

Summer Reading for Sophomore English

The class above you nominated these books for your summer reading because they found them stimulating, well-written, and age appropriate. Furthermore, they believe they related to the sophomore theme of investigating the outside world and other perspectives. Sometimes other perspectives can be less rosy than your own, so you may find challenging themes in the book you select. We will discuss these themes in the coming year and the more you read the more perspectives you will have to pull from to further these discussions.

Choose a book, buy it online--or find it at your local library--and read it at your own pace before the first day of school. If you get on a roll, read more than one. (Reading books you already read doesn't count). Enjoy!

Looking for Alaska by John Green. Sixteen-year-old Miles' first year at Culver Creek Preparatory School in Alabama includes good friends and great pranks, but is defined by the search for answers about life and death after a fatal car crash.

Life of Pi by Martel Yann. Possessing encyclopedia-like intelligence, unusual zookeeper's son Pi Patel sets sail for America, but when the ship sinks, he escapes on a life boat and is lost at sea with a dwindling number of animals until only he and a hungry Bengal tiger remain.

The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd. After her "stand-in mother," a bold black woman named Rosaleen, insults the three biggest racists in town, Lily Owens joins Rosaleen on a journey to Tiburon, South Carolina, where they are taken in by three black, bee-keeping sisters.

The Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafon. A boy named Daniel selects a novel from a library of rare books, enjoying it so much that he searches for the rest of the author's works, only to discover that someone is destroying every book the author has ever written.

Milkweed by Jerry Spinelli. This novel captures the hardships and cruelty of life in the ghettos of Warsaw during the Nazi occupation of World War II, through the eyes of a Jewish orphan who must use all his wits and courage to survive unimaginable events and circumstances.

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini. This is a sequel to The Kite Runner. Two women born a generation apart witness the destruction of their home and family in war torn Kabul, incurring losses over the course of thirty years that test the limits of their strength and courage.

The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold. This plot unfolds from the perspective of Suzie in heaven, watching from above as her family tries to uncover the mystery surrounding her rape and murder. Sebold coaxes audiences to think about the purpose of life, how to spend it, and where we go after death.

The Power of One by Bryce Courtenay. The Power of One begins with the main character (who names himself Peekay) heading off to boarding school, away from his beloved nanny, and into the arms of Boers (Dutch, also called Afrikaners), who not only despise him for being British but despise him as a human being; a powerful story of race and compassion in South Africa during apartheid.