



District Summer Reading List



Incoming 5th Graders for the 2015 – 2016 School Year

Parents/Guardians,

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Students should choose one book to read over the summer from the grade-level list below*. Happy reading!

5th Grade:

Title	Author	Genre	Synopsis
<i>Island of the Blue Dolphins</i>	Scott O'Dell	Historical Fiction	This is the story of Karana, the Indian girl who lived alone for years on the Island of the Blue Dolphins. Year after year, she watched one season pass into another and waited for a ship to take her away.
<i>The Watsons Go to Birmingham</i>	Christopher Paul Curtis	Multicultural Fiction	A wonderful middle-grade novel narrated by Kenny, 9, about his middle-class black family, the Weird Watsons of Flint, Michigan. When Kenny's 13-year-old brother, Byron, gets to be too much trouble, they head South to Birmingham to visit Grandma, the one person who can shape him up. And they happen to be in Birmingham when Grandma's church is blown up.
<i>The Indian in the Cupboard</i>	Lynne Reid Banks	Fiction	A young man receives two presents that will change his life: a plastic miniature Indian that magically comes to life inside a mysterious old cupboard.
<i>The Secret Garden</i>	Feances Hodgson Burnett	Fiction	This timeless classic is a poignant tale of Mary, a lonely orphaned girl sent to a Yorkshire mansion at the edge of a vast lonely moor. At first, she is frightened by this gloomy place until she meets a local boy, Dickon, who's earned the trust of the moor's wild animals, the invalid Colin, an unhappy boy terrified of life, and a mysterious, abandoned garden..
<i>Amelia Earhart</i>	Mary Dodson Wade	Nonfiction - Biography	This book follows Amelia Earhart's life from her childhood fascination with airplanes to her final round-the-world flight from which she never returned.

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District Summer Reading List



Incoming 6th Graders for the 2015 – 2016 School Year

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6th Grade:

Title	Author	Genre	Synopsis
<i>A Wrinkle in Time</i>	Madeline L'Engle	Science Fiction	It was a dark and stormy night; Meg Murry, her small brother Charles Wallace, and her mother had come down to the kitchen for a midnight snack when they were upset by the arrival of a most disturbing stranger. "Wild nights are my glory," the unearthly stranger told them. "I just got caught in a downdraft and blown off course. Let me sit down for a moment, and then I'll be on my way. Speaking of ways, by the way, there is such a thing as a tesseract." A tesseract is a wrinkle in time. <i>A Wrinkle in Time</i> , winner of the Newbery Medal in 1963, is the story of the adventures in space and time of Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin O'Keefe (athlete, student, and one of the most popular boys in high school). They are in search of Meg's father, a scientist who disappeared while engaged in secret work for the government on the tesseract problem.
<i>Tuck Everlasting</i>	Natalie Babbit	Fiction	Doomed to—or blessed with—eternal life after drinking from a magic spring, the Tuck family wanders about trying to live as inconspicuously and comfortably as they can. When ten-year-old Winnie Foster stumbles on their secret, the Tucks take her home and explain why living forever at one age is less a blessing that it might seem. Complications arise when Winnie is followed by a stranger who wants to market the spring water for a fortune.
<i>Julie of the Wolves</i>	Jean Craighead George	Fiction	To her small Eskimo village, she is known as Miyax; to her friend in San Francisco, she is Julie. When her life in the village becomes dangerous, Miyax runs away, only to find herself lost in the Alaskan wilderness. Without food and time running out, Miyax tries to survive by copying the ways of a pack of wolves. Accepted by their leader and befriended by a feisty pup named Kapu, she soon grows to love her new wolf family. Life in the wilderness is a struggle, but when she finds her way back to civilization, Miyax is torn between her old and new lives. Is she Miyax of the Eskimos -- or Julie of the wolves?

