English I and II Recommended Summer Reading

The purpose of summer reading is to help you stay engaged with reading, writing, and thinking over the summer. Doing a little bit each week goes a long way in boosting comprehension and vocabulary that will be vital for high school English this year. Like anything else, practice improves skills; reading skills like speed, fluency, and comprehension can be strengthened. Recommendations for summer reading are based upon student interest AND ideas students will be exploring during the coming year. Lexile levels are provided for many selections so that you can choose accordingly.

Students, reading is strongly encouraged over the summer, but there is an optional writing assignment, with a reward/incentive to be announced when school starts in August. Students in a standard class are encouraged to read one summer reading book. Students enrolled in English I or English II Honors, should read a second book and see the “Honors Addendum” below. As you read, interact with the text through highlighting and annotating. (Use sticky notes or separate notes sheets if the book is not yours!) (See “What Should I Annotate?”) For the writing assignment, use the title of the book for the title of your report. (It should be typed in standard MLA format.) Responses should be thorough and reflective of individual understanding of the reading. High school level quality is also an expectation; cite textual evidence to support responses and follow standard written conventions (spelling, sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics). Written work may be submitted electronically to shelby.crawford@wcs.edu (name the file with your first and last name and grade) or a hard copy can be submitted to your teacher when school begins.

(Please note that any responses reflecting or coinciding with Sparknotes, Shmoop, or other such study aids will be counted as plagiarism and will not receive any credit; this project is designed to improve YOUR reading.)

Writing Assignment for FICTION or BIOGRAPHIES/AUTOBIOGRAPHIES
1. Select two points of conflict and explain how characters or events are affected by them and then, in turn, respond to the conflict.
2. Pick one major character and discuss how he or she develops and changes throughout the course of the text. What moral/ethical choices do the characters make? What did might readers think of those choices?
3. What literary elements seem most important? Point of view? Setting? Is there dialect? Symbolism? Does the author use imagery, figurative language, or allusions to reveal his or her tone or create a mood?
4. Choose one theme from the book and discuss how it is conveyed at different points of the plot.
5. Offer a well written critique of the book. What parts impacted you? Would you recommend this book to your peers – why or why not?

Writing Assignment for NONFICTION (non-narrative)
1. Select two kinds of information in this book that are most important. Explain.
2. What can readers learn from the text that they can actually use? Explain giving examples from the text.
3. How is the book organized? How does that help the reader? Does the author use text features like headings or illustrations?
5. What are three ideas or takeaways everyone needs to know about this book? Why?

Honors Addendum: For the second book, create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the major characters and/or ideas from each work. Make sure to refer not only to character traits but also how their decisions impact the plot or how information is presented and for what purpose.
Some of the below titles have adult themes and content. Students should choose books at their (and their parents’) discretion.

English I Recommended Reading

Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom
Maybe it was a grandparent, or a teacher, someone older who understood you when you were young and searching, who helped you see the world as a more profound place, and gave you advice to help you make your way through it. For Mitch Albom, that person was Morrie Schwartz, his college professor from nearly twenty years ago.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens by Sean Covey
Imagine you had a roadmap—a step-by-step guide to help you get from where you are now, to where you want to be in the future. Your goals, your dreams, your plans—they are all within reach. You just need the tools to help you get there.

No Easy Day by Mark Owen
This is the firsthand account of the mission and capture of Osama Bin Laden.

Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand
(Young Adult Adaptation) The story of a man’s breathtaking odyssey and the courage, cunning, and fortitude he found to endure and overcome. Lavishly illustrated with more than one hundred photographs and featuring an exclusive interview with Zamperini, Unbroken will introduce a new generation to one of history’s most thrilling survival epics.

The Killer Angels by Michael Shaara (Lexile Level 630)
In the four most bloody and courageous days of our nation’s history, two armies fought for two conflicting dreams. One dreamed of freedom, the other of a way of life. Far more than rifles and bullets were carried into battle. There were memories. There were promises. There was love. Far more than men fell on those Pennsylvania fields. Bright futures, untested innocence, and pristine beauty were also the casualties of war.

Red Queen by Victoria Aveyard (Lexile Level 800)
Mare Barrow’s world is divided by blood—those with common, Red blood serve the Silver-blooded elite, who are gifted with superhuman abilities. Mare is a Red, scraping by as a thief in a poor, rural village until a twist of fate throws her in front of the Silver court. Before the king, princes, and all the nobles, she discovers she has an ability of her own.

The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom (Lexile Level 900)
The is the true account of the Faith of a Jewish girl during the Holocaust.
**All the Pretty Horses** by Cormac McCarthy (Lexile Level 940)
John Grady Cole, at sixteen, finds himself at the end of a long line of Texas ranchers, cut off from the only life he has ever imagined for himself. With two companions, he sets off for Mexico on a sometimes idyllic, sometimes comic journey to a place where dreams are paid for in blood.

**The Arabian Nights** Haddawy, Husain, translator (Lexile Level 980)
This work translates Muhsin Mahdi's edition of the 14th century Syrian manuscript of "The Thousand and One Nights," in which a young woman tells a series of stories to her king to prevent her own death and that of other girls in the kingdom; contains the 10 stories and 25 tales of the original version.

