

Wilson County School System High School Protected Reading List

The Purpose of the Wilson County Schools Protected Reading List:

The Protected Reading List of the Wilson County School System is a list of books that are reserved for class study at specific grade levels in order to better ground students in different types of literature. At each grade level, there are both texts that students are required to study and texts that students have a choice to study as part of the student's English class. Teachers may not teach any piece of literature that is listed as protective at another grade level. This includes, but is not limited to, whole class instruction, small group instruction, independent study, literature circles/book studies, teacher read-alouds, excerpts, or videos.

The Goal of the Wilson County Schools Protected Reading List:

The Wilson County School System's Reading List is designed to encourage students to read and to instill a love of reading, and to refrain from repetitiously re-reading the same pieces and types of literature. It is our intent that all students will graduate from the Wilson County School System being well read and educated. The Protected Reading List contains both literary classics and more modern works of literature, from a variety of authors. It is our hope that all students will attain a love of reading during their time as a student here in Wilson County.

Alternative Texts for Challenged Books

Any book on the Protected Reading List may be challenged. As with any piece of literature, a parent, student, or student's legal guardian may find the content of a piece of literature offensive. In these cases, the parent, student, or parent's guardian may request a meeting with the school's administration. If after a conference with the principal, a parent submits a written challenge to a Required Reading or to one of the titles from the Protected Reading Choice List, the challenge must be filed with the principal and the student will be allowed to study an alternate text. The alternate text should be selected from the Protected Reading Choice list if at all possible. A copy of all written objections should be sent to the English Language Arts Secondary Supervisor. All objections will be reviewed to determine if titles on the Protected Reading List should be revisited.

Protected Reading List 2009 Revision Committee

The Wilson County School System would like to thank the teachers who agreed to serve on the Protected Reading List Revision Committee. The following teachers worked diligently during the spring semester of the 2008-2009 school year: Emily Adkinson, Linda Allen, Brandy Baird, Mary Halbert, Amanda Hargis, Josh Mauthe, Deb Pate, Lori Scott, Tanya Stinson, and Carrie Tinsley.

Protected Reading List

Grade Level: 9

Standard Required Readings:

1. Romeo and Juliet (Basal Text)
2. To Kill a Mockingbird * (Lexile 920)
3. The Odyssey (Unit Study)

Honors Required Readings:

1. Romeo and Juliet (Basal Text)
2. To Kill a Mockingbird * (Lexile 920)
3. The Odyssey (Unit Study)

Protected Reading Choices:

Standard classes will choose one book from this list to read. Honors classes will read two books from this list; however, one may be done as part of class study, while the other will still be read independently.

1. The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time (Haddon)*/** (Lexile 1180)
2. Speak (Anderson)* (Lexile 680)
3. Death Be Not Proud (Gunther) (Lexile1060)
4. Of Mice and Men (Steinbeck)* (Lexile 630)
5. The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon (King) (Lexile 1040)
6. The Good Earth (Buck) (Lexile 1530)
7. Fahrenheit 451 (Bradbury)* (Lexile 890)
8. The House on Mango Street (Cisneros) (Lexile 870)
9. I, Robot (Asimov) (Lexile 820)
10. The Secret life of Bees (Kidd) (Lexile 840)
11. The Bean Trees (Kingsolver)* (Lexile 900)
12. The Old Man and the Sea (Hemingway) (Lexile 940)
13. Blood Red Horse (Grant) (Lexile 930)
14. The Blind Side (Lewis) (Lexile 910)
15. Great Expectations (Dickens) (Lexile 1200)

*These selections may contain subject matter that may be objectionable to some students or families. Students may choose to read an alternate book from this list in lieu of any of these books.