<i>The Black Pearl</i>	Scott O'Dell	Multicultural Fiction	<p>From the depths of a cave in the Vermilion Sea, Ramon Salazar has wrested a black pearl so lustrous and captivating that his father, an expert pearl dealer, is certain Ramon has found the legendary Pearl of Heaven. Such a treasure is sure to bring great joy to the villagers of their tiny coastal town, and even greater renown to the Salazar name. No diver, not even the swaggering Gaspar Ruiz, has ever found a pearl like this!</p> <p>But is there a price to pay for a prize so great? When a terrible tragedy strikes the village, old Luzon's warning about El Diablo returns to haunt Ramon. If El Diablo actually exists, it will take all Ramon's courage to face the winged creature waiting for him offshore.</p>
<i>Holes</i>	Louis Sachar	Fiction	<p>This winner of the Newbery Medal and the National Book Award features Stanley Yelnats, a kid who is under a curse. A curse that began with his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather and has since followed generations of Yelnats. Now Stanley has been unjustly sent to a boys' detention center, Camp Green Lake, where the warden makes the boys "build character" by spending all day, every day, digging holes five feet wide and five feet deep. It doesn't take long for Stanley to realize there's more than character improvement going on at Camp Green Lake: the warden is looking for something. Stanley tries to dig up the truth in this inventive and darkly humorous tale of crime and punishment—and redemption.</p>

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District Summer Reading List



Incoming 7th Graders for the 2015 – 2016 School Year

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7th Grade:

Title	Author	Genre	Synopsis
<i>The Westing Game</i>	Ellen Raskin	Fiction - Mystery	A bizarre chain of events begins when sixteen unlikely people gather for the reading of Samuel W. Westing's will. And though no one knows why the eccentric, game-loving millionaire has chosen a virtual stranger—and a possible murderer—to inherit his vast fortune, on things for sure: Sam Westing may be dead...but that won't stop him from playing one last game!
<i>The River</i>	Gary Paulsen	Fiction	These words, spoken to Brian Robeson, will change his life. Two years earlier, Brian was stranded alone in the wilderness for 54 days with nothing but a small hatchet. Yet he survived. Now the government wants him to go back into the wilderness so that astronauts and the military can learn the survival techniques that kept Brian alive. Soon the project backfires, though, leaving Brian with a wounded partner and a long river to navigate. His only hope is to build a raft and try to transport the injured man a hundred miles downstream to a trading post--if the map he has is accurate. Sequel to <i>Hatchet!</i>
<i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>	Sir Arthur Conan Doyle	Fiction - Mystery	Venture back in time to Victorian London to join literature's greatest detective team — the brilliant Sherlock Holmes and his devoted assistant, Dr. Watson — as they investigate a dozen of their best-known cases. Originally published in 1892, this is the first and best collection of stories about the legendary sleuth. It's also the least expensive edition available. Featured tales include several of the author's personal favorites: "A Scandal in Bohemia" — in which a king is blackmailed by a former lover and Holmes matches wits with the only woman to attract his open admiration — plus "The Speckled Band," "The Red-Headed League," and "The Five Orange Pips." Additional mysteries include "The Blue Carbuncle," "The Engineer's Thumb," "The Beryl Coronet," "The Copper Beeches," and four others.
<i>Where the Red Fern Grows</i>	Wilson Rawls	Fiction	A loving threesome, they ranged the dark hills and river bottoms of Cherokee country. Old Dan had the brawn, Little Ann had the brains -- and Billy had the will to train them to be the finest hunting team in the valley. Glory and victory were coming to them, but sadness waited too. And close by was the strange and wonderful power that's only found... An exciting tale of love and adventure you'll never forget.

<i>The Face on the Milk Carton</i>	Caroline B. Cooney	Fiction	<p>No one ever really paid close attention to the faces of the missing children on the milk cartons. But as Janie Johnson glanced at the face of the ordinary little girl with her hair in tight pigtails, wearing a dress with a narrow white collar—a three-year-old who had been kidnapped twelve years before from a shopping mall in New Jersey—she felt overcome with shock. She recognized that little girl—it was she. How could it possibly be true?</p> <p>Janie can't believe that her loving parents kidnapped her, but as she begins to piece things together, nothing makes sense. Something is terribly wrong. Are Mr. and Mrs. Johnson really her parents? And if not, who is Janie Johnson, and what really happened?</p>
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District Summer Reading List



Incoming 8th Graders for the 2015 – 2016 School Year

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8th Grade:

