and the book's understated development of serious underlying themes: "natural" man versus "civilized" society, the evils of slavery, the innate value and dignity of human beings, and other topics. Most of all, Huckleberry Finn is a wonderful story, filled with high adventure and unforgettable characters.

### **2. Alice's Adventures in Wonderland** by Lewis Carroll **ISBN: 978-0553213458**

In 1862 Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, a shy Oxford mathematician with a stammer, created a story about a little girl tumbling down a rabbit hole. Thus began the immortal adventures of Alice, perhaps the most popular heroine in English literature. Countless scholars have tried to define the charm of the Alice books—with those wonderfully eccentric characters the Queen of Hearts, Tweedledum, and Tweedledee, the Cheshire Cat, Mock Turtle, the Mad Hatter et al.—by proclaiming that they really comprise a satire on language, a political allegory, a parody of Victorian children's literature, even a reflection of contemporary ecclesiastical history. Perhaps, as Dodgson might have said, Alice is no more than a dream, a fairy tale about the trials and tribulations of growing up—or down, or all turned round—as seen through the expert eyes of a child.

### **3. Beloved** by Toni Morrison **ISBN: 978-1400033416**

Staring unflinchingly into the abyss of slavery, this spellbinding novel transforms history into a story as powerful as Exodus and as intimate as a lullaby. Sethe, its protagonist, was born a slave and escaped to Ohio, but eighteen years later she is still not free. She has too many memories of Sweet Home, the beautiful farm where so many hideous things happened. And Sethe's new home is haunted by the ghost of her baby, who died nameless and whose tombstone is engraved with a single word: Beloved. Filled with bitter poetry and suspense as taut as a rope, Beloved is a towering achievement.

### **4. The Book Thief** by Markus Zusak **ISBN: 978-0375842209**

It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still. Liesel Meminger is a foster girl living outside of Munich who scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement. In superbly crafted writing that burns with intensity, award-winning author Markus Zusak, author of I Am the Messenger, has given us one of the most enduring stories of our time.

## **5. The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats** by W. B. Yeats **ISBN: 978-1909621640**

William Butler Yeats, whom many consider this century's greatest poet, began as a bard of the Celtic Twilight, reviving legends and Rosicrucian symbols. By the early 1900s, however, he was moving away from lush romanticism, his verse morphing from the incantatory rhythms of "I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree" into lyrics "as cold and passionate as the dawn." At every stage, however, Yeats plays a multiplicity of poetic roles. There is the romantic lover of "When You Are Old" and "A Poet to His Beloved" ("I bring you with reverent Hands / The books of my numberless dreams..."). And there are the far more bitter celebrations of Maud Gonne, who never accepted his love and engaged in too much politicking for his taste: "Why should I blame her that she filled my days / With misery, or that she would of late / Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways, / Or hurled the little streets upon the great, / Had they but courage equal to desire?" There is also the poet of conscience--and confrontation. His 1931 "Remorse for Intemperate Speech" ends: "Out of Ireland have we come. / Great hatred, little room, / Maimed us at the start. / I carried from my mother's womb / A fanatic heart."

Yeats was to explore several more sides of himself, and of Ireland, before his Last Poems of 1938-39. Many are difficult, some snobbish, others occult and spiritualist. As Brendan Kennelly writes, Yeats "produces both poppycock and sublimity in verse, sometimes closely together." On the other hand, many prophetic masterworks are poppycock-free--for example, "The Second Coming" ("Turning and turning in the widening gyre / The falcon cannot hear the falconer; / Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; / Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world...") and such inquiries into inspiration as "Among School Children" ("O body swayed to music, O brightening glance, How can we know the dancer from the dance?"). And at his best, Yeats extends the meaning of love poetry beyond the obviously romantic: love becomes a revolutionary emotion, attaching the poet to friends, history, and the passionate life of the mind.

## **6. The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time** by Mark Haddon **ISBN: 978-1400032716**

Mark Haddon's bitterly funny debut novel, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, is a murder mystery of sorts--one told by an autistic version of Adrian Mole. Fifteen-year-old Christopher John Francis Boone is mathematically gifted and socially hopeless, raised in a working-class home by parents who can barely cope with their child's quirks. He takes everything that he sees (or is told) at face value, and is unable to sort out the strange behavior of his elders and peers. Late one night, Christopher comes across his neighbor's poodle, Wellington, impaled on a garden fork. Wellington's owner finds him cradling her dead dog in his arms, and has him arrested. After spending a night in jail, Christopher resolves--against the objection of his father and neighbors--to discover just who has murdered Wellington. He is encouraged by Siobhan, a social worker at his school, to write a book about his investigations, and the result--quirkily illustrated, with each chapter given its own prime number--is *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.

**7. Fahrenheit 451** by Ray Bradbury **ISBN: 978-1451673319** Guy Montag is a fireman. In his world, where television rules and literature is on the brink of extinction, firemen start fires rather than put them out. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden. Montag never questions the destruction and ruin his actions produce, returning each day to his bland life and wife, Mildred, who spends all day with her television "family." But then he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people didn't live in fear and to a present where one sees the world through the ideas in books instead of the mindless chatter of television. When Mildred attempts suicide and Clarisse suddenly disappears, Montag begins to question everything he has ever known. He starts hiding books in his home, and when his pilfering is discovered, the fireman has to run for his life.

