

Free Choice Summer Reading for Freshman English

Welcome to high school! The current 9th graders chose these books for you because a) they liked them and b) they relate to our essential question for 9th grade English: Who am I? Please *choose at least one of these books that you have not read before* and read it before the first day of school next year. (You will get to edit this list for next year's freshman). Enjoy!

The Alchemist—by Paulo Coelho--An Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago yearns of traveling the world in search of a worldly treasure that came to him in a dream. The story of the treasures Santiago finds along the way teaches us about the essential wisdom of listening to our hearts, learning to read the omens strewn along life's path, and, above all, following our dreams.

The 5 People you meet in Heaven--by Mitch Albom--It recounts the life and death of a simple yet dignified old man, Eddie. After dying in a freak accident, Eddie finds himself in heaven where he encounters five people who have significantly affected his life, whether he realized at the time or not.

Homeboyz—by Alan Lawrence Sitomer--When Teddy Anderson's little sister Tina is gunned down randomly in a drive-by shooting, the gangsters who rule the streets in the Anderson family's rapidly deteriorating neighborhood dismiss the incident as just another case of RP, RT—wrong place, wrong time. This is a coming of age story set in the ghetto.

The Hunger Games—by Suzanne Collins--This is a gripping story set in a post apocalyptic world where a replacement for the United States demands a tribute from each of its territories: two children to be used as gladiators in a televised fight to the death. What happens if we choose entertainment over humanity?

Twisted—by Laurie Halse Anderson--Tyler Miller was a socially invisible nerd ("Your average piece of drywall who spent too much time playing computer games") before he sprayed some attention-getting graffiti and became a legend. Writing for the first time from a male perspective, Anderson skillfully explores identity and power struggles that all young people will recognize.

Candor—by Pam Bachorz-- This book is about a town where everyone's minds are controlled: everyone except for Oscar Banks. He is the son of the town's creator and uses his creativity to help other kids escape the town of Candor while risking every memory he has.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time – by Mark Haddon. Mystery/fiction told from the point of view of an autistic boy who is able to make keen observations but doesn't know how to put those observations in context, thus making his "detective work" difficult.

The Kite Runner – fiction by Khaled Hosseini – Story of a boy growing up in Afghanistan and having to reckon with the consequences of an incident involving his best friend. National bestseller material. Has some graphic content, but nothing you can't handle maturely.

Of Mice and Men – fiction by John Steinbeck about two migrant field workers in California's Salinas Valley during the Great Depression. Here's something John Steinbeck wrote in his journal in 1938 that sort of addresses what the book is about: "In every bit of honest writing in the world there is a base theme. Try to understand men; if you understand each other you will be kind to each other. Knowing a man well never leads to hate and nearly always leads to love. There are shorter means, many of them. There is writing promoting social change, writing punishing injustice, writing in celebration of heroism, but always that base theme. Try to understand each other."

Great Expectations – fiction by Charles Dickens (a bit long but not difficult). No one reads Dickens anymore, which is a shame, so I'm putting this on the list (some 9th graders liked it too). This is a classic "coming of age" novel full of twists and turns.