

Summer Reading for 9th Grade

The Following list of books is a resource for you to explore over the summer. It is optional but encouraged for those who want to get ahead. The first list is comprised of books we will be reading next year. The second list is comprised of books that are similar in scope and genre and will better help students to understand themes and subject matter.

LIST 1: BOOKS WE WILL READ NEXT YEAR

Animal Farm – George Orwell

George Orwell's timeless and timely allegorical novel—a scathing satire on a downtrodden society's blind march towards totalitarianism. A farm is taken over by its overworked, mistreated animals. With flaming idealism and stirring slogans, they set out to create a paradise of progress, justice, and equality. Thus the stage is set for one of the most telling satiric fables ever penned—a razor-edged fairy tale for grown-ups that records the evolution from revolution against tyranny to a totalitarianism just as terrible. When *Animal Farm* was first published, Stalinist Russia was seen as its target. Today it is devastatingly clear that wherever and whenever freedom is attacked, under whatever banner, the cutting clarity and savage comedy of George Orwell's masterpiece have a meaning and message still ferociously fresh.

Anthem – Ayn Rand

This Novella by Ayn Rand was first published in England in 1938. It takes place at some unspecified future date when mankind has entered another dark age characterized by irrationality, collectivism, and socialistic thinking and economics. Technological advancement is now carefully planned (when it is allowed to occur at all) and the concept of individuality has been eliminated (for example, the use of the word "I" is punishable by death). Rand, as a teenager living in Soviet Russia, initially conceived *Anthem* as a play. This is a novel upholding Rand's central principles of her philosophy and of her heroes: reason, values, volition, individualism.

Night – Elie Wiesel

Night is Elie Wiesel's masterpiece, a candid, horrific, and deeply poignant autobiographical account of his survival as a teenager in the Nazi death camps. This new translation by Marion Wiesel, Elie's wife and frequent translator, presents this seminal memoir in the language and spirit truest to the author's original intent. And in a substantive new preface, Elie reflects on the enduring importance of *Night* and his lifelong, passionate dedication to ensuring that the world never forgets man's capacity for inhumanity to man. *Night* offers much more than a litany of the daily terrors, everyday perversions, and rampant sadism at Auschwitz and Buchenwald; it also eloquently addresses many of the philosophical as well as personal questions implicit in any serious consideration of what the Holocaust was, what it meant, and what its legacy is and will be

The Perks of Being a Wallflower – Stephen Chbosky

The critically acclaimed debut novel from Stephen Chbosky, *Perks* follows observant “wallflower” Charlie as he charts a course through the strange world between adolescence and adulthood. First dates, family drama, and new friends. Devastating loss, young love, and life on the fringes. Caught between trying to live his life and trying to run from it, Charlie must learn to navigate those wild and poignant roller-coaster days known as growing up. A #1 *New York Times* best seller for more than a year, an American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults (2000) and Best Book for Reluctant Readers (2000), and with millions of copies in print, this novel for teen readers (or “wallflowers” of more-advanced age) will make you laugh, cry, and perhaps feel nostalgic for those moments when you, too, tiptoed onto the dance floor of life.

Ready Player One – Ernest Cline

In the year 2045, reality is an ugly place. The only time teenage Wade Watts really feels alive is when he's jacked into the virtual utopia known as the OASIS. Wade's devoted his life to studying the puzzles hidden within this world's digital confines—puzzles that are based on their creator's obsession with the pop culture of decades past and that promise massive power and fortune to whoever can unlock them. But when Wade stumbles upon the first clue, he finds himself beset by players willing to kill to take this ultimate prize. The race is on, and if Wade's going to survive, he'll have to win—and confront the real world he's always been so desperate to escape.

Romeo and Juliet – William Shakespeare

Shakespeare's “*Romeo and Juliet*” is one of the Bard's most popular and frequently performed plays. Romeo who is a

member of the house of Montague falls in love with the beautiful Juliet, a member of the house of Capulet. The Montagues and the Capulets have been engaged in a feud for many years and as such the love between Romeo and Juliet is a forbidden one. Written near the end of the 16th century, "Romeo and Juliet," is one of Shakespeare's earliest dramas, the story of a love that can never be truly realized and the tragedy that ensues. Regarded as one of the greatest and most tragic love stories of all time, "Romeo and Juliet" is an archetypal story of star-crossed young lovers which has inspired countless imitations on both stage and screen.

LIST 2: BOOKS THAT ARE SIMILAR AND WILL HELP WITH THEME AND CONTENT

Fahrenheit 451 – Ray Bradbury

Ray Bradbury's internationally acclaimed novel *Fahrenheit 451* is a masterwork of twentieth-century literature set in a bleak, dystopian future. 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.

Me and Earl and the Dying Girl – Jesse Andrews

The book that inspired the hit film *This is the Funniest Book You'll Ever Read About Death*. It is a universally acknowledged truth that high school sucks. But on the first day of his senior year, Greg Gaines thinks he's figured it out. The answer to the basic existential question: How is it possible to exist in a place that sucks so bad? His strategy: remain at the periphery at all times. Keep an insanely low profile. Make mediocre films with the one person who is even sort of his friend: Earl. This plan works for exactly eight hours. Then Greg's mom forces him to become friends with a girl who has cancer. This brings about the destruction of Greg's entire life. Fiercely funny, honest, heart-breaking – this is an unforgettable novel from a bright talent, that critics are calling a touchstone for its generation and an instant classic.

Paper Towns – John Green

When Margo Roth Spiegelman beckons Quentin Jacobsen in the middle of the night—dressed like a ninja and plotting an ingenious campaign of revenge—he follows her. Margo's always planned extravagantly, and, until now, she's always planned solo. After a lifetime of loving Margo from afar, things are finally looking up for Q . . . until day breaks and she has vanished. Always an enigma, Margo has now become a mystery. But there are clues. And they're for Q.

The Pearl – John Steinbeck

Like his father and grandfather before him, Kino is a poor diver, gathering pearls from the gulf beds that once brought great wealth to the Kings of Spain and now provide Kino, Juana, and their infant son with meager subsistence. Then, on a day like any other, Kino emerges from the sea with a pearl as large as a sea gull's egg, as "perfect as the moon." With the pearl comes hope, the promise of comfort and of security....A story of classic simplicity, based on a Mexican folk tale, *The Pearl* explores the secrets of man's nature, the darkest depths of evil, and the luminous possibilities of love.

To Kill a Mockingbird – Harper Lee

One of the best-loved stories of all time, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been translated into more than forty languages, sold more than forty million copies worldwide, served as the basis for an enormously popular motion picture, and was voted one of the best novels of the twentieth century by librarians across the country. A gripping, heart-wrenching, and wholly remarkable tale of coming-of-age in a South poisoned by virulent prejudice, it views a world of great beauty and savage inequities through the eyes of a young girl, as her father—a crusading local lawyer—risks everything to defend a black man unjustly accused of a terrible crime.