**8. The Hound of the Baskervilles** by Arthur Conan Doyle **ISBN: 978-0486282145** At Baskerville Hall on the grim moors of Devonshire, a legendary curse has apparently claimed one more victim. Sir Charles Baskerville has been found dead. There are no signs of violence, but his face is hideously distorted with terror. Years earlier, a hound-like beast with blazing eyes and dripping jaws was reported to have torn out the throat of Hugo Baskerville. Has the spectral destroyer struck again? More important, is Sir Henry Baskerville, younger heir to the estate, now in danger? Enter Sherlock Holmes, summoned to protect Sir Henry from the fate that has threatened the Baskerville family. As Holmes and Watson begin to investigate, a blood-chilling howl from the fog-shrouded edges of the great Grimpen Mire signals that the legendary hound of the Baskervilles is poised for yet another murderous attack. The Hound of the Baskervilles first appeared as a serial in The Strand Magazine in 1901. By the time of its publication in book form eight months later, this brilliantly plotted, richly atmospheric detective story had already achieved the status of a classic. It has often been called the best detective story ever written. It remains a thrilling tale of suspense, must reading for every lover of detective fiction.

**9. Invisible Man** by Ralph Ellison **ISBN: 978-0679732761** Invisible Man is a milestone in American literature, a book that has continued to engage readers since its appearance in 1952. A first novel by an unknown writer, it remained on the bestseller list for sixteen weeks, won the National Book Award for fiction, and established Ralph Ellison as one of the key writers of the century. The nameless narrator of the novel describes growing up in a black community in the South, attending a Negro college from which he is expelled, moving to New York and becoming the chief spokesman of the Harlem branch of "the Brotherhood", and retreating amid violence and confusion to the basement lair of the Invisible Man he imagines himself to be. The book is a passionate and witty tour de force of style, strongly influenced by T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Joyce, and Dostoevsky.

**10. The Metamorphosis, In the Penal Colony, and Other Stories** by Franz Kafka, trans. Joachim Neugroschel **ISBN: 978-0684800707** Since his death in 1924, Kafka has come to be regarded as one of the greatest modern writers, one whose work brilliantly explores the anxiety, futility, and complexity of modern life. The precision and clarity of Kafka's style, its

powerful symbolism, and his existential exploration of the human condition have given his work universal significance.

**11. Never Let Me Go** by Kazuo Ishiguro **ISBN: 978-1400078776** From the Booker Prize-winning author of *The Remains of the Day* comes a devastating new novel of innocence, knowledge, and loss. As children Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy were students at Hailsham, an exclusive boarding school secluded in the English countryside. It was a place of mercurial cliques and mysterious rules where teachers were constantly reminding their charges of how special they were. Now, years later, Kathy is a young woman. Ruth and Tommy have reentered her life. And for the first time she is beginning to look back at their shared past and understand just what it is that makes them special—and how that gift will shape the rest of their time together. Suspenseful, moving, beautifully atmospheric, *Never Let Me Go* is another classic by the author of *The Remains of the Day*.

**12. On the Road** by Jack Kerouac **ISBN: 978-0143105466** Inspired by Jack Kerouac's adventures with Neal Cassady, *On the Road* tells the story of two friends whose cross-country road trips are a quest for meaning and true experience. Written with a mixture of sad-eyed naivete and wild ambition and imbued with Kerouac's love of America, his compassion for humanity, and his sense of language as jazz, *On the Road* is the quintessential American vision of freedom and hope, a book that changed American literature and changed anyone who has ever picked it up.

**13. Ordinary People** by Judith Guest **ISBN: 978-0140065176** In *Ordinary People*, Judith Guest's remarkable first novel, the Jarrets are a typical American family. Calvin is a determined, successful provider and Beth an organized, efficient wife. They had two sons, Conrad and Buck, but now they have one. In this memorable, moving novel, Judith Guest takes the reader into their lives to share their misunderstandings, pain, and ultimate healing. *Ordinary People* is an extraordinary novel about an "ordinary" family divided by pain, yet bound by their struggle to heal.

**14. Pride and Prejudice** by Jane Austen **ISBN 13: 978-0141439662** Few have failed to be charmed by the witty and independent spirit of Elizabeth Bennet in Austen's beloved classic *Pride and Prejudice*. When Elizabeth Bennet first meets eligible bachelor Fitzwilliam Darcy, she thinks him arrogant and conceited; he is indifferent to her good looks and lively mind. When she later discovers that Darcy has involved himself in the troubled relationship between his friend Bingley and her beloved sister Jane, she is determined to dislike him more than ever. In the sparkling comedy of manners that follows, Jane Austen shows us the folly of judging by first impressions and superbly evokes the friendships, gossip and snobberies of provincial middle-class life.

**15. A Wrinkle in Time** by Madeleine L'Engle **ISBN: 978-0312367541** It was a dark and stormy night; Meg Murry, her small brother Charles Wallace, and her mother had come down to

the kitchen for a midnight snack when they were upset by the arrival of a most disturbing stranger. "Wild nights are my glory," the unearthly stranger told them. "I just got caught in a downdraft and blown off course. Let me sit down for a moment, and then I'll be on my way. Speaking of ways, by the way, there is such a thing as a tesseract." A tesseract (in case the reader doesn't know) is a wrinkle in time. To tell more would rob the reader of the enjoyment of Miss L'Engle's unusual book. *A Wrinkle in Time*, winner of the Newbery Medal in 1963, is the story of the adventures in space and time of Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin O'Keefe (athlete, student, and one of the most popular boys in high school). They are in search of Meg's father, a scientist who disappeared while engaged in secret work for the government on the tesseract problem. *A Wrinkle in Time* is the winner of the 1963 Newbery Medal.