Title	Author	Genre	Synopsis
<i>The Red Badge of Courage</i>	Stephen Crane	Historical Fiction	Henry Fleming, a private in the Union Army, runs away from the field of war. Afterwards, the shame he feels at this act of cowardice ignites his desire to receive an injury in combat—a “red badge of courage” that will redeem him. Stephen Crane’s novel about a young soldier’s experiences during the American Civil War is well known for its understated naturalism and its realistic depiction of battle.
<i>The Call of the Wild</i>	Jack London	Fiction	<i>The Call of the Wild</i> , considered by many London's greatest novel, is a gripping tale of a heroic dog that, thrust into the brutal life of the Alaska Gold Rush, ultimately faces a choice between living in man’s world and returning to nature. Adventure and dog-story enthusiasts as well as students and devotees of American literature will find this classic work a thrilling, memorable reading experience.
<i>The Contender</i>	Robert Lipsyte	Fiction	Alfred Brooks is scared. He's a high school dropout and his grocery store job is leading nowhere. His best friend is sinking further and further into drug addiction. Some street kids are after him for something he didn't even do. So Alfred begins going to Donatelli's Gym, a boxing club in Harlem that has trained champions. There he learns it's the effort, not the win, that makes the man -- that last desperate struggle to get back on your feet when you thought you were down for the count.
<i>Gathering Blue</i>	Lois Lowry	Fiction – Utopia/Dystopia	Lois Lowry won her first Newbery Medal in 1994 for <i>The Giver</i> . Six years later, she ushered readers back into its mysterious but plausible future world in <i>Gathering Blue</i> to tell the story of Kira, orphaned, physically flawed, and left with an uncertain future. This second book in the Giver Quartet has been stunningly redesigned in paperback. <i>Gathering Blue</i> challenges readers to imagine what our world could become, how people could evolve, and what could be considered valuable.
<i>The Man in the Brown Suit</i>	Agatha Christie	Fiction - Mystery	Agatha Christie, the acknowledged mistress of suspense brings her entire oeuvre of ingenious whodunits, locked room mysteries, and perplexing puzzles to William Morrow Paperbacks. <i>The Man in the Brown Suit</i> is Christie at her best, as a young woman makes a dangerous decision to investigate a shocking “accidental” death she witnesses at a London tube station.

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District Summer Reading List



Incoming 9th Graders for the 2015 – 2016 School Year

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9th Grade:

Title	Author	Genre	Synopsis
<i>Travels with Charley</i>	John Steinbeck	Nonfiction - Travelogue	John Steinbeck (Feb. 27, 1902 - December 20, 1968) embarks on a journey to discover America in the fall of 1960. He drives a brand new three-quarter ton pickup camper truck and travels with his dog Charley. His purpose is to learn something about the vast United States and write a book about his experiences.
<i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i>	Mitch Albom	Philosophical Nonfiction	Maybe it was a grandparent, or a teacher, or a colleague. Someone older, patient and wise, who understood you when you were young and searching, helped you see the world as a more profound place, gave you sound 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. Maybe, like Mitch, you lost track of this mentor as you made your way, and the insights faded, and the world seemed colder. Wouldn't you like to see that person again, ask the bigger questions that still haunt you, receive wisdom for your busy life today the way you once did when you were younger? Mitch Albom had that second chance. He rediscovered Morrie in the last months of the older man's life. Knowing he was dying, Morrie visited with Mitch in his study every Tuesday, just as they used to back in college. Their rekindled relationship turned into one final "class": lessons in how to live. Tuesdays with Morrie is a magical chronicle of their time together, through which Mitch shares Morrie's lasting gift with the world.
<i>Hunger Games</i>	Suzanne Collins	Utopia/Dystopia Fiction	In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. Long ago the districts waged war on the Capitol and were defeated. As part of the surrender terms, each district agreed to send one boy and one girl to appear in an annual televised event called, "The Hunger Games," a fight to the death on live TV. Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who lives alone with her mother and younger sister, regards it as a death sentence when she is forced to represent her district in the Games. The terrain, rules, and level of audience participation may change but one thing is constant: kill or be killed.

