



SOME RECOMMENDED CLASSICS

Available at LCMR H.S. Media Center

Adams, Douglas. *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.*

Seconds before Earth is demolished to make room for a galactic freeway, an earthman is saved by his friend. Together they journey through the galaxy.

Adams, Richard. *Watership Down.*

Follow the epic Tolkienesque adventures of Fiver, Hazel, and a ragtag lapin band. Rabbits will never seem the same again.

Alexander, Lloyd. *The Book of Three.*

Taran, the Assistant Pig Keeper in the mythical kingdom of Prydain, sets out with the warrior Gwydion to save his country from evil. A very funny adventure tale set in an imaginary kingdom.

Armstrong, William. *Souder.*

Souder is no beauty. But as a coon dog, this loyal mongrel with his cavernous bark is unmatched. When the African American sharecropper who has raised Souder from a pup is hauled off to jail for stealing a hog, his family must suffer their humiliation and crushing loss with no recourse. To make matters worse, in the fracas, Souder is shot and disappears. The eventual return of a tattered and emaciated Souder doesn't change the fact that the sharecropper's oldest son is forced to take on man's work to help support the family. His transition to adulthood is paved by the rocks and taunts hurled at him by convicts and guards as he searches for his father. But along this rough road he ultimately finds salvation as well.

Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale.*

Offred, a handmaid living in a near-future time, endures life in a society in which women able to bear children are used for procreation.

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice.*

Classic novel about the courtship of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet.

Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451.*

In *Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury's classic, frightening vision of the future, firemen don't put out fires--they start them in order to burn books. Bradbury's vividly painted society holds up the appearance of happiness as the highest goal--a place where trivial information is good, and knowledge and ideas are bad.

Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre.*

Orphaned into the household of her Aunt Reed at Gateshead, subject to the cruel regime at Lowood charity school, Jane Eyre none the less emerges unbroken in spirit and integrity. How she takes up the post of governess at Thornfield Hall, meets and loves Mr. Rochester and discovers the impediment to their lawful marriage are elements in a story that transcends melodrama to portray a woman's passionate search for a wider and richer life than that traditionally accorded to her sex in Victorian society.

Bronte, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*.

"My greatest thought in living is Heathcliff. If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be... Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure... but as my own being." *Wuthering Heights* is the only novel of Emily Bronte, who died a year after its publication, at the age of thirty. A brooding Yorkshire tale of a love that is stronger than death, it is also a fierce vision of metaphysical passion, in which heaven and hell, nature and society, are powerfully juxtaposed. Unique, mystical, with a timeless appeal, it has become a classic of English literature.

Buck, Pearl. *The Good Earth*.

This great modern classic depicts life in China at a time before the vast political and social upheavals transformed an essentially agrarian country into a world power. Nobel Prize-winner Pearl S. Buck traces the whole cycle of life--its terrors, its passions, its ambitions, and rewards. Includes biographical and historical information and more.

Camus, Albert. *The Stranger*.

This novel "is set in Camus's birthplace, Algeria française, and narrated by Meursault, a young Frenchman. . . . {After his arrest for the murder of an Arab on the beach}, Meursault shows no remorse. Witnesses at his trial testify about his failure to cry at his mother's funeral. Throughout his ordeal, he resists all attempts by lawyer, magistrate, and chaplain to discuss sin, redemption, God, or afterlife. He is sentenced to death." (*Christian Science Monitor*)

Conrad, Joseph. *The Heart of Darkness*.

Compelling, exotic, suspenseful and far more than just an adventure story, this vivid picture of the moral deterioration and reversion to savagery resulting from prolonged isolation explores deep into the dark heart of its characters' souls.

Crane, Stephen. *The Red Badge of Courage*.

Long considered the first great modern novel of war by an American author, this classic work is set in the time of the Civil War and tells a powerful, psychological story of a young soldier's struggle with the horrors--both within and without the war.

Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*.

"Great Expectations" is at once a superbly constructed novel of spellbinding mastery and a profound examination of moral values. Here, some of Dickens's most memorable characters come to play their part in a story whose title itself reflects the deep irony that shaped Dickens's searching reappraisal of the Victorian middle class.

Dickens, Charles. *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Featuring a new introduction by literature scholar Frederick Busch, this immortal novel of the French Revolution tells the story of the courageous Sydney Carton, a man ready to give his life for a woman who will never be his.

Doctorow, E.L. *Ragtime*.

