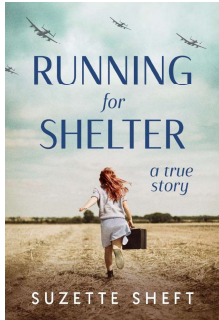


Summer Reading Book List 2026

Please choose a book listed under your grade level for the '26-'27 school year. Once you have finished reading, be sure to look at the requirements for the [ONE PAGER PROJECT](#)

Grade 9:



Running for Shelter- A True Story, Suzette Sheft

Vienna, late 1930s. Bright, red-headed Inge Eisenger leads a privileged life with her glamorous, distant mother. When forced to flee from Nazi-occupied Austria to Switzerland, Inge sees her young life turned upside down. She hopes to finally connect with her mother during their escape, but her mother soon abandons her. Vulnerable and alone, Inge makes her way to Paris before reuniting with her grandmother in Central France. But even there, Inge endures one hardship after another—all while her grandmother keeps a family secret that, if revealed, could result in their whole family's demise. *Running for Shelter* is written by Inge's 15-year-old granddaughter, Suzette Sheft. The gripping, true story offers a window through which young adult readers can witness the challenges of growing up during the Holocaust. As this important chapter of history fades from living memory, Inge's tale offers hope to a new generation who must also cultivate courage and determination in the face of personal and political challenges.



Everything, Everything - Nicola Yoon

My disease is as rare as it is famous. It's a form of Severe Combined Immunodeficiency, but basically, I'm allergic to the world. I don't leave my house, have not left my house in fifteen years. The only people I ever see are my mom and my nurse, Carla.

But then one day, a moving truck arrives. New next door neighbors. I look out the window, and I see him. He's tall, lean and wearing all black—black t-shirt, black jeans, black sneakers and a

black knit cap that covers his hair completely. He catches me looking and stares at me. I stare right back. His name is Olly. I want to learn everything about him, and I do. I learn that he is funny and fierce. I learn that his eyes are Atlantic Ocean-blue and that his vice is stealing silverware. I learn that when I talk to him, my whole world opens up, and I feel myself starting to change—starting to want things. To want out of my bubble. To want everything, everything the world has to offer.

Maybe we can't predict the future, but we can predict some things. For example, I am certainly going to fall in love with Olly. It's almost certainly going to be a disaster.



March: Book 1 - Andrew Aydin and John Lewis

March is a vivid first-hand account of John Lewis' lifelong struggle for civil and human rights, meditating in the modern age on the distance traveled since the days of Jim Crow and segregation. Rooted in Lewis' personal story, it also reflects on the highs and lows of the broader civil rights movement.

Book One spans John Lewis' youth in rural Alabama, his life-changing meeting with Martin Luther King, Jr., the birth of the Nashville Student Movement, and their battle to tear down segregation through nonviolent lunch counter sit-ins, building to a stunning climax on the steps of City Hall.

Many years ago, John Lewis and other student activists drew inspiration from the 1950s comic book *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story*. Now, his own comics bring those days to life for a new audience, testifying to a movement whose echoes will be heard for generations.



Scythe, Neal Schusterman

A world with no hunger, no disease, no war, no misery. Humanity has conquered all those things,

and has even conquered death. Now scythes are the only ones who can end life—and they are commanded to do so, in order to keep the size of the population under control.

Citra and Rowan are chosen to apprentice to a scythe—a role that neither wants. These teens must master the “art” of taking life, knowing that the consequence of failure could mean losing their own.

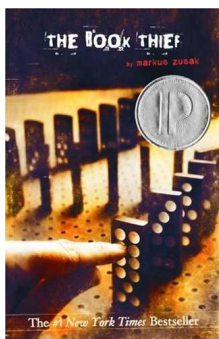
Grade 10:



On the Come Up, Angie Thomas

Sixteen-year-old Bri wants to be one of the greatest rappers of all time. Or at least make it out of her neighborhood one day. As the daughter of an underground rap legend who died before he hit big, Bri’s got big shoes to fill. But now that her mom has unexpectedly lost her job, food banks and shutoff notices are as much a part of Bri’s life as beats and rhymes. With bills piling up and homelessness staring her family down, Bri no longer just wants to make it—she has to make it.

