

Honors English 10 Suggested Summer Reading List 2020

"Reading a good book is like taking a journey" ~Emma Gulliford

Throughout your semester in Honors English 10, you will independently read two novels. You will first read Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, completing analysis activities for the novel as a class. Subsequently, you will read one of the remaining novels as part of a long-term author study project. We know that a lot of people like to read over the summer, so we wanted to offer this list to you in case you would like to get ahead by adding one to your own summer reading list.

These texts can be purchased online (digital or physical formats). You can also access digital versions of the texts [here](#).

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 of abandonment and the prejudice of the local "powhitetrash." At eight years old and back 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 that love for herself, the kindness of others, her own strong spirit, and the ideas of great authors ("I met and fell in love with William Shakespeare") will allow her to be free instead of imprisoned."

Go Tell It On The Mountain, James Baldwin

"First published in 1953, this is Baldwin's first major work, a semi-autobiographical novel that has established itself as an American classic. With lyrical precision, psychological directness, resonating symbolic power, and a rage that is at once unrelenting and compassionate, Baldwin chronicles a fourteen-year-old boy's discovery of the terms of his identity as the stepson of the minister of a storefront Pentecostal church in Harlem one Saturday in March of 1935. Baldwin's rendering of his protagonist's spiritual, sexual, and moral struggle of self-invention opened new possibilities in the American language and in the way Americans understand themselves."

Ragtime, E.L. Doctorow

"An extraordinary tapestry, *Ragtime* captures the spirit of America in the era between the turn of the century & the First World War. The story opens in 1906 in New Rochelle, NY, at the home of an affluent American family. One lazy Sunday afternoon, the famous escape artist Harry Houdini swerves his car into a telephone pole outside their house. Almost magically, the line between fantasy & historical fact, between real & imaginary characters, disappears. Henry Ford, Emma Goldman, J.P. Morgan, Evelyn Nesbit, Sigmund Freud & Emiliano Zapata slip in & out of the tale, crossing paths with Doctorow's imagined family & other fictional characters, including an immigrant peddler & a ragtime musician from Harlem whose insistence on a point of justice drives him to revolutionary violence."

The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini

"Amir is the son of a wealthy Kabul merchant, a member of the ruling caste of Pashtuns. Hassan, his servant and constant companion, is a Hazara, a despised and impoverished caste. Their uncommon bond is torn by Amir's choice to abandon his friend amidst the increasing ethnic, religious, and political tensions of the dying years of the Afghan monarchy, wrenching them far apart. But so strong is the bond between the two boys that Amir journeys back to a distant world, to try to right past wrongs against the only true friend he ever had."

Their Eyes Were Watching God, Zora Neale Hurston

"Fair and long-legged, independent and articulate, Janie Crawford sets out to be her own person -- no mean feat for a black woman in the '30s. Janie's quest for identity takes her through three marriages and into a journey back to her roots."

Never Let Me Go, Kazuo Ishiguro

"Hailsham seems like a pleasant English boarding school, far from the influences of the city. Its students are well tended and supported, trained in art and literature, and become just the sort of people the world wants them to be. But, curiously, they are taught nothing of the outside world and are allowed little contact with it. Within the grounds of Hailsham, Kathy grows from schoolgirl to young woman, but it's only when she and her friends Ruth and Tommy leave the safe grounds of the school (as they always knew they would) that they realize the full truth of what Hailsham is."

The Namesake, Jhumpa Lahiri

"*The Namesake* takes the Ganguli family from their tradition-bound life in Calcutta through their fraught transformation into Americans. On the heels of their arranged wedding, Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli settle together in Cambridge, Massachusetts. An engineer by training, Ashoke adapts far less warily than his wife, who resists all things American and pines for her family. When their son is born, the task of naming him betrays the vexed results of bringing old ways to the new world. Named for a Russian writer by his Indian parents in memory of a catastrophe years before, Gogol Ganguli knows only that he suffers the burden of his heritage as well as his odd, antic name."

The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath

"Esther Greenwood is brilliant, beautiful, enormously talented, and successful, but slowly going under—maybe for the last time. In her acclaimed and enduring masterwork, Sylvia Plath brilliantly draws the reader into Esther's breakdown with such intensity that her insanity becomes palpably real, even rational—as accessible an experience as going to the movies. A deep penetration into the darkest and most harrowing corners of the human psyche, *The Bell Jar* is an extraordinary accomplishment and a haunting American classic."

The Catcher in the Rye, J. D. Salinger

"The hero-narrator of *The Catcher in the Rye* is an ancient child of sixteen, a native New Yorker named Holden Caulfield. Through circumstances that tend to preclude adult, secondhand description, he leaves his prep school in Pennsylvania and goes underground in New York City for three days. The boy himself is at once too simple and too complex for us to make any final comment about him or his story. Perhaps the safest thing we can say about Holden is that he was born in the world not just strongly attracted to beauty but, almost, hopelessly impaled on it. There are many voices in this novel: children's voices, adult voices, underground voices—but Holden's voice is the most eloquent of all. Transcending his own vernacular, yet remaining marvelously faithful to it, he issues a perfectly articulated cry of mixed pain and pleasure. However, like most lovers and clowns and poets of the higher orders, he keeps most of the pain to, and for, himself. The pleasure he gives away, or sets aside, with all his heart. It is there for the reader who can handle it to keep."

Slaughterhouse-Five, Kurt Vonnegut

"An American classic, this novel is one of the world's great antiwar books. Centering on the infamous firebombing of Dresden, Billy Pilgrim's odyssey through time reflects the mythic journey of our own fractured lives as we search for meaning in what we fear most."

The Color Purple, Alice Walker

"Set in the deep American South between the wars, it is the tale of Celie, a young black girl born into poverty and segregation. Raped repeatedly by the man she calls 'father', she has two children taken away from her, is separated from her beloved sister Nettie and is trapped into an ugly marriage. But then she meets the glamorous Shug Avery, singer and magic-maker - a woman who has taken charge of her own destiny. Gradually, Celie discovers the power and joy of her own spirit, freeing her from her past and reuniting her with those she loves."