<p><i>Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story</i></p>	<p>Ben Carson</p>	<p>Inspirational Nonfiction</p>	<p>Ben Carson, M.D., works medical miracles. Today, he's one of the most celebrated neurosurgeons in the world. In <i>Gifted Hands</i>, he tells of his inspiring odyssey from his childhood in inner-city Detroit to his position as director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital at age 33. Ben Carson is a role model for anyone who attempts the seemingly impossible as he takes you into the operating room where he has saved countless lives. Filled with fascinating case histories, this is the dramatic and intimate story of Ben Carson's struggle to beat the odds -- and of the faith and genius that make him one of the greatest life-givers of the century.</p>
<p><i>Little Women</i></p>	<p>Louisa May Alcott</p>	<p>Coming-of-Age Fiction</p>	<p>This novel follows the lives of four sisters – Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy March – detailing their passage from childhood to womanhood, and is loosely based on the author and her three sisters. <i>Little Women</i> was an immediate commercial and critical success. It is a fiction novel for girls that veered from the normal writings for children, especially girls, at the time. The novel had three major themes: “domesticity, work, and true love, all of them interdependent and each necessary to the achievement of its heroine’s individual identity.” <i>Little Women</i> itself “has been read as a romance or as a quest, or both. It has been read as a family drama that validates virtue over wealth.” <i>Little Women</i> has been read “as a means of escaping that life by women who knew its gender constraints only too well.” Alcott “combines many conventions of the sentimental novel with crucial ingredients of Romantic children’s fiction, creating a new form of which <i>Little Women</i> is a unique model.” Elbert argued that within <i>Little Women</i> can be found the first vision of the “American Girl” and that her multiple aspects are embodied in the differing March sisters.</p>

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District Summer Reading List



Incoming 10th Graders for the 2015 – 2016 School Year

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10th Grade:

Title	Author	Genre	Synopsis
<i>Coming Back Stronger: Unleashing the Hidden Power of Adversity</i>	Drew Brees	Nonfiction - Memoir	When a potentially career-ending shoulder injury left quarterback Drew Brees without a team—and facing the daunting task of having to learn to throw a football all over again—coaches around the NFL wondered, Will he ever come back? After Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, leaving more than 80 percent of the city underwater, many wondered, Will the city ever come back? And with their stadium transformed into a makeshift refugee camp, forcing the Saints to play their entire 2005 season on the road, people questioned, Will the Saints ever come back? It takes a special person to turn adversity into success and despair into hope—yet that is exactly what Super Bowl MVP Drew Brees has done—and with the weight of an entire city on his shoulders. <i>Coming Back Stronger</i> is the ultimate comeback story, not only of one of the NFL’s top quarterbacks, but also of a city and a team that many had all but given up on. Brees’s inspiring message of hope and encouragement proves that with enough faith, determination, and heart, you can overcome any obstacle life throws your way and not only come back, but come back stronger.
<i>A Separate Peace</i>	John Knowles	Coming-of-Age Fiction	An American classic and great bestseller for over thirty years, <i>A Separate Peace</i> is timeless in its description of adolescence during a period when the entire country was losing its innocence to the second world war. Set at a boys’ boarding school in New England during the early years of World War II, <i>A Separate Peace</i> is a harrowing and luminous parable of the dark side of adolescence. Gene is a lonely, introverted intellectual. Phineas is a handsome, taunting, daredevil athlete. What happens between the two friends one summer, like the war itself, banishes the innocence of these boys and their world.
<i>Catching Fire</i>	Suzanne Collins	Utopia/Dystopia Fiction	Against all odds, Katniss Everdeen has won the annual Hunger Games with fellow district tribute Peeta Mellark. But it was a victory won by defiance of the Capitol and their harsh rules. Katniss and Peeta should be happy. After all, they have just won for themselves and their families a life of safety and plenty. But there are rumors of rebellion among the subjects, and Katniss and

