

Grade 11: Incoming Juniors
Summer Reading Program 2026

All incoming juniors (not enrolled in the AP English Language course) must select **ONE** of the following texts to read over the summer. Please select a book which you have not previously read. Assessments will be administered in the fall for the text selected. Students enrolled in AP courses should refer to their respective course lists.

If students would like additional reading choices beyond the requirement above, feel free to select from the following texts to read over the summer. Please select books which you have not previously read. Assessments will be administered in the fall for the text selected. Students enrolled in AP courses should refer to their respective course lists.

***An Abundance of Katherines* by John Green (Fiction)**

Having been recently dumped for the nineteenth time by a girl named Katherine, recent high school graduate and former child prodigy Colin sets off on a road trip with his best friend to try to find some new direction in life while also trying to create a mathematical formula to explain his relationships.

***Ashley's War: The Untold Story of a Team of Women Soldiers on the Special Ops Battlefield* by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon (Nonfiction History / Military)**

In 2010, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command created Cultural Support Teams, a pilot program to put women on the battlefield alongside Green Berets and Army Rangers on sensitive missions in Afghanistan. This is the story of CST-2, a unit of women hand-picked from across the Army, and the remarkable hero at its heart: 1st Lt. Ashley White, the first Cultural Support Team member killed in action.

***The Assist: Hoops, Hope, and the Game of Their Lives* by Neil Swidey (Nonfiction Sports)**

Jack O'Brien, the impossibly demanding basketball coach at Charlestown High School in Boston, has led his team to five state championship titles in six years. Less talked about is O'Brien's other winning record: Nearly every one of the players who stuck with his program managed to get to college. *The Assist* is a captivating narrative of a basketball team that also drills down into the legacy of desegregation and explores issues of education, family, and race.

***The Bunker Diary* by Kevin Brooks (Horror fiction)**

Linus is a 16-year-old runaway living on the harsh English streets who wakes up one day in an unfamiliar underground bunker with no water or food while under constant surveillance by an unknown kidnapper. He is not alone. When Linus and the rest try to escape and find out more about their situation and their kidnapper, they realize that, with their options dwindling, they may have to resort to the ultimate horror to survive.

***The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas (Adventure Fiction)**

After escaping from the island fortress where he has been imprisoned for treason, young sailor Edmund Dantes sets out to discover the treasure of Monte Cristo and seek revenge against the people who falsely accused him.

***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon (Mystery Fiction)**

Despite his overwhelming fear of interacting with people, Christopher, a mathematically-gifted, autistic fifteen-year-old boy, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secret information about his mother.

***Denton Little's Deathdate* by Lance Rubin (Science Fiction)**

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A tale set in a world where everyone knows the day on which they will die finds Denton preparing for his imminent demise and wondering about a mysterious purple rash before a stranger's warning raises suspicions about shady government characters.

***The Devil's Teeth: a True Story of Obsession and Survival Among America's Great White Sharks* by Susan Casey (Nonfiction)**

A journalist describes how her fascination with great white sharks led her to Southeast Farallon Island, a remote island off the California coast, and to a group of biologists who study these fearsome, frequently misunderstood predators.

***Ember in the Ashes* by Sabaa Tahir (Fantasy)**

Laia is a Scholar living under the iron-fisted rule of the Martial Empire. When her brother is arrested for treason, Laia goes undercover as a slave at the empire's greatest military academy in exchange for assistance from rebel Scholars who claim that they will help to save her brother from execution.

***Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury (Science Fiction)**

After learning that books are a vital part of a culture he never knew, a book-burning official in a future fascist state clandestinely pursues reading until he is betrayed.

***The Faithful Spy: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Plot to Kill Hitler* by John Hendrix (Graphic Nonfiction)**

Adolf Hitler's Nazi party is gaining strength and becoming more menacing every day. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a pastor upset by the complacency of the German church toward the suffering around it, forms a breakaway church to speak out against the established political and religious authorities. Struggling to reconcile his faith and the teachings of the Bible with the Nazi Party's evil agenda, Bonhoeffer decides that Hitler must be stopped by any means possible!

