

Community Academy of Philadelphia

Summer Reading for English

Over the summer months, each student in grades 9 -12 is required to read certain novels before returning in September. All students must read 2 novels out of the choices provided for their grade level. Novels will be available for sale in our school store, as well as Amazon and Barnes and Noble or at most local libraries. Many of these novels can be found as eBooks. Please view a tutorial from Ms. Benvenuto to find out how to download books for FREE.

The novels must be read by the first day of school in September. Your English teacher will test your knowledge of the required novels. Please have your novel with you the first day of class.

These novels were not only chosen for their literary quality, but also because they are great novels to read. We hope you enjoy them.

Happy Reading!

* Exceptions: 12th grade AP English Students must read all four books listed under its section.

8th into 9th Choose 2 Books

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night- Time

Mark Haddon

Christopher Boone, the autistic 15-year-old narrator of this revelatory novel, relaxes by groaning and doing math problems in his head, eats red- but not yellow or brown – foods, and screams when he is touched. When his neighbor’s poodle is killed and Christopher is falsely accused of the crime, he decides that he will take a page from Sherlock Holmes (one of his favorite characters) and track down the killer. As mystery leads him to the secrets of his parents’ broken marriage and then into an odyssey to find his place in the world, he must fall back on deductive logic to navigate the emotional complexities of social world that remains a closed book to him.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

Sherman Alexie

Sherman Alexie’s first young adult novel is a semi-autobiographical chronicle of Arnold Spirit, aka Junior, a Spokane Indian from Wellpinit, WA. The bright 14-year-old with water on the brain, is regularly the target of bullies, and loves to draw. He expects disaster when he transfers from the reservation school to the rich, white school in Reardan, but soon finds himself making friends with both geeky and popular students, and starting on the basketball team. Meeting his old classmates on the court, Junior grapples with questions about what constitutes one’s community, identity, and tribe. The daily struggles of reservation life and the tragic deaths of the protagonist’s grandmother, dog, and older sister would be all but unbearable without the humor and resilience of spirit with which Junior faces the world.

The House of the Scorpion

Nancy Farmer

Matteo Alacran wasn’t born; he was harvested. His DNA came from El Patron, lord of a country called Opium—a strip of poppy fields lying between the United States and what was once Mexico. Matt’s first cell split and divided inside a Petri dish. Then he was placed in the womb of a cow, where he continued the miraculous journey from embryo, to fetus, to baby. He is a boy now, but most consider him a monster--- except for El Patron. El Patron loves Matt as he loves himself, because Matt is himself.

Tuesday's with Morrie

Mitch Albom

This novel tells the true story of retired sociology professor Morrie Schwartz and his relationship with his students. On his graduation, Mitch Albom, the narrator, tells his favorite professor, Morrie Schwartz, that he will keep in touch. However, Mitch doesn't contact his professor until one night when he sees Morrie being interviewed on T.V. It turns out that Morrie has developed ALS, a terminal disease, and is in a wheelchair. Mitch begins to visit his professor and soon realizes that, though he has grown remarkably, he still has a lot to learn from Morrie.

Cuba 15

Nancy Osa

Violet Paz has just turned 15, a pivotal birthday in the eyes of her Cuban grandmother. 15 is the age when a girl enters womanhood, traditionally celebrating the occasion with the quinceañero. But while Violet is half Cuban, she's also Polish, and more importantly, she feels 100% American. Except for her zany family's passion for playing dominoes, smoking cigars, and dancing to Latin music, Violet knows little about Cuban culture, nada about Quinces, and only tidbits about the history of Cuba.

Bless Me Ultima

Rudolfo Anaya

Antonio Marez is 6 years old when Ultima stays with his family in New Mexico. She is curandera, one who cures with herbs and magic. Under her wise wing, Tony will probe the family ties that bind and rend him, and he will discover himself in the magical secret of the pagan past- a mythical legacy as palpable as the Catholicism of Latin America. At each life turn there is Ultima, who delivered Tony into the world... and will nurture the birth of his soul.

9th into 10th (choose 2 Books)

Nineteen Minutes

Jodi Picoult

On Peter Houghton's first day of kindergarten, he watched helplessly as an older boy ripped his lunch box out of his hands and threw it out the window. From that day on, his life was a series of humiliations, from having his pants pulled down in the cafeteria, to being called a freak at every turn. But can endless bullying justify murder? *Nineteen Minutes* deals with the truth and consequences of a small town high school shooting. Set in Sterling, New Hampshire, the book offers a glimpse of what would cause a 17-year-old to wake up one day, load his backpack with four guns, and kill ten people in the span of 19 minutes.

Friday Night Lights

H.G. 'Buzz' Bissinger

Football is taken seriously in Odessa, Texas. *Friday Night Lights* follows the 1988 season of the Permian High School Panthers Football team. This book examines the story of the town, the team, and its young players. For better or worse, this small town lives and dies with its football team.