An account of the interrelated lives of the families of a New Rochelle manufacturer, an immigrant socialist, and a Harlem musician and their involvements with period notables is set against the backdrop of early twentieth-century American history.

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. *Crime & Punishment.*

Mired in poverty, the student Raskolnikov nevertheless thinks well of himself. Of his pawnbroker he takes a different view, and in deciding to do away with her he sets in motion his own tragic downfall. Dostoyevsky's penetrating novel of an intellectual whose moral compass goes haywire, and the detective who hunts him down for his terrible crime, is a stunning psychological portrait, a thriller and a profound meditation on guilt and retribution.

Dreiser, Theodore. *An American Tragedy.*

A story of a poor boy whose ambition for wealth and social prestige leads him to commit murder.

Eliot, George. *Silas Marner.*

Falsely accused, cut off from his past, Silas the weaver is reduced to a spider-like existence, endlessly weaving his web and hoarding his gold. While the village celebrates Christmas and New Year, two apparently inexplicable events occur: Silas loses his gold and finds a child on his hearth.

Ellison, Ralph. *The Invisible Man.*

An African-American man's search for success and the American dream leads him out of college to Harlem and a growing sense of personal rejection and social invisibility.

Faulkner, William. *As I Lay Dying.*

At the heart of this 1930 novel is the Bundren family's bizarre journey to Jefferson to bury Addie, their wife and mother. Faulkner lets each family member--including Addie--and others along the way tell their private responses to Addie's life.

Faulkner, William. *Light in August.*

The tragicomic story of a girl searching for the father of her unborn child, the disgraced minister who dreams of Confederate cavalry charges, and the desperate, enigmatic drifter consumed by his mixed ancestry. Amid the ruins of the Old South, they play out the eternal struggle of hope and despair, life and death.

Faulkner, William. *The Sound and the Fury.*

First published in 1929, Faulkner created his "heart's darling," the beautiful and tragic Caddy Compson, whose story Faulkner told through separate monologues by her three brothers--the idiot Benjy, the neurotic suicidal Quentin and the monstrous Jason.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby.*

The story of the fabulously wealthy Jay Gatsby and his love for the beautiful Daisy Buchanan.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *Tender Is the Night.*

Set in the South of France in the decade after World War I, *Tender Is the Night* is the story of a brilliant and magnetic psychiatrist named Dick Diver; the bewitching, wealthy, and dangerously unstable mental patient, Nicole, who becomes his wife; and the beautiful, harrowing ten-year pas de deux they act.

Gaines, Ernest J. *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman.*

Fictional biography of a Black slave, who lived for 100 years after the Civil War.

Golding, William. *Lord of the Flies*.

A classic study of the depths of human nature follows the degeneration of a group of British schoolboys, who abandon social norms and revert to barbarism and murder after they are marooned on a desert island.

Hardy, Thomas. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

Driven by poverty into the service of her wealthy relations, Tess confesses her life of hardship and faces a solemn destiny after her husband leaves her.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*.

Set in Puritan Boston, *The Scarlet Letter* tells the disturbing tale of Hester Prynne, a woman caught in the conflict between the Puritan ethics of her community and the higher law of her own love. In this tragic tale, we see the struggle between the laws of scripture and those of a different moral authority.

Heinlein, Robert. *A Stranger in a Strange Land*.

A Mars-born earthling arrives on this planet for the first time as an adult, and the sensation he creates teaches Earth some unforgettable lessons.

Heller, Joseph. *Catch 22*.

As revealing today as when it was first published, this brilliant novel expresses the concerns of an entire generation in its black comedy. World War II flier John Yossarian decides that his only mission each time he goes up is to return—alive.

Hemingway, Ernest. *A Farewell to Arms*.

A tragic wartime romance set against the brutal and chaotic backdrop of World War I is the classic story of a volunteer ambulance driver wounded on the Italian front and the English nurse he loves and leaves behind.

Hemingway, Ernest. *The Old Man and the Sea*.

The Old Man and the Sea is one of Hemingway's most enduring works. Told in language of great simplicity and power, it is the story of an old Cuban fisherman, down on his luck, and his supreme ordeal -- a relentless, agonizing battle with a giant marlin far out in the Gulf Stream.

Herbert, Frank. *Dune*.

Paul Atreides moves with his family to the planet Dune and is forced into exile when his father's government is overthrown. The first book in the series.

Hesse, Hermann. *Siddhartha*.

A young Indian mystic, a contemporary of Buddha, sacrifices everything to search for the true meaning of life.

Hinton, S.E. *The Outsiders.*

According to Ponyboy, there are two kinds of people in the world: greasers and socs. A soc (short for "social") has money, can get away with just about anything, and has an attitude longer than a limousine. A greaser, on the other hand, always lives on the outside and needs to watch his back. Ponyboy is a greaser, and he's always been proud of it, even willing to rumble against a gang of socs for the sake of his fellow greasers--until one terrible night when his friend Johnny kills a soc. The murder gets under Ponyboy's skin, causing his world to crumble and teaching him that pain feels the same whether a soc or a greaser.

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God.*

An American classic, a luminous and haunting novel about Janie Crawford, a Southern black woman in the 1930s whose journey from a free-spirited girl to a woman of independence and substance has inspired writers and readers for close to seventy years.

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World.*

A mighty novel of soulless, streamlined Eden, a shocking look at a frightening tomorrow.

Joyce, James. *A Portrait of an Artist As a Young Man.*

Joyce's semi-autobiographical chronicle of Stephen Dedalus' passage from university student to "independent" artist is at once a richly detailed, amusing, and moving coming-of-age story, a tour de force of style and technique.

Knowles, John. *A Separate Peace.*

Knowles' classic story of two friends at boarding school during World War II--one of the most starkly moving parables ever written about the dark forces that brood over the tortured world of adolescence--has been a consistent seller for more than 20 years.

Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird.*

Lawyer Atticus Finch defends the real mockingbird of Harper Lee's classic, Pulitzer Prize-winning novel--a black man charged with the rape of a white woman. Through the eyes of Atticus's children, Scout and Jem Finch, Harper Lee explores with rich humor and unanswering honesty the irrationality of adult attitudes toward race and class in the Deep South of the 1930's.

London, Jack. *The Call of the Wild.*

A bold-spirited dog is stripped from his comfortable California estate and thrust into the rugged terrain of the Klondike in this allegorical adventure story demonstrating kindness amid the bitter cold and savage lawlessness of man.

McCullers, Carson. *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter.*

The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter is considered McCullers' finest work. The focus of the work is on John Singer, a deaf-mute in a Georgia mill town during the 1930s, and on his effect on the people who confide in him. When Singer's mute Greek companion of 10 years goes insane, Singer is left alone and isolated. He takes a room with the Kelly family, where he is visited by the town's misfits, who turn to him for understanding but have no knowledge of his inner life. The book's emphasis on individuals who are considered outcasts because of race, politics, disability, or sensibility placed it squarely within the Southern gothic tradition of American literature.

McCullers, Carson. *The Member of the Wedding.*

Twelve-year-old Frankie cannot understand why everyone disapproves of her idea of going on her brother's honeymoon.

Meville, Herman. *Moby Dick.*

The saga of Captain Ahab and his monomaniacal pursuit of the white whale remains a peerless adventure story but one full of mythic grandeur, poetic majesty, and symbolic power.

Mitchell, Margaret. *Gone With the Wind.*

A monumental classic considered by many to be not only the greatest love story ever written, but also the greatest Civil War saga.

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved.*

Set in the years immediately following the Civil War, "Beloved" tells the story of an escaped slave haunted by the memory of her murdered daughter.

O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried.*

In his second work of fiction about Vietnam, O'Brien's unique artistic vision is again clearly demonstrated. Neither a novel nor a short story collection, it is an arc of fictional episodes, taking place in the childhoods of its characters, in the jungles of Vietnam and back home in America two decades later.

Orwell, George. *Animal Farm.*

A farm is taken over by its overworked, mistreated animals. With flaming idealism and stirring slogans, they set out to create a paradise of progress, justice, and equality. Thus the stage is set for one of the most telling satiric fables ever penned--a razor-edged fairy tale for grown-ups that records the evolution from revolution against tyranny to a totalitarianism just as terrible.

Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four.*

Published in 1949, Ninety Eighty-Four is Orwell's terrifying vision of a totalitarian future. Its hero, Winston Smith, is a worker at the Ministry of Truth, where he falsifies records for the party. Secretly subversive, he and his colleague Julia try to free themselves from political slavery but the price of freedom is betrayal.

Pasternak, Boris. *Doctor Zhivago.*

Classic Russian novel of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution.

Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar.*

During a queer, sultry summer in New York, Esther Greenwood works as a junior editor on MADMOISELLE, quarrels with her mother and boy friend, and is gradually aware of her descent into madness.

Potok, Chaim. *The Chosen.*

Few stories offer more warmth, wisdom, or generosity than this tale of two boys, their fathers, their friendship, and the chaotic times in which they live. Though on the surface it explores religious faith--the intellectually committed as well as the passionately observant--the struggles addressed in *The Chosen* are familiar to families of all faiths and in all nations.

Remarque, Erich Maria. *All Quiet on the Western Front.*

Now repackaged--the timeless classic of World War I Germany that speaks to generation after generation.

Richter, Conrad. *The Light in the Forest.*

A fifteen-year-old white boy raised by the Lenni Lenape Indians is returned to his people under the terms of a treaty and faces difficult choices about his identity and personal loyalty.

Salinger, J.D. *The Catcher in the Rye.*

Since his debut in 1951 as *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield has been synonymous with "cynical adolescent." Holden narrates the story of a couple of days in his sixteen-year-old life, just after he's been expelled from prep school, in a slang that sounds edgy even today.

Scott, Sir Walter. *Ivanhoe.*

The epitome of the chivalric novel, *Ivanhoe* sweeps readers into Medieval England and the lives of a memorable cast of characters.

Shelly, Mary. *Frankenstein.*

A classic since 1818, this is the tale of a scientist whose dream becomes his nightmare when the creature he creates, then rejects, comes back to wreak revenge.

Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath.*

Epic saga of a family driven West by Oklahoma dust storms during the 1930s.

Steinbeck, John. *Of Mice and Men.*

While the powerlessness of the laboring class is a recurring theme in Steinbeck's work of the late 1930s, he narrowed his focus when composing *Of Mice and Men* (1937), creating an intimate portrait of two men facing a world marked by petty tyranny, misunderstanding, jealousy, and callousness. But though the scope is narrow, the theme is universal: a friendship and a shared dream that makes an individual's existence meaningful.

Steinbeck, John. *The Pearl.*

A Mexican folk tale about a man who finds a great pearl and its traumatic effect on him and his family.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings.*

- *The Hobbit.*
- *The Fellowship of the Ring*
- *The Two Towers*
- *The Return of the King*

Elves, dwarves, hobbits, and men are caught in the spell of an evil ring that corrupts. This seminal work establishes the pattern of heroic fantasy and inspired the blossoming of the genre.

Tolstoy, Leo. *War and Peace.*

This classic Russian novel details the invasion of Russia by Napoleon and his army.

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.*

Mark Twain's rare insight into the recipe for "Boy" was never keener than in this timeless story of Huckleberry Finn's adventures with his friends Tom Sawyer and Jim on the great Mississippi.

Twain, Mark. *Tom Sawyer.*

The irrepressible Tom Sawyer and his best friend, Huck Finn, enjoy a host of sometimes entertaining, sometimes dangerous adventures as they play pirates on a deserted island, attend their own funeral, stumble upon a midnight murder, and run afoul of the evil Injun Joe.

Uris, Leon. *Exodus.*

An American nurse and an Israeli freedom fighter get caught up in the re-birth of Israel.

Vonnegut, Kurt Jr. *Slaughterhouse Five.*

Billy Pilgrim travels through time to relive parts of his life.

Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple.*

An uneducated woman living in the rural American south who was raped by her father, deprived of the children she bore him and forced to marry a brutal man she calls "Mister" is transformed by the friendship of two remarkable women, acquiring self-worth and the strength to forgive.

Wharton, Edith. *The Age of Innocence.*

The winner of the 1921 Pulitzer Prize, "The Age of Innocence" is at once an elegant portrait of New York's elite in the 1870s and a devastatingly ironic commentary on their attitudes and customs .

Wharton, Edith. *Ethan Frome.*

Set against the bleak winter landscape of New England, Ethan Frome is the story of a poor farmer, lonely and downtrodden, his wife Zeena, and her cousin, the enchanting Mattie Silver.

White, T. H. *The Once and Future King.*

A novel about the court of King Arthur.

Wright, Richard. *Native Son.*

Right from the start, Bigger Thomas had been headed for jail. It could have been for assault or petty larceny--it was for murder and rape. Set in 1930s Chicago, this powerful novel is as meaningful today as when it was written--both in its unsparing reflection of the poverty in the inner cities across the U.S. and in what it means to be black in America.