On the Come Up is Angie Thomas’s homage to hip-hop, the art that sparked her passion for storytelling and continues to inspire her to this day. It is the story of fighting for your dreams, even as the odds are stacked against you; of the struggle to become who you are and not who everyone expects you to be; and of the desperate realities of poor and working-class black families.



The Book Thief, Marcus Zusak

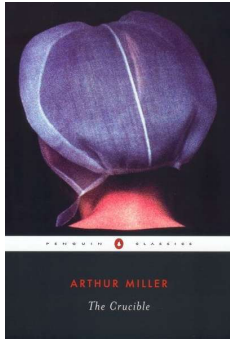
It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will be busier still.

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.

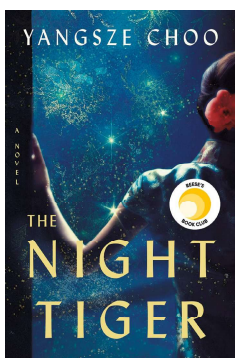
But these are dangerous times. When Liesel's foster family hides a Jew in their basement, Liesel's world is both opened up, and closed down.

In superbly crafted writing that burns with intensity, award-winning author Markus Zusak has given us one of the most enduring stories of our time.



The Crucible, Arthur Miller

"I believe that the reader will discover here the essential nature of one of the strangest and most awful chapters in human history," Arthur Miller wrote of his classic play about the witch-hunts and trials in seventeenth-century Salem, Massachusetts. Based on historical people and real events, Miller's drama is a searing portrait of a community engulfed by hysteria. In the rigid theocracy of Salem, rumors that women are practicing witchcraft galvanize the town's most basic fears and suspicions; and when a young girl accuses Elizabeth Proctor of being a witch, self-righteous church leaders and townspeople insist that Elizabeth be brought to trial. The ruthlessness of the prosecutors and the eagerness of neighbor to testify against neighbor brilliantly illuminates the destructive power of socially sanctioned violence.



The Night Tiger, Yangsze Choo

A sweeping historical novel about a dancehall girl and an orphan boy whose fates entangle over an old Chinese superstition about men who turn into tigers.

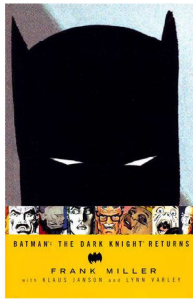
When 11-year-old Ren's master dies, he makes one last request of his Chinese houseboy: that Ren

find his severed finger, lost years ago in an accident, and reunite it with his body. Ren has 49 days, or else his master's soul will roam the earth, unable to rest in peace.

Ji Lin always wanted to be a doctor, but as a girl in 1930s Malaysia, apprentice dressmaker is a more suitable occupation. Secretly, though, Ji Lin also moonlights as a dancehall girl to help pay off her beloved mother's Mahjong debts. One night, Ji Lin's dance partner leaves her with a gruesome souvenir: a severed finger. Convinced the finger is bad luck, Ji Lin enlists the help of her erstwhile stepbrother to return it to its rightful owner.

As the 49 days tick down, and a prowling tiger wreaks havoc on the town, Ji Lin and Ren's lives intertwine in ways they could never have imagined. Propulsive and lushly written, *The Night Tiger* explores colonialism and independence, ancient superstition and modern ambition, sibling rivalry and first love. Braided through with Chinese folklore and a tantalizing mystery, this novel is a page-turner of the highest order.

Grade 11:



***The Dark Knight Returns*, Frank Miller**

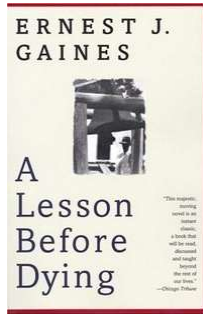
This masterpiece of modern comics storytelling brings to vivid life a dark world and an even darker man. Together with inker Klaus Janson and colorist Lynn Varley, writer/artist Frank Miller completely reinvents the legend of Batman in his saga of a near-future Gotham City gone to rot, ten years after the Dark Knight's retirement.