			Peeta, to their horror, are the faces of that rebellion. The Capitol is angry. The Capitol wants revenge.
<i>The Pearl</i>	Steinbeck	Philosophical Fiction	Like his father and grandfather before him, Kino is a poor diver, gathering pearls from the gulf beds that once brought great wealth to the Kings of Spain and now provide Kino, Juana, and their infant son with meager subsistence. Then, on a day like any other, Kino emerges from the sea with a pearl as large as a sea gull's egg, as "perfect as the moon." With the pearl comes hope, the promise of comfort and of security . . . A story of classic simplicity, based on a Mexican folk tale, <i>The Pearl</i> explores the secrets of man's nature, the darkest depths of evil, and the luminous possibilities of love.
<i>Wesley the Owl: A Remarkable Love Story of an Owl and His Girl</i>	Stacy O'Brien	Nonfiction - Memoir	On Valentine's Day 1985, biologist Stacey O'Brien adopted Wesley, a baby barn owl with an injured wing who could not have survived in the wild. Over the next nineteen years, O'Brien studied Wesley's strange habits with both a tender heart and a scientist's eye—and provided a mice-only diet that required her to buy the rodents in bulk (28,000 over the owl's lifetime). She watched him turn from a helpless fluff ball into an avid com-municator with whom she developed a language all their own. Eventually he became a gorgeous, gold-and-white macho adult with a heart-shaped face who preened in the mir-ror and objected to visits by any other males to "his" house. O'Brien also brings us inside Caltech's prestigious research community, a kind of scientific Hogwarts where resident owls sometimes flew freely from office to office and eccentric, brilliant scientists were extraordinarily committed to studying and helping animals; all of them were changed by the animals they loved. As O'Brien gets close to Wesley, she makes astonishing discoveries about owl behavior, intelligence, and communication, coining the term "The Way of the Owl" to describe his noble behavior. When O'Brien develops her own life-threatening ill-ness, the biologist who saved the life of a helpless baby bird is herself rescued from death by the insistent love and courage of this wild animal.

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District Summer Reading List



Incoming 11th Graders for the 2015 – 2016 School Year

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11th Grade:

Title	Author	Genre	Synopsis
<i>Brave New World</i>	Aldous Huxley	Science Fiction	The novel opens in the year 632 A.F. (which means After Ford). All of civilization has been destroyed by a great war. Then there is another war, the Nine Years War, which ushers in the era of Ford, ensuring stability through dictatorship. The society depicted in the novel is based on a rigid caste system. The higher of the five castes enjoy superior tasks, while the lower ones perform menial roles. Ten Controllers hold all the power in this new world and peace is maintained by conditioning infant minds and by soothing adults. The population is further controlled through scientific methods; marriage is forbidden, and children are not born but produced in an embryo factory. Would you want to live in a world like this?
<i>Of Mice and Men</i>	John Steinbeck	Fiction - Novella	They are an unlikely pair: George is "small and quick and dark of face." Lennie, a man of tremendous size, has the mind of a young child. Yet they have formed a "family," clinging together in the face of loneliness and alienation. Laborers in California's dusty vegetable fields, they hustle work when they can, living a hand-to-mouth existence. For George and Lennie have a plan: to own an acre of land and a shack they can call their own. When they land jobs on a ranch in the Salinas Valley, the fulfillment of their dream seems to be within their grasp. But even George cannot guard Lennie from the unseen factors, nor predict the consequences of Lennie's unswerving obedience to the things George taught him.
<i>Mockingjay</i>	Suzanne Collins	Utopia/Dystopia Fiction	Katniss Everdeen, girl on fire, has survived, even though her home has been destroyed. There are rebels. There are new leaders. A revolution is unfolding. District 13 has come out of the shadows and is plotting to overthrow the Capitol. Though she's long been a part of the revolution, Katniss hasn't known it. Now it seems that everyone has had a hand in the carefully laid plans but her. The success of the rebellion hinges on Katniss's willingness to be a pawn, to accept responsibility for countless lives, and to change the course of the future of Panem. To do this, she must put aside her feelings of anger and distrust. She must become the rebels' Mockingjay - no matter what the cost.

<i>A Farewell to Arms</i>	Ernest Hemingway	Fiction - War, Romance	<i>A Farewell to Arms</i> is the unforgettable story of an American ambulance driver on the Italian front and his passion for a beautiful English nurse. Hemingway's frank portrayal of the love between Lieutenant Henry and Catherine Barkley, caught in the inexorable sweep of war, glows with an intensity unrivaled in modern literature, while his description of the German attack on Caporetto—of lines of fired men marching in the rain, hungry, weary, and demoralized—is one of the greatest moments in literary history. A story of love and pain, of loyalty and desertion, <i>A Farewell to Arms</i> , written when he was thirty years old, represents a new romanticism for Hemingway.
<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	Mark Twain	Adventure Fiction/Satire	Climb aboard the raft with Huck and Jim and drift away from the "sivilized" life and into a world of adventure, excitement, danger, and self-discovery. Huck's shrewd and humorous narrative is complemented by lyrical descriptions of the Mississippi valley and a sparkling cast of memorable characters.