** "On-Reserve" title. Students choosing to read this selection may do so only with parental permission.

Protected Reading Choices Book Summaries

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

Mark Haddon's bitterly funny debut novel, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, is a murder mystery of sorts--one told by an autistic version of Adrian Mole. Fifteen-year-old Christopher John Francis Boone is mathematically gifted and socially hopeless, raised in a working-class home by parents who can barely cope with their child's quirks. He takes everything that he sees (or is told) at face value, and is unable to sort out the strange behavior of his elders and peers. Late one night, Christopher comes across his neighbor's poodle, Wellington, impaled on a garden fork. Wellington's owner finds him cradling her dead dog in his arms, and has him arrested. After spending a night in jail, Christopher resolves--against the objection of his father and neighbors--to discover just who has murdered Wellington. He is encouraged by Siobhan, a social worker at his school, to write a book about his investigations, and the result--quirkily illustrated, with each chapter given its own prime number--is *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. -- Jack Illingworth, Amazon.com Review

Speak

Amazon.com Review

Since the beginning of the school year, high school freshman Melinda has found that it's been getting harder and harder for her to speak out loud: "My throat is always sore, my lips raw.... Every time I try to talk to my parents or a teacher, I sputter or freeze.... It's like I have some kind of spastic laryngitis." What could have caused Melinda to suddenly fall mute? Could it be due to the fact that no one at school is speaking to her because she called the cops and got everyone busted at the seniors' big end-of-summer party? Or maybe it's because her parents' only form of communication is Post-It notes written on their way out the door to their nine-to-whenever jobs. While Melinda is bothered by these things, deep down she knows the real reason why she's been struck mute...

Laurie Halse Anderson's first novel is a stunning and sympathetic tribute to the teenage outcast. The triumphant ending, in which Melinda finds her voice, is cause for cheering (while many readers might also shed a tear or two). After reading *Speak*, it will be hard for any teen to look at the class scapegoat again without a measure of compassion and understanding for that person--who may be screaming beneath the silence. -- Jennifer Hubert

Death Be Not Proud

Johnny Gunther was only seventeen years old when he died of a brain tumor. During the months of his illness, everyone near him was unforgettably impressed by his level-headed courage, his wit and quiet friendliness, and, above all, his unfaltering patience through times of despair. This deeply moving book is a father's memoir of a brave, intelligent, and spirited boy. (Amazon.com Product Description)

Of Mice and Men

Novella by John Steinbeck, published in 1937. The tragic story, given poignancy by its objective narrative, is about the complex bond between two migrant laborers. The book, which was adapted by Steinbeck into a three-act play (produced 1937), earned him national renown. The plot centers on George Milton and Lennie Small, itinerant ranch hands who dream of one day owning a small farm. George acts as a father figure to Lennie, who is large and simpleminded, calming him and helping to rein in his immense physical strength. When Lennie accidentally kills the ranch owner's flirtatious daughter-in-law, George shoots his friend rather than allow him to be captured by a vengeful lynch mob. -- [The Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia of Literature](#)

The Old Man and the Sea

Here, for a change, is a fish tale that actually does honor to the author. In fact *The Old Man and the Sea* revived Ernest Hemingway's career. It also led directly to his receipt of the Nobel Prize in 1954. A half century later, it's still easy to see why. This tale of an aged Cuban fisherman going head-to-head (or hand-to-fin) with a magnificent marlin encapsulates Hemingway's favorite motifs of physical and moral challenges. (Adapted from an Amazon.com review by James Marcus)

The House on Mango Street

From Publishers Weekly

Esperanza Cordero, a girl coming of age in the Hispanic quarter of Chicago, uses poems and stories to express thoughts and emotions about her oppressive environment.

The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon

"The world had teeth and it could bite you with them anytime it wanted." King's new novel, which begins with that sentence, has teeth, too, and it bites hard. Readers will bite right back. Always one to go for the throat, King crafts a story that concerns not just anyone lost in the Maine-New Hampshire woods, but a plucky nine-year-old girl, and from a broken home, no less. This stacked deck is flush with aces, however. King has always excelled at writing about children, and Trisha McFarland, dressed in jeans and a Red Sox jersey and cap when she wanders off the forest path, away from her mother and brother and toward tremendous danger, is his strongest kid character yet, wholly believable and achingly empathetic in her vulnerability and resourcefulness. Trisha spends nine days (eight nights) in the forest, ravaged by wasps, thirst, hunger, illness, loneliness and terror. Her knapsack with a little food and water helps, but not as much as the Walkman that allows her to listen to Sox games, a crucial link to the outside world. Love of baseball suffuses the novel, from the chapter headings (e.g., "Bottom of the Ninth") to Trisha's reliance, through fevered imagined conversations with him, on (real life) Boston pitcher Tom Gordon and his grace under pressure. King renders the woods as an eerie wonderland, one harboring a something stalking Trisha but also, just perhaps, God: he explicitly explores questions of faith here (as he has before, as in *Desperation*) but without impeding the rush of the narrative. Despite its brevity, the novel ripples with ideas, striking images, pop culture allusions and recurring themes, plus an unnecessary smattering of scatology. It's classic King, brutal, intensely suspenseful, an exhilarating affirmation of the human spirit. (Amazon.com Editorial Review)