**Seabiscuit** by Laura Hillenbrand (Lexile Level 990)
Seabiscuit was an unlikely champion: a roughhewn, undersized horse with a sad little tail and knees that wouldn't straighten all the way. But, thanks to the efforts of three men, Seabiscuit became one of the most spectacular performers in sports history.

**I Am Malala** by Malala Yousafzai (Lexile Level 1000)
When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education.

**Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass** by Frederick Douglass (Lexile Level 1080)
An autobiographical account by the runaway slave Frederick Douglass, this work chronicles his experiences with his owners and overseers and discusses how slavery affected both slaves and slaveholders.

**The Once and Future King** by T.H. White (640 pages Lexile Level 1080)
Especially of interest to Nolensville Knights, this is the story of the youth and reign of King Arthur, the establishment of the Round Table, and the search for the Holy Grail.

**English II Recommended Readings**

**1984** by George Orwell (Lexile Level 1090)
This novel is set in a bleak future world where citizens are constantly watched by the government, known as Big Brother. Individuality is forbidden, free thought is suppressed, and words never mean what they say.

**Ender's Game** by Orson Scott Card (Lexile Level 780)
Ender, who is the result of genetic experimentation, may be the military genius Earth needs in its war against an alien enemy.
The Piano Lesson by August Wilson
In this play, an African-American brother and sister clash over their family’s legacy—a piano carved in designs by an enslaved ancestor. The brother wants to sell it to buy land; the sister wants to keep it.

Brick Lane by Monica Ali
Nazneen, born in Bangladesh, is sent to England at age 18 to marry a Bengali immigrant twice her age. Eventually she begins to ask what she wants from life, what she finds of value.

The Perfect Storm by Sebastian Junger (Lexile Level 1140)
In October 1991, one of the worst storms in history occurred off the coast of New England. This true account describes the sinking of the fishing boat Andrea Gail and the dramatic attempts to rescue other vessels.

A Separate Peace by John Knowles (Lexile Level 1100)
The narrator of this novel remembers his high school friend Phineas, a talented athlete whom he accidentally crippled in a moment of misperception and envy.

Twelve Angry Men by Reginald Rose
In this play a jury must decide whether a teenager is guilty of murder. When the jurors take their first poll, all but one vote to convict the boy. Will the majority convince the holdout to change his mind?

The Color of Water: A Black Man’s Tribute to His White Mother by James McBride (Lexile Level 1240)
McBride honors his mother, who experienced rejection, isolation, and poverty but ensured that each one of her 12 children went to college.

A Lesson before Dying by Ernest J. Gaines (Lexile Level 1060)
Grant Wiggins is asked to help a young death-row inmate prepare to die. The prisoner is a victim of racism, as is Grant, who chafes at the limits it places on his life. The two men help each other resist the crippling effects of hatred.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon (Lexile Level 1180)
When a 15-year-old autistic boy discovers his neighbor’s poodle stabbed to death, he vows to solve the crime. Ultimately, he learns who killed the dog but also uncovers other secrets that turn his life upside down.

In the Time of the Butterflies by Julia Alvarez (Lexile Level 910)
Alvarez combines history and fiction in this account of the three heroic Mirabal sisters, who worked against the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic and were assassinated. They used the code name mariposas, or “butterflies.”
**Catch-22 by Joseph Heller (Lexile Level 1140)**
The soldier Yossarian wants no part of war because—no surprise—people are trying to kill him. He spends his time thinking of ways to get out but is thwarted by a powerful and absurd military system.

**The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd (Lexile Level 880)**
Fourteen-year-old Lily and her companion, Rosaleen, an African-American woman who has cared from Lily since her mother's death ten years earlier, flee their home after Rosaleen is victimized by racist police officers, and find a safe haven in Tiburon, South Carolina at the home of three beekeeping sisters, May, June, and August.

**The Pearl by John Steinbeck (Lexile Level 1000)**
When Kino, a poor Mexican fisherman, finds a huge pearl, he thinks it will bring his family wealth and happiness. Instead, it places him in danger and causes him to lose what he values most.

**The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan (Lexile Level 930)**
This novel-in-stories explores the relationships of Chinese immigrant mothers and their American-born daughters. The mothers struggle with painful memories as they adjust to a new culture. The daughters struggle with their mothers’ high expectations of them.

**Lord of the Flies by William Golding (Lexile Level 770)**
In this novel by a former schoolmaster, a group of English schoolboys is marooned with no adults on a Pacific island. They organize their own society, which soon disintegrates into savagely warring factions.

**Schindler’s List by Thomas Keneally (Lexile Level 1150)**
Oskar Schindler was a German factory owner who managed to save 1,300 Polish Jews during the Holocaust by claiming that he needed their labor. Keneally’s novel, based on true events, explores how a person can do good in the midst of the worst evil.

**The Ocean at the End of the Lane by Neil Gaiman**
In this fantasy novel, a man returns to the site of his childhood home where, years before, he knew a girl named Lettie Hempstock who showed him the most marvelous, dangerous, and outrageous things, but when he gets there he learns that nothing is as he remembered.

**Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston (Lexile Level 1040)**
Read more about the Wakatsuki family’s experiences in an internment camp. Learn how internees made the camp more homelike, planting gardens and setting up schools. Also discover how hard it was to adjust to life outside the camps once they were closed.