Crime runs rampant in the streets, and the man who was Batman is still tortured by the memories of his parents' murders. As civil society crumbles around him, Bruce Wayne's long-suppressed vigilante side finally breaks free of its self-imposed shackles.

The Dark Knight returns in a blaze of fury, taking on a whole new generation of criminals and matching their level of violence. He is soon joined by this generation's Robin—a girl named Carrie Kelley, who proves to be just as invaluable as her predecessors.

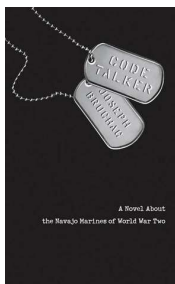
But can Batman and Robin deal with the threat posed by their deadliest enemies, after years of incarceration have made them into perfect psychopaths? And more important, can anyone survive the coming fallout of an undeclared war between the superpowers—or a clash of what were once the world's greatest superheroes?

Over fifteen years after its debut, *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* remains an undisputed classic and one of the most influential stories ever told in the comics medium.



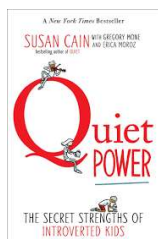
A Lesson before Dying - Ernest J. Gaines

A Lesson Before Dying is set in a small Cajun community in the late 1940s. Jefferson, a young black man, is an unwitting party to a liquor store shoot out in which three men are killed; the only survivor, he is convicted of murder and sentenced to death. Grant Wiggins, who left his hometown for the university, has returned to the plantation school to teach. As he struggles with his decision whether to stay or escape to another state, his aunt and Jefferson's godmother persuade him to visit Jefferson in his cell and impart his learning and his pride to Jefferson before his death. In the end, the two men forge a bond as they both come to understand the simple heroism of resisting and defying the expected. Ernest J. Gaines brings to this novel the same rich sense of place, the same deep understanding of the human psyche, and the same compassion for a people and their struggle that have informed his previous, highly praised works of fiction.



Code Talker: A Book about the Navajo Marines of World War II - Joseph Bruchac

After being taught in boarding school that Navajo is a useless language, Ned Begay and other Navajo men are recruited by the Marines to become Code Talkers, sending messages during World War II in their native tongue.

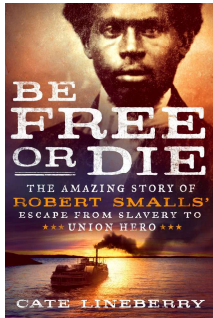


Quiet Power: Growing Up As An Introvert in a World That Can't Stop Talking- Susan Cain

At least one-third of the people we know are introverts. They are the ones who prefer listening to speaking; who innovate and create but dislike self-promotion; who favor working on their own over

working in teams. It is to introverts—Rosa Parks, Chopin, Dr. Seuss, Steve Wozniak—that we owe many of the great contributions to society.

The monumental bestseller *Quiet* has been recast in a new edition that empowers introverted kids and teens Susan Cain sparked a worldwide conversation when she published *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*. The original book focused on the workplace, and Susan realized that a version for and about kids was also badly needed.

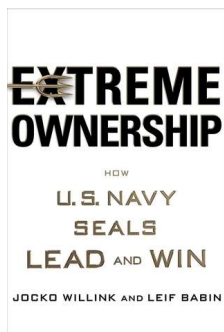


Be Free or Die: The Amazing Story of Robert Smalls' Escape from Slavery to Union Hero - Cate Lineberry

Be Free or Die is a compelling narrative that illuminates Robert Smalls' amazing journey from slave to Union hero and ultimately United States Congressman. It also gives fascinating insight and knowledge into the country's first efforts to help newly freed slaves while also illustrating the many struggles and achievements of African Americans during the war.

