

American Literature
Recommended Summer Reading List
Ms. Vanden Bosch

"Reading is to the Mind,
what Exercise is to the Body...."
--Sir Richard Steele--

Choose a book that is right for you! These books are recommendations; not all books are appropriate for all readers. Since some are for the more mature reader, research the books and consult your parents when making your choice for summer reading.

1. Agee, James, **A Death in the Family**
Story of loss and heartbreak felt when a young father dies.
2. Anderson, Sherwood, **Winesburg, Ohio**
A collection of short stories lays bare the life of a small town in the Midwest.
3. Baldwin, James, **Go Tell It On the Mountain**
Semi-autobiographical novel about a 14-year-old black youth's religious conversion.
4. Bellamy, Edward, **Looking Backward: 2000-1887**
Written in 1887 about a young man who travels in time to a utopian year 2000, where economic security and a healthy moral environment have reduced crime.
5. Bellow, Saul, **Seize the Day**
A son grapples with his love and hate for an unworthy father.
6. Bradbury, Ray, **Fahrenheit 451**
Reading is a crime and firemen burn books in this futuristic society.
7. Cather, Willa, **My Antonia**
Immigrant pioneers strive to adapt to the Nebraska prairies.
8. Clark, Walter Van Tilburg, **The Ox-Bow Incident**
When a group of citizens discovers one of their members has been murdered by cattle rustlers, they form an illegal posse, pursue the murderers, and lynch them.
9. Crane, Stephen, **The Red Badge of Courage**
During the Civil War, Henry Fleming joins the army full of romantic visions of battle which are shattered by combat.
10. Dorris, Michael, **A Yellow Raft in Blue Water**
Three generations of Native American women recount their searches for identity and love.
11. Ellison, Ralph, **Invisible Man**
A black man's search for himself as an individual and as a member of his race and his society.

12. Faulkner, William, **As I Lay Dying**

The Bundren family takes the ripening corpse of Addie, wife and mother, on a gruesomely comic journey.

13. Gaines, Ernest, **The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman**

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

14. Heller, Joseph, **Catch-22**

A broad comedy about a WWII bombardier based in Italy and his efforts to avoid bombing missions.

15. Hurston, Zora Neale, **Their Eyes Were Watching God**

Janie repudiates many roles in her quest for self-fulfillment.

16. Kesey, Ken, **One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest**

A novel about a power struggle between the head nurse and one of the male patients in a mental institution.

17. Lewis, Sinclair, **Main Street**

A young doctor's wife tries to change the ugliness, dullness and ignorance which prevail in Gopher Prairie, Minn.

18. London, Jack, **Call of the Wild**

Buck is a loyal pet dog until cruel men make him a pawn in their search for Klondike gold.

19. McCullers, Carson, **The Member of the Wedding**

A young southern girl is determined to be the third party on a honeymoon, despite all the advice against it from friends and family.

20. Melville, Herman, **Moby-Dick**

A complex novel about a mad sea captain's pursuit of the White Whale.

21. Morrison, Toni, **Sula**

The lifelong friendship of two women becomes strained when one causes the other's husband to abandon her.

22. O'Connor, Flannery, **A Good Man is Hard to Find**

Social awareness, the grotesque, and the need for faith characterize these stories of the contemporary South.

23. Parks, Gordon, **The Learning Tree**

A fictional study of a black family in a small Kansas town in the 1920s.

24. Plath, Sylvia, **The Bell Jar**

The heartbreaking story of a talented young woman's descent into madness.

25. Poe, Edgar Allan, **Great Tales and Poems**

Poe is considered the father of detective stories and a master of supernatural tales.

26. Salinger, J.D., **The Catcher in the Rye**
A prep school dropout rejects the "phoniness" he sees all about him.
27. Sinclair, Upton, **The Jungle**
The deplorable conditions of the Chicago stockyards are exposed in this turn-of-the-century novel.
28. Steinbeck, John, **The Grapes of Wrath**
The desperate flight of tenant farmers from Oklahoma during the Depression.
29. Stowe, Harriet Beecher, **Uncle Tom's Cabin**
The classic tale that awakened a nation about the slave system.
30. Vonnegut, Kurt, **Slaughterhouse-Five**
Billy Pilgrim, an optometrist from Ilium, New York, shuttles between World War II Dresden and a luxurious zoo on the planet Tralfamadore.
31. Walker, Alice, **The Color Purple**
A young woman sees herself as property until another woman teaches her to value herself.
32. Wells, H.G., **The Time Machine**
A scientist invents a machine that transports him into the future.
33. Welty, Eudora, **Thirteen Stories**
A collection of short stories about people and life in the deep South.
34. Wolfe, Thomas, **Look Homeward, Angel**
A novel depicting the coming of age of Eugene Gant and his passion to experience life.
35. Wright, Richard, **Black Boy**
An autobiography chronicling the life of the author growing up amid adversity in the south.