The Bean Trees

Barbara Kingsolver

Feisty Marietta Greer changes her name to "Taylor" when her car runs out of gas in Taylorville, IL. By the time she reaches Oklahoma, this strong-willed young Kentucky native with a quick tongue and an open mind catapulted into a surprising new life. She rises to the challenge of accepting a baby from a stranger and finds that motherhood, responsibility, and independence are thorny, if welcome, gifts. This funny, inspiring book is a marvelous affirmation of risk-taking, commitment and everyday miracles.

10th into 11th (choose 2 Books)

The Kite Runner

Khaled Hosseini

Khaled Hosseini's quietly powerful debut novel, *The Kite Runner*, fulfills the promise of fiction, awakening curiosity about the world around us, speaking truth as the lessons of history echo down the years. The themes are universal: familial relationships, particularly father and son; the price of disloyalty; the inhumanity of a rigid class system; and the horrific realities of war.

1984

George Orwell

Portrays a terrifying vision of life in the future when an authoritarian government, considered a "depressing Utopia" watches over all citizens and dictates all activities, becoming more powerful as time goes by.

The Heart is a Lonely Hunter

Carson McCullers

At its center is the deaf-mute John Singer, who becomes the confidant for various types of misfits in a Georgia mill town during the 1930s. Each one yearns for escape from small town life. When Singer's mute companion goes insane, Singer moves into the Kelly house, where Mick Kelly, the book's heroine (and loosely based on McCullers), finds solace in her music.

Down These Mean Streets

Piri Thomas

Piri Thomas describes the passionate and painful search to validate his manhood. He has done it all in Harlem's mean streets and has gone on from machismo to manhood. Those that have not let their environment get the best of them will enjoy this book.

11th into 12th (choose 2 Books)

The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao

Junot Diaz

This is the first novel by Junot Diaz. Things have never been easy for Oscar, a sweet but disastrously overweight, lovesick Dominican. From his home in New Jersey, where he lives with his old-world mother and rebellious sister, Oscar dreams of becoming the Dominican J.R.R. Tolkien and, most of all, finding love.

The Bell Jar

Sylvia Plath

Based on the author's own breakdown, the story unfolds of a young girl who wins a dream assignment at a New York City magazine, only to have it turn into a nightmare.

Into the Wild

Jon Krakauer

This nonfiction book recaps the life of a young man named Christopher Johnson who gave away his savings to charity and hitchhiked into the wilderness to begin a new life. Four months later, his body was found decomposing in a bus.

The Color of the Water

James McBride

James McBride grew up one of twelve siblings in the all-black housing projects of Red Hook, Brooklyn, the son of a black minister and a woman who would not admit she was white. The object of McBride's constant embarrassment and continuous fear for her safety, his mother was an inspiring figure, who through sheer force of will saw her dozen children through college, and many through graduate school. McBride was an adult before he discovered the truth about his mother.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Maya Angelou

Sent by their mother to live with their devout, self-sufficient Grandmother in a small Southern town, Maya and her brother, Bailey, endure the ache and the prejudice of the local “poor white trash.” At eight years old at her mother’s side in St. Louis, Maya is attacked by a man many times her age— and has to live with the consequences for a lifetime. Years later, in San Francisco, Maya learns about love for herself and the kindness of others, and her own strong spirit.

11th into 12 AP (Must Read All)

Ralph Ellison’s **Invisible Man** is a monumental novel, one that can well be called an epic of modern American Negro life. It is a strange story, in which many extraordinary things happen, some of them shocking and brutal, some of them pitiful and touching—yet always with elements of comedy and irony and burlesque that appear in unexpected places.

Henrik Ibsen’s controversial play, *A Doll House**, explores relationships at the turn of the 19th century.

Henry James’s enigmatic gothic novella, *The Turn of the Screw*, has ghosts, a governess, and gobs of ambiguity.

In Oscar Wilde’s unforgettable novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* a man’s soul is caught in a painting, leaving him free to lead a life of stainless corruption.

*No need to purchase; these are part of your AP text.

	Hoopla	Overdrive	Gutenberg	Open Library
Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time (Haddon)		Yes		Yes
Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian (Alexie)		Yes		
House of the Scorpion (Farmer)				
Tuesdays with Morrie (Albom)		Yes		Yes
Cuba 15 (Osa)				Yes
Bless Me Ultima (Anaya)				Yes
Nineteen Minutes (Picoult)		Yes		Yes
Friday Night Lights (Bissinger)		Yes		
Bean Trees (Kingsolver)	Yes	Yes		Yes
Kite Runner (Hosseini)		Yes		Yes
1984 (Orwell)	Yes	Yes		Yes
The Heart is a Lonely Hunter (McCullers)	Yes	Yes		Yes
Down these Mean Streets (Thomas)				Yes
The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao (Diaz)		Yes		Yes
The Bell Jar (Plath)	Yes (audio only)	Yes		Yes
Into the Wild (Krakauer)		Yes		
The Color of Water (McBride)		Yes		Yes
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings		Yes		Yes
Turn of the Screw (James)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
The Picture of Dorian Gray (Wilde)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Invisible Man (Ellison)		Yes		Yes
A Doll's House (Ibsen)	Yes		Yes	Yes