It was a mild May morning in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1862, the second year of the Civil War, when a twenty-three-year-old enslaved man named Robert Smalls boldly seized a Confederate steamer. With his wife and two young children hidden on board, Smalls and a small crew ran a gauntlet of heavily armed fortifications in Charleston Harbor and delivered the valuable vessel and the massive guns it carried to nearby Union forces. Smalls' courageous and ingenious act freed him and his family from slavery and immediately made him a Union hero. It also challenged much of the country's view of what African Americans were willing to do for their freedom.

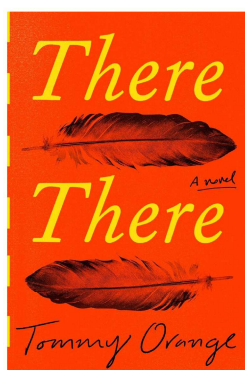
In *Be Free or Die*, Cate Lineberry tells the remarkable story of Smalls' escape and his many accomplishments during the war, including becoming the first black captain of an Army vessel. In a particularly poignant moment, Smalls even bought the home that he and his mother had once served in as house slaves.



Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy SEALs Lead and Win- Jocko Willink & Leif Babin

The #1 New York Times bestseller Sent to the most violent battlefield in Iraq, Jocko Willink and Leif Babin’s SEAL task unit faced a seemingly impossible help U.S. forces secure Ramadi, a city deemed “all but lost.” In gripping firsthand accounts of heroism, tragic loss, and hard-won victories in SEAL Team Three’s Task Unit Bruiser, they learned that leadership—at every level—is the most important factor in whether a team succeeds or fails. Willink and Babin returned home from deployment and instituted SEAL leadership training that helped forge the next generation of SEAL leaders. After departing the SEAL Teams, they launched Echelon Front, a company that teaches these same leadership principles to businesses and organizations. From promising startups to Fortune 500 companies, Babin and Willink have helped scores of clients across a broad range of industries build their own high-performance teams and dominate their battlefields. Now, detailing the mind-set and principles that enable SEAL units to accomplish the most difficult missions in combat, *Extreme Ownership* shows how to apply them to any team, family or organization. Each chapter focuses on a specific topic such as Cover and Move, Decentralized Command, and Leading Up the Chain, explaining what they are, why they are important, and how to implement them in any leadership environment. A compelling narrative with powerful instruction and direct application, *Extreme Ownership* revolutionizes business management and challenges leaders everywhere to fulfill their ultimate lead and win.

Grade 12:

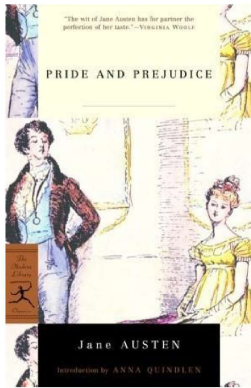


There, There, Tommy Orange

Tommy Orange's wondrous and shattering novel follows twelve characters from Native communities: all traveling to the Big Oakland Powwow, all connected to one another in ways they may not yet realize.

Among them is Jacquie Red Feather, newly sober and trying to make it back to the family she left behind. Dene Oxendene, pulling his life together after his uncle's death and working at the powwow to honor his memory. Fourteen-year-old Orvil, coming to perform traditional dance for the very first time. Together, this chorus of voices tells of the plight of the urban Native American--grappling with a complex and painful history, with an inheritance of beauty and spirituality, with communion and sacrifice and heroism.

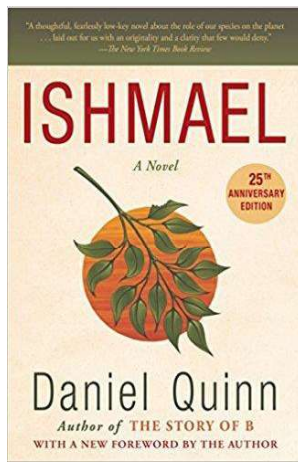
Hailed as an instant classic, *There There* is at once poignant and unflinching, utterly contemporary and truly unforgettable.



***Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen**

Set in England in the early 19th century, *Pride and Prejudice* tells the story of Mr and Mrs Bennet's five unmarried daughters after the rich and eligible Mr Bingley and his status-conscious friend, Mr Darcy, have moved into their neighborhood. While Bingley takes an immediate liking to the eldest Bennet daughter, Jane, Darcy has difficulty adapting to local society and repeatedly clashes with the second-eldest Bennet daughter, Elizabeth.

