

American Literature Summer Reading List

Summer 2019

Belmont High School English Department

The following list was compiled from the recommendations of the Belmont High School English department and contains some of the best-known works of American literature. Each book addresses the American Dream and/or American identities. All entering 11th graders must read at least one book from the list below over the summer. Students entering English 11 Honors must read at least one contemporary AND one classic work from the list. We encourage all students to preview a book before making a choice in order to determine that the writing style and narrative voice will be a good fit. Please consult your 10th grade teacher if you need help finding a book that is a good match for you.

Author	Book	Genre	Era
Joan Didion	The White Album: Essays	Essays	Classic
Joan Didion	Slouching Toward Bethlehem: Essays	Essays	Classic
W.E.B. Du Bois	The Souls of Black Folk	Essays	Classic
Booker T. Washington	Up from Slavery	Memoir	Classic
Hunter S. Thompson	Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey to the Heart of the American Dream	Memoir	Classic
Jack Kerouac	The Dharma Bums	Memoir	Classic
Jack Kerouac	On the Road	Memoir	Classic
Malcolm X and Alex Haley	The Autobiography of Malcolm X	Memoir	Classic
Tom Wolfe	The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test	Memoir	Classic
Alex Haley	Roots	Novel	Classic
Ayn Rand	The Fountainhead	Novel	Classic
Ayn Rand	Atlas Shrugged	Novel	Classic
Bernard Malamud	The Natural	Novel	Classic
E.L. Doctorow	Ragtime	Novel	Classic
Edith Wharton	The Age of Innocence	Novel	Classic
Edith Wharton	The House of Mirth	Novel	Classic
F. Scott Fitzgerald	Tender is the Night	Novel	Classic
F. Scott Fitzgerald	This Side of Paradise	Novel	Classic
Herman Melville	Moby-Dick	Novel	Classic
James Baldwin	Go Tell it on the Mountain	Novel	Classic

James Baldwin	Giovanni's Room	Novel	Classic
James Weldon Johnson	Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man	Novel	Classic
Joan Didion	Play It As It Lays	Novel	Classic
John Cheever	The Wapshot Chronicle	Novel	Classic
John Dos Passos	The U.S.A. Trilogy	Novel	Classic
John Irving	The World According to Garp	Novel	Classic
John Steinbeck	East of Eden	Novel	Classic
John Steinbeck	The Grapes of Wrath	Novel	Classic
John Updike	Rabbit, Run	Novel	Classic
Kate Chopin	The Awakening	Novel	Classic
Ken Kesey	One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest	Novel	Classic
N. Scott Momaday	House Made of Dawn	Novel	Classic
Nella Larsen	Passing	Novel	Classic
Norman Mailer	An American Dream	Novel	Classic
Philip Roth	Portnoy's Complaint	Novel	Classic
Ralph Ellison	Invisible Man	Novel	Classic
Raymond Chandler	The Big Sleep	Novel	Classic
Richard Wright	Black Boy	Novel	Classic
Rita Mae Brown	Rubyfruit Jungle	Novel	Classic
Robert Penn Warren	All the King's Men	Novel	Classic
Saul Bellow	The Adventures of Augie March	Novel	Classic
Sinclair Lewis	Main Street	Novel	Classic
Theodore Dreiser	An American Tragedy	Novel	Classic
Theodore Dreiser	Sister Carrie	Novel	Classic
Upton Sinclair	The Jungle	Novel	Classic
Vladimir Nabokov	Lolita	Novel	Classic
Willa Cather	My Antonia	Novel	Classic
Willa Cather	O Pioneers!	Novel	Classic
William Faulkner	Absalom, Absalom!	Novel	Classic
Studs Terkel	Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel about What They Do	Oral History	Classic
Arthur Miller	A View from the Bridge	Play	Classic
Lorraine Hansberry	A Raisin in the Sun	Play	Classic
Sherwood Anderson	Winesburg, Ohio	Short Stories	Classic
Sarah Vowell	The Partly Cloudy Patriot	Essays	Contemporary
Touré	Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness? What It Means to be Black Now	Essays	Contemporary

Annie Dillard	An American Childhood	Memoir	Contemporary
Barack Obama	Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance	Memoir	Contemporary
Bob Dylan	Chronicles, Vol. I	Memoir	Contemporary
David Sheff	Beautiful Boy	Memoir	Contemporary
Itabari Njeri	Every Goodbye Ain't Gone	Memoir	Contemporary
James McBride	The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother	Memoir	Contemporary
Jay-Z	Decoded	Memoir	Contemporary
John Edgar Wideman	Brothers and Keepers	Memoir	Contemporary
Luis Rodriguez	Always Running: La Vida Loca: Gang Days in L.A	Memoir	Contemporary
Maxine Hong Kingston	The Woman Warrior	Memoir	Contemporary
Richard Rodriguez	Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez	Memoir	Contemporary
Ta'Nehsi Coates	Between the World and Me	Memoir	Contemporary
Ari Berman	Give Us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America	Nonfiction	Contemporary
Barbara Ehrenreich	Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America	Nonfiction	Contemporary
Dave Eggers	Zeitoun	Nonfiction	Contemporary
David Bianculli	Dangerously Funny: The Uncensored Story of "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour"	Nonfiction	Contemporary
Erik Larsen	Devil in the White City	Nonfiction	Contemporary
Greil Marcus	The Old, Weird America: The World of Bob Dylan's Basement Tapes	Nonfiction	Contemporary
John Berendt	Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil	Nonfiction	Contemporary
Jon Krakauer	Into the Wild	Nonfiction	Contemporary
Kristen Green	Something Must Be Done about Prince Edward County: A Family, a Virginia Town, a Civil Rights Battle	Nonfiction	Contemporary
Michelle Alexander	The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness	Nonfiction	Contemporary
Neil Swidey	The Assist: Hoops, Hope, and the Game of Their Lives	Nonfiction	Contemporary
Tom Wolfe	The Right Stuff	Nonfiction	Contemporary
Amy Tan	The Joy Luck Club	Novel	Contemporary
Andre Dubus III	House of Sand and Fog	Novel	Contemporary
Annie Proulx	The Shipping News	Novel	Contemporary
Audrey Niffenegger	The Time Traveller's Wife	Novel	Contemporary
Barbara Kingsolver	The Bean Trees	Novel	Contemporary
Barbara Kingsolver	Animal Dreams	Novel	Contemporary
Barbara Kingsolver	The Poisonwood Bible	Novel	Contemporary
Chad Harbach	The Art of Fielding	Novel	Contemporary
Chang-rae Lee	Native Speaker	Novel	Contemporary
Colson Whitehead	The Underground Railroad	Novel	Contemporary

Colson Whitehead	Sag Harbor	Novel	Contemporary
Cormac McCarthy	Blood Meridian	Novel	Contemporary
Daniel Wallace	Big Fish: A Novel of Mythic Proportions	Novel	Contemporary
Danzy Senna	Caucasia	Novel	Contemporary
Dave Eggers	What is the What	Novel	Contemporary
David Foster Wallace	Infinite Jest	Novel	Contemporary
David Leavitt	The Lost Language of Cranes	Novel	Contemporary
Don DeLillo	Americana	Novel	Contemporary
Donna Tartt	The Secret History	Novel	Contemporary
Dorothy Allison	Bastard Out of Carolina	Novel	Contemporary
Edward P. Jones	The Known World	Novel	Contemporary
Fannie Flagg	Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café	Novel	Contemporary
Gish Jen	Typical American	Novel	Contemporary
Gloria Naylor	The Women of Brewster Place	Novel	Contemporary
Jane Smiley	A Thousand Acres	Novel	Contemporary
Jennifer Egan	A Visit from the Goon Squad	Novel	Contemporary
Jhumpa Lahiri	The Namesake	Novel	Contemporary
John Irving	A Prayer for Owen Meany	Novel	Contemporary
John Kennedy O'Toole	A Confederacy of Dunces	Novel	Contemporary
Jonathan Franzen	The Corrections	Novel	Contemporary
Jonathan Lethem	The Fortress of Solitude	Novel	Contemporary
Jonathan Safran Foer	Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close	Novel	Contemporary
Julia Alvarez	How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents	Novel	Contemporary
Junot Diaz	The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao	Novel	Contemporary
K.M. Soehnlein	The World of Normal Boys	Novel	Contemporary
Leslie Marmon Silko	Ceremony	Novel	Contemporary
Marilynne Robinson	Gilead	Novel	Contemporary
Marilynne Robinson	Home	Novel	Contemporary
Marisha Pessl	Special Topics in Calamity Physics	Novel	Contemporary
Michael Chabon	The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay	Novel	Contemporary
Ntozake Shange	Sassafras, Cypress, and Indigo	Novel	Contemporary
Paul Auster	The New York Trilogy	Novel	Contemporary
Paul Auster	The Music of Chance	Novel	Contemporary
Paula Fox	Desperate Characters	Novel	Contemporary
Peter Cameron	Someday This Pain Will be Useful to You	Novel	Contemporary
Philip Roth	American Pastoral	Novel	Contemporary

Philip Roth	The Human Stain	Novel	Contemporary
Richard Ford	The Sportswriter	Novel	Contemporary
Richard Russo	Empire Falls	Novel	Contemporary
Sherman Alexie	Reservation Blues	Novel	Contemporary
Steven Millhauser	Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer	Novel	Contemporary
Sue Monk Kidd	The Secret Life of Bees	Novel	Contemporary
T.C. Boyle	The Tortilla Curtain	Novel	Contemporary
Thomas Pynchon	Vineland	Novel	Contemporary
Thomas Pynchon	The Crying of Lot 49	Novel	Contemporary
Tom Wolfe	Bonfire of the Vanities	Novel	Contemporary
Toni Morrison	Beloved	Novel	Contemporary
Toni Morrison	Song of Solomon	Novel	Contemporary
Walter Mosley	Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned	Novel	Contemporary
Walter Mosley	The Man in My Basement	Novel	Contemporary
Alison Bechdel	Fun Home (memoir)	Graphic Novel	Contemporary
Art Spiegelman	Maus (memoir)	Graphic Novel	Contemporary
Gene Luen Yang	Level Up	Graphic Novel	Contemporary
Gene Luen Yang	Shadow Turtle	Graphic Novel	Contemporary
August Wilson	Ma Rainey's Black Bottom	Play	Contemporary
August Wilson	The Piano Lesson	Play	Contemporary
David Mamet	Glengarry Glen Ross	Play	Contemporary
Tony Kushner	Angels in America	Play	Contemporary
Sherman Alexie	The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven	Short Stories	Contemporary
Raymond Carver	What We Talk About When We Talk About Love	Short Stories	Contemporary
Jhumpa Lahiri	Interpreter of Maladies	Short Stories	Contemporary
Annie Proulx	Close Range: Wyoming Stories	Short Stories	Contemporary