***The Hades Factor* by Robert Ludlum and Gayle Lynds (Thriller Fiction)**

For days, U.S. scientists have been trying to unlock the secrets of a virus known as "Hades". When Lt. Col. Jon Smith returns home after a meeting, he finds his partner dying of the virus. Convinced she was murdered, Smith joins forces with the CIA, and uncovers a horrifying plot.

***The Harlem Hellfighters* by Max Brooks (Author), Caanan White (Illustrator) (Graphic Novel)**

This fictionalized account of the first African-American regiment, called the Harlem Hellfighters by their enemies, to fight in World War I relates the heroic journey these soldiers undertook for a chance to fight for America.

***Holler if you Hear Me: Searching for Tupac Shakur* by Michael Eric Dyson (Biography)**

Examines the life of rap musician Tupac Shakur, explores the reasons why his music and message continue to grow five years after his death, and includes interviews with people who knew and/or admired the rapper, including his mother, Quincy Jones, Jada Pinkett Smith, and others.

***The Invisible Life of Ivan Isaenko : A Novel* by Scott Stambach (Realistic fiction)**

Seventeen-year-old Ivan Isaenko is a life-long resident of the Mazyr Hospital for Gravely Ill Children in Belarus. For the most part, every day is exactly the same for Ivan...until Polina arrives. Soon, he cannot help being drawn to her and the two forge a romance that is tenuous and beautiful and everything they never dared dream of.

***Just Mercy : A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson (Memoir)**

Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in our criminal justice system. One of his first cases

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was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinksmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever.

***Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara (Historical Fiction)**

A fictional account of four days in July, 1863 at the Battle of Gettysburg discussing tactics, plans, and preparations for battle from both the Northern and Southern points of view.

***Life Is Not an Accident: A Memoir of Reinvention* by Jay Williams (Autobiography)**

This big-hearted memoir by the most promising professional basketball player of his generation details his rise to NBA stardom, the terrible accident that ended his career and plunged him into a life-altering depression, and how he ultimately found his way out of the darkness.

***The Lock Artist* by Steve Hamilton (Mystery Fiction)**

Traumatized at the age of eight and pushed into a life of crime by reason of his unforgivable talent--lock picking--Michael sees his chance to escape, and with one desperate gamble risks everything to come back home to the only person he ever loved, and to unlock the secret that has kept him silent for so long.

***Lock In* by John Scalzi (Sci Fi)**

In the near future, a virus spreads around the world. For an unlucky one percent, the condition leaves them completely aware-and totally paralyzed. For rookie FBI agent Chris Shane and his partner, veteran Leslie Vann, the condition becomes infinitely more personal when they are called to investigate a homicide that appears to have been committed by a "Lock In" who borrowed someone else's body and then killed another human.

***Mexican Whiteboy* by Matt de la Peña (Sports Fiction)**

Sixteen-year-old Danny searches for his identity amidst the confusion of being half-Mexican and half-white while spending a summer with his cousin and new friends on the baseball fields and back alleys of San Diego County, California.

***No Sad Songs* by Frank Morelli (Realistic Fiction)**

Following a family tragedy, 18-year-old Gabe LoScuda suddenly finds himself thrust into the role of caregiver for his ailing grandfather. It doesn't take long for Gabe to realize that going to school and looking after a grandfather with Alzheimer's is more work than he imagined. And when long-lost Uncle Nick appears on the scene, Gabe soon finds that living with Nick and Grandpa is like babysitting two grown men.

***Outliers: the Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell (Nonfiction)**

The author explores why some people are high achievers and others are not, citing culture, family, and upbringing as possible reasons some people are not as successful as others.

***Patron Saints of Nothing* by Randy Ribay (Realistic Fiction)**

Jay Reguero plans to spend the last semester of his senior year playing video games before heading to the University of Michigan in the fall. But when he discovers that his Filipino cousin Jun was murdered as part of President Duterte's war on drugs, and no one in the family wants to talk about what happened, Jay travels to the Philippines to find out the real story.

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***The Power of Broke : how empty pockets, a tight budget, and a hunger for success can become your greatest competitive advantage* by Daymond John with Daniel Paisner (Nonfiction)**

The star of ABC's "Shark Tank" demonstrates how starting a business on a shoestring can provide significant competitive advantages for entrepreneurs by forcing them to think creatively, use resources efficiently, and connect more authentically with customers.

***Prince of Mist* by Carlos Ruiz Zafón (Ghost Story)**

In 1943, in a seaside town where their family has gone to be safe from war, thirteen-year-old Max Carver and sister, fifteen-year-old Alicia, with new friend Roland, face off against an evil magician who is striving to complete a bargain made before he died.

***Rise of Empire (The Riyria Revelations Books 3 and 4)* by Michael J. Sullivan (Fantasy)**

*** This selection is actually two books in one, containing book three, *Nyphron Rising*, and book 4, *The Emerald Storm*, of the *The Riyria Revelations* series. You must have read *Theft of Swords* books 1 and 2 in its entirety to choose *Rise of Empire*. If you read the first book in the series for summer reading last year, but not book two, you may choose to read book 2, titled *Avenpartha*, as your summer reading selection.**

War has come to Melengar and once more Royce and Hadrian are hired to make a desperate gamble and form an alliance with the Nationalists. Royce uses this opportunity to discover if an ancient wizard is using Riyria as pawns in his own bid for power. To find the truth, he must unravel the secret of Hadrian's past--what he discovers may end their friendship and break Riyria in two.

***Shelter: A Mickey Bolitar Novel* by Harlan Coben (Mystery Fiction)**

After tragic events tear Mickey Bolitar away from his parents, he lives with his estranged Uncle Myron where he finds both friends and enemies at his new school; when his new girlfriend, Ashley, vanishes, he follows her trail into a seedy underworld that reveals she is not what she seems to be.

***Steve Jobs: the Man Who Thought Different* by Karen Blumenthal (Biography)**

Chronicles the life and accomplishments of Apple mogul Steve Jobs, discussing his ideas, and describing how he has influenced life in the twenty-first century.

***The Templar Legacy* by Steve Berry (Thriller Fiction)**

Cotton Malone, a former covert U.S. Justice Department operative, and his ex-supervisor Stephanie Nelle, follow a labyrinthine trail of danger, treachery, high-level intrigue, and overwhelming ambition across Europe on a quest that leads them to the enigmatic secrets of the Knights Templar.

***Tweak: Growing up on Methamphetamines* by Nic Sheff (Autobiography)**

The author describes his childhood in California, his addiction to crystal meth and heroin at a young age, his relapse after eighteen months of sobriety, and his path to recovery.

***We all Looked Up* by Tommy Wallach (Science Fiction)**

The lives of four high school seniors intersect weeks before a meteor is set to pass through Earth's orbit, with a 66.6% chance of striking and destroying all life on the planet.

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***We Could Not Fail: The First African Americans in the Space Program* by Richard Paul and Steven Moss (Biography)**

We Could Not Fail tells the inspiring, largely unknown story of how shooting for the stars helped to overcome segregation on earth. Paul and Moss profile ten pioneer African American space workers whose stories illustrate the role NASA and the space program played in promoting civil rights.

***Why You Crying?: My Long, Hard Look At Life, Love, And Laughter* by George Lopez with Armen Keteyian (Autobiography)**

Third-generation Mexican-American comedian and actor describes his twenty-year rise from poor Chicano kid to success as an entertainer, detailing his dysfunctional childhood and his triumph over alcoholism and depression.

***Winger* by Andrew Smith (Sci Fi)**

Ryan Dean West is a fourteen-year-old junior at a boarding school for rich kids in the Pacific Northwest. He's living in Opportunity Hall, the dorm for troublemakers, and rooming with the biggest bully on the rugby team. But when the unthinkable happens, he has to figure out how to hold on to what's important, even when it feels like everything has fallen apart.

***Winterdance : The Fine Madness of Running the Iditarod* by Gary Paulsen (Memoir)**

Fueled by a passion for running dogs, Gary Paulsen entered the Iditarod--the 1150-mile winter sled-dog race between Anchorage and Nome-- in dangerous ignorance and with a fierce determination. *Winterdance* is his account of this seventeen-day battle against Nature's worst elements and his own frailty.