

## South Hadley High School 2009 Summer Reading List

To help you decide which book or books you will read, here are short summaries of each of the texts. (Summaries are courtesy of Follet/Titlewave.)

### Grade 9:

***The Contender (Lipsyte)*** After a successful start in a boxing career, a Harlem high school dropout decides that competing isn't enough in life and resolves to make a change.

***How I Live Now (Rosoff)*** Manhattan native Daisy is sent by her frustrated parent to live with cousins in England. There, war breaks out, and she must learn to change if she is to survive.

***Briar Rose (Yolen)*** In this retelling of "Sleeping Beauty," a young woman learns that her grandmother had a secret past tied to the Holocaust.

***Ender's Game (Card)*** Ender, who is a result of genetic experimentation, may be the military genius Earth needs in its war against an alien enemy. A must read for those who like computer games and/or science fiction.

***A Child Called It (Pelzer)*** David Pelzer, victim of one of the worst child abuse cases in the history of California, tells the story of how he survived his mother's brutality and triumphed over his past.

***The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian (Alexie)\**** Budding cartoonist Junior leaves his troubled school on the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white farm town school where the only other Native American is the school mascot.

### Grade 10:

***My Sister's Keeper (Picoult)*** Thirteen-year-old Anna, conceived specifically to provide blood and bone marrow for her sister Kate who was diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia at the age of two, decides to sue her parents for control of her body when her mother wants her to donate a kidney to Kate.

***Nineteen Minutes (Picoult)*** The people of Sterling, New Hampshire, are forever changed after a shooting at the high school leaves ten people dead, and the judge presiding over the trial tries to remain unbiased, even though her daughter witnessed the events and was friends with the assailant. (mature content)

**NOTE: READING BOTH PICOULT NOVELS WILL NOT FULFILL THE SUMMER READING REQUIREMENT. A SECOND AUTHOR MUST BE READ.**

***Persepolis (Satrapi)*** Contains black-and-white comic strip images in which the author shares the story of her life in Tehran, Iran, where she lived from ages six to fourteen while the country came under control of the Islamic regime.

***Twilight (Meyer)*** Seventeen-year-old Bella leaves Phoenix to live with her father in Forks, Washington, where she meets an exquisitely handsome boy at school for whom she feels an overwhelming attraction and who she comes to realize is not wholly human.

***The Color of Water (McBride)*** An Afro-American man tells of his mother, a white woman, who refused to admit her true identity.

***The Road (McCarthy)*** This novel traces the journey of a father and son as they try to survive in a post-war wasteland. (mature content)

***The Truth about Forever (Dessen)*** Grieving for her recently deceased father, Macy, a sixteen-year-old, plans to spend the summer working at the library and waiting for her boyfriend to return. An unexpected new job and new friends provide experiences that help her confront her grief.

***Twisted (Anderson)*** After finally getting noticed by someone other than school bullies and his ever-angry father, seventeen-year-old Tyler enjoys his tough new reputation and the attentions of a popular girl, but when life starts to go bad again, he must choose between transforming himself or giving in to his destructive thoughts.

## **Grade 11:**

***The Secret Life of Bees (Kidd)*** Fourteen-year-old Lily and her companion, Rosaleen, flee their home after Rosaleen is victimized by racist police officers. They find a safe haven at the home of three beekeeping sisters, May, June, and August, who hold the secret to Lily's past.

***Into the Wild (Krakauer)*** The author tells the story of Chris McCandless, a twenty-four-year-old who walked into the Alaskan wilderness on an idealistic journey of self-discovery and was found dead four months later. Krakauer tries to discover what happened to this adventurer.

***The Lovely Bones (Sebold)*** Fourteen-year-old Susie Salmon, the victim of sexual assault and murder, looks on from an afterlife as her family deals with their grief, and waits for her killer to be brought to some kind of justice. (mature content)

***Eleven Seconds (Roy and Swift)*** Travis Roy recounts how his life has changed since a freak accident in 1995 in his first Boston University hockey game left him paralyzed from the neck down.

**Montana 1948 (Watson)** The book chronicles the challenges one boy and his family must face when trying to expose the abuse of power by a well-respected family member.

**When I Was Puerto Rican (Santiago)** This is Santiago's well-received book about her childhood and youth in Puerto Rico and New York City. (mature content)

## AP English 11 (All 3 Required)

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**Mao's Last Dancer (Li)** Li Cunxin, a principal dancer with the Houston Ballet and Australian Ballet, explains how his childhood of poverty in rural China changed when he was selected by Madame Mao to attend the dance academy in Beijing, tells how his devotion to Communist philosophy was shaken during his first visit to the U.S. as part of an exchange program with the Houston Ballet, and discusses his eventual defection to the West.

**The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Twain)** Huck, in flight from his murderous father, and Jim, in flight from slavery, pilot their raft down the Mississippi River in search of freedom.

## Grade 12:

**The Bean Trees (Kingsolver)** Taylor, a poor Kentuckian, makes her way west with an abandoned baby girl and stops in Tucson. There she finds friends and discovers resources in what appear to be barren places.

**Friday Night Lights (Bissinger)** The book follows the 1988 season of the Permian Panthers, a high school football team in Odessa, Texas, exploring the lives of the players and the impact of the championship team on the small town.

**Things Fall Apart (Achebe)** The tragic story of one man's refusal to surrender his life style and cultural values as the world changes around him.

**On Her Majesty's Secret Service (Fleming)** James Bond must steal vital information from the head of SPECTRE to keep him from continuing his research that could ultimately threaten the safety of the world.

**Long Way Gone (Beah)** Beah describes his experiences after he was driven from his home by war in Sierra Leone and picked up by the government army at the age of thirteen, serving as a soldier for three years before being removed from fighting by UNICEF and eventually moving to the United States.

***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time (Haddon)*** Despite his overwhelming fear of interacting with people, Christopher, a mathematically-gifted, autistic fifteen-year-old boy, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secret information about his mother.

***The Kite Runner (Hosseini)*** Hosseini writes a powerful tale of childhood friendship and betrayal set against the backdrop of the cataclysmic changes that rocked Afghanistan in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **AP English 12 (All 4 Required)**

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***Beloved (Morrison)*** Sethe, an escaped slave living in post-Civil War Ohio, struggles to keep Beloved, an intruder, from gaining possession of her present while throwing off the legacy of her past.

***Pride and Prejudice (Austen)*** In early nineteenth-century England, a spirited young woman copes with the courtship of a snobbish gentleman as well as the romantic entanglements of her four sisters.