The Good Earth

Though more than sixty years have passed since this remarkable novel won the Pulitzer Prize, it has retained its popularity and become one of the great modern classics. "I can only write what I know, and I know nothing but China, having always lived there," wrote Pearl Buck. In *The Good Earth* she presents a graphic view of a China when the last emperor reigned and the vast political and social upheavals of the twentieth century were but distant rumblings for the ordinary people. This moving, classic story of the honest farmer Wang Lung and his selfless wife O-lan is must reading for those who would fully appreciate the sweeping changes that have occurred in the lives of the Chinese people during this century. (Amazon.com Product Description)

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. Guy Montag is a book-burning fireman undergoing a crisis of faith. His wife spends all day with her television "family," imploring Montag to work harder so that they can afford a fourth TV wall. Their dull, empty life sharply contrasts with that of his next-door neighbor Clarisse, a young girl thrilled by the ideas in books, and more interested in what she can see in the world around her than in the mindless chatter of the tube. When Clarisse disappears mysteriously, Montag is moved to make some changes, and starts hiding books in his home. Eventually, his wife turns him in, and he must answer the call to burn his secret cache of books. After fleeing to avoid arrest, Montag winds up joining an outlaw band of scholars who keep the contents of books in their heads, waiting for the time society will once again need the wisdom of literature. (Adapted from Amazon.com – Neil Roseman)

I, Robot

Amazon.com Review

In this collection, one of the great classics of science fiction, Asimov set out the principles of robot behavior that we know as the Three Laws of Robotics. Here are stories of robots gone mad, mind-reading robots, robots with a sense of humor, robot politicians, and robots who secretly run the world, all told with Asimov's trademark dramatic blend of science fact and science fiction.

The Bean Trees

From Library Journal; Edward C. Lynskey, Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This debut novel follows the gritty, outspoken Taylor Greer, who leaves her native Kentucky to head west. She becomes mother to an abandoned baby and, when her jalopy dies in Tucson, is forced to work in a tire garage and to room with a young, battered divorcee who also has a little girl. With sisterly counsel and personal honesty, the two face their painful lot (told in ponderous detail). The blue-collar setting, described vibrantly, often turns violent, with baby beatings, street brawls, and drug busts. Despite the hurt and rage, themes of love and nurturing emerge. A refreshingly upbeat, presentable first effort by an author whose subsequent novels will probably generate more interest than this one.

Secret Life of Bees

Amazon.com Review

In Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*, 14-year-old Lily Owen, neglected by her father and isolated on their South Carolina peach farm, spends hours imagining a blissful infancy when she was loved and nurtured by her mother, Deborah, whom she barely remembers. These consoling fantasies are her heart's answer to the family story that as a child, in unclear circumstances, Lily accidentally shot and killed her mother. All Lily has left of Deborah is a strange image of a Black Madonna, with the words "Tiburon, South Carolina" scrawled on the back. The search for a mother, and the need to mother oneself, are crucial elements in this well-written coming-of-age story set in the early 1960s against a background of racial violence and unrest. When Lily's beloved nanny, Rosaleen, manages to insult a group of angry white men on her way to register to vote and has to skip town, Lily takes the opportunity to go with her, fleeing to the only place she can think of--Tiburon, South Carolina--determined to find out more about her dead mother --*Regina Marler*

Blood Red Horse

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-9--Based on the Third Crusade with England's King Richard I and the Muslim leader Saladin, this novel takes readers from the de Granvilles' Hartslove Castle to the bloody battlefields of the Middle East. It is a story of loyalty, honor, and nobility and centers around the lives of two brothers, Gavin and William; the fair maiden Eleