

SUGGESTED SUMMER READING

2011

Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers. ~Charles W. Eliot

- The suggestions below were derived from various book lists, including: The Book List for College bound Students by the College Board, The Washington Post, and even Oprah's Book Club! Our hope is that every student will select to read at least ONE book from the list. None of these books are taught in our curriculum, so this is purely for enrichment, and the JOY of reading.
- Students who choose to participate will have an opportunity for extra credit during the 1st quarter of their English course; assignments will vary according to teacher.
- Students in AP Literature and AP Language have REQUIRED summer reading, and should do those assignments instead.

1. ***Dombey and Son*** by Charles Dickens

Paul Dombey is a heartless London merchant who runs his domestic affairs as he runs his business. In the tight orbit of his daily life there is no room for dealing with emotions because emotion has no market value. In his son he sees the future of his firm and the continuation of his name, while he neglects his affectionate daughter. He decides to get rid of her beloved, a lowly clerk. But Dombey's weakness is his pride, and he falls prey to the treacherous flattery of others.

2. ***A Girl Named Disaster*** by Nancy Farmer

For Nhamo, an 11-year-old Shona girl living in Mozambique in 1981, life is filled with the traditions of her village people. When family circumstances, a ngozi (angry spirit), and a cholera epidemic force her into a horrible marriage, she flees with only her grandmother's blessings, some gold nuggets, and many survival skills. Still, what should have been a two-day boat trip across the border to her father's family in Zimbabwe spans a year. Daily conversations with spirits help to combat her loneliness and provide her with sage and practical advice. The most incredible leg of her journey is spent on an island where Nhamo closely observes and is warily accepted by a baboon family only to have one of them destroy her shelter and food supply. She makes mistakes, loses heart, and nearly dies of starvation. Even after she arrives in Zimbabwe where she lives with scientists before meeting her father's family, Nhamo must learn to survive in civilization and exorcise the demons that haunt her.

3. ***I, Robot*** by Isaac Asimov

The three laws of Robotics:

- 1) A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm
- 2) A robot must obey orders given to it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
- 3) A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

With these three, simple directives, Isaac Asimov changed our perception of robots forever when he formulated the laws governing their behavior. In ***I, Robot***, Asimov chronicles the development of the robot through a series

of interlinked stories: from its primitive origins in the present to its ultimate perfection in the not-so-distant future--a future in which humanity itself may be rendered obsolete. Here are stories of robots gone mad, of mind-read ring robots, and robots with a sense of humor. Of robot politicians and robots that secretly run the world--all told with the dramatic blend of science fact and science fiction that has become Asimov's trademark.

4. ***The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*** by Douglas Adams

It's safe to say that *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* is one of the funniest science fiction novels ever written. Adams spoofs many core science fiction tropes: space travel, aliens, interstellar war--stripping away all sense of wonder and repainting them as commonplace, even silly. *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, in which Arthur Dent is introduced to the galaxy at large when he is rescued by an alien friend seconds before Earth's destruction, begins a wonderful series of compelling and funny novels.

5. ***Triumph: The Untold Story of Jesse Owens and Hitler's Olympics*** by Jeremy Schaap

Sports writer and ESPN "Sports Center" anchor Jeremy Schaap reveals Jesse Owens as not just a beloved American 'sports icon', but also a towering figure on both the international sports and world history stages. Jesse Owens was only athlete to be singled out in the world history books for his very notable international athletic achievements during the Olympic Games just prior to Hitler's scourging of Europe in the run-up to World War II. Mr. Schaap reveals new insights about Jesse Owens in Berlin. The Jesse Owens/Lutz Long friendship and its aftermath are truly moving. He is also the central figure in the greatest one-hour period of individual sports achievements, ever.

6. ***The Road*** by Cormac McCarthy

Cormac McCarthy sets his new novel, *The Road*, in a post-apocalyptic blight of gray skies that drizzle ash, a world in which all matter of wildlife is extinct, starvation is not only prevalent but nearly all-encompassing, and marauding bands of cannibals roam the environment with pieces of human flesh stuck between their teeth. If this sounds oppressive and dispiriting, it is. McCarthy may have just set to paper the definitive vision of the world after nuclear war, and in this recent age of relentless saber-rattling by the global powers, it's not much of a leap to feel his vision could be not far off the mark nor, sadly, right around the corner. Stealing across this horrific (and that's the only word for it) landscape are an unnamed man and his emaciated son, a boy probably around the age of ten. It is the love the father feels for his son, a love as deep and acute as his grief that could surprise readers of McCarthy's previous works.

7. ***Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time***: By Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin

Some failures lead to phenomenal successes, and this American nurse's unsuccessful attempt to climb K2, the world's second tallest mountain, is one of them. Dangerously ill when he finished his climb in 1993, Mortenson was sheltered for seven weeks by the small Pakistani village of Korphe; in return, he promised to build the impoverished town's first school, a project that grew into the Central Asia Institute, which has since constructed more than 50 schools across rural Pakistan and Afghanistan. Coauthor Relin recounts Mortenson's efforts in fascinating detail, presenting compelling portraits of the village elders, con artists, philanthropists, mujahideen, Taliban officials, ambitious school girls and upright Muslims Mortenson met along the way. As the book moves into the post-9/11 world, Mortenson and Relin argue that the United States must fight Islamic extremism in the region through collaborative efforts to alleviate poverty and improve access to education, especially for girls. Captivating and suspenseful, with engrossing accounts of both hostilities and unlikely friendships, this book will win many readers' hearts.

NOTE: All book descriptions/reviews were taken from Amazon.com