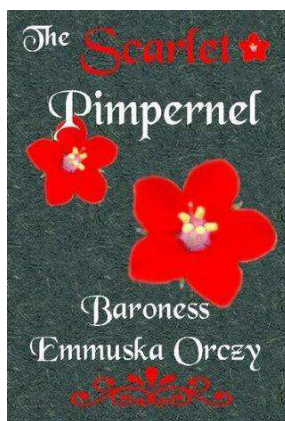
Though Austen set the story at the turn of the 19th century, it retains a fascination for modern readers, continuing near the top of lists of "most loved books." It has become one of the most popular novels in English literature, selling over 20 million copies, and receiving considerable attention from literary scholars. Modern interest in the book has resulted in a number of dramatic adaptations and an abundance of novels and stories imitating Austen's memorable characters or themes.



***Ishmael*, Daniel Quinn**

An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit

The narrator of this extraordinary tale is a man in search of truth. He answers an ad in a local newspaper from a teacher looking for serious pupils, only to find himself alone in an abandoned office with a full-grown gorilla who is nibbling delicately on a slender branch. "You are the teacher?" he asks incredulously. "I am the teacher," the gorilla replies. Ishmael is a creature of immense wisdom and he has a story to tell, one that no other human being has ever heard. It is a story that extends backward and forward over the lifespan of the earth from the birth of time to a future where there is still time to save. Like all great teachers, Ishmael refuses to make the lesson easy; he demands the final illumination to come from within ourselves. Is it man's destiny to rule the world? Or is it a higher destiny possible for him-- one more wonderful than he has ever imagined?

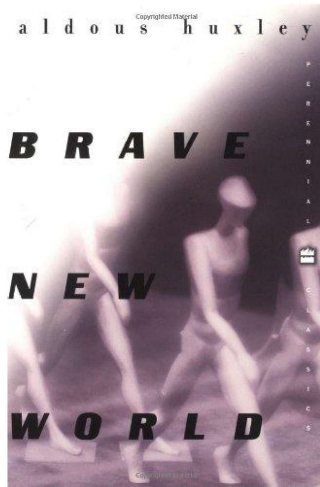


The Scarlet Pimpernel - Baroness Orczy

The year is 1792. The French Revolution, driven to excess by its own triumph, has turned into a reign of terror. Daily, tumbrels bearing new victims to the guillotine roll over the cobbled streets of Paris.... Thus the stage is set for one of the most enthralling novels of historical adventure ever written.

The mysterious figure known as the Scarlet Pimpernel, sworn to rescue helpless men, women, and children from their doom; his implacable foe, the French agent Chauvelin, relentlessly hunting him

down; and lovely Marguerite Blakeney, a beautiful French exile married to an English lord and caught in a terrible conflict of loyalties—all play their parts in a suspenseful tale that ranges from the squalid slums of Paris to the aristocratic salons of London, from intrigue on a great English country estate to the final denouement on the cliffs of the French coast.



***Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley**

Aldous Huxley's profoundly important classic of world literature, *Brave New World* is a searching vision of an unequal, technologically-advanced future where humans are genetically bred, socially indoctrinated, and pharmaceutically anesthetized to passively uphold an authoritarian ruling order—all at the cost of our freedom, full humanity, and perhaps also our souls. “A genius [who] who spent his life decrying the onward march of the Machine” (*The New Yorker*), Huxley was a man of incomparable talents: equally an artist, a spiritual seeker, and one of history’s keenest observers of human nature and civilization. *Brave New World*, his masterpiece, has enthralled and terrified millions of readers, and retains its urgent relevance to this day as both a warning to be heeded as we head into tomorrow and as thought-provoking, satisfying work of literature. Written in the shadow of the rise of fascism during the 1930s, *Brave New World* likewise speaks to a 21st-century world dominated by mass-entertainment, technology, medicine and pharmaceuticals, the arts of persuasion, and the hidden influence of elites.