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District Summer Reading List



Incoming 12th Graders for the 2015 – 2016 School Year

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12th Grade:

Title	Author	Genre	Synopsis
<i>Rebecca</i>	Daphne du Maurier	Fiction - Gothic Mystery	With these words, the reader is ushered into an isolated gray stone mansion on the windswept Cornish coast, as the second Mrs. Maxim de Winter recalls the chilling events that transpired as she began her new life as the young bride of a husband she barely knew. For in every corner of every room were phantoms of a time dead but not forgotten—a past devotedly preserved by the sinister housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers: a suite immaculate and untouched, clothing laid out and ready to be worn, but not by any of the great house's current occupants. With an eerie presentiment of evil tightening her heart, the second Mrs. de Winter walked in the shadow of her mysterious predecessor, determined to uncover the darkest secrets and shattering truths about Maxim's first wife—the late and hauntingly beautiful Rebecca.
<i>Ophelia</i>	Lisa Klein	Fiction - Young Adult	He is Hamlet, Prince of Denmark; she is simply Ophelia. If you think you know their story, think again. In this reimagining of Shakespeare's famous tragedy, it is Ophelia who takes center stage. A rowdy, motherless girl, she grows up at Elsinore Castle to become the queen's most trusted lady-in-waiting. Ambitious for knowledge and witty as well as beautiful, Ophelia learns the ways of power in a court where nothing is as it seems. When she catches the attention of the captivating, dark-haired Prince Hamlet, their love blossoms in secret. But bloody deeds soon turn Denmark into a place of madness, and Ophelia's happiness is shattered. Ultimately, she must choose between her love for Hamlet and her own life. In desperation, Ophelia devises a treacherous plan to escape from Elsinore forever . . . with one very dangerous secret.
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	Robert Louis Stevenson	Fiction - Psychological Thriller/Suspense	<i>The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> is about a London lawyer named Gabriel John Utterson who investigates strange occurrences between his old friend, Dr. Henry Jekyll, and the evil Edward Hyde. The work is commonly associated with the rare mental condition often spuriously called "split personality", referred to in psychiatry as dissociative identity disorder, where within the same body there exists more than one distinct personality. In this case, there are two personalities within Dr.

			Jekyll, one apparently good and the other evil; completely opposite levels of morality.
<i>Wuthering Heights</i>	Emily Bronte	Fiction - Gothic Romance	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> is a wild, passionate story of the intense love between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, a foundling adopted by Catherine's father. After Mr Earnshaw's death, Heathcliff is bullied and humiliated by Catherine's brother Hindley and wrongly believing that his love for Catherine is not reciprocated, leaves Wuthering Heights, only to return years later as a wealthy and polished man. He proceeds to exact a terrible revenge for his former miseries. The action of the story is chaotic and unremittingly violent, but the accomplished handling of a complex structure, the evocative descriptions of the lonely moorland setting and the poetic grandeur of vision combine to make this unique novel a masterpiece of English literature.
<i>David Copperfield</i>	Charles Dickens	Fiction - Artist's Growth to Maturity	<i>David Copperfield</i> is the story of a young man's adventures on his journey from an unhappy and impoverished childhood to the discovery of his vocation as a successful novelist. Among the gloriously vivid cast of characters he encounters are his tyrannical stepfather, Mr. Murdstone; his formidable aunt, Betsey Trotwood; the eternally humble yet treacherous Uriah Heep; frivolous, enchanting Dora; and the magnificently impecunious Micawber, one of literature's great comic creations. In <i>David Copperfield</i> —the novel he described as his "favorite child"—Dickens drew revealingly on his own experiences to create one of his most exuberant and enduringly popular works, filled with tragedy and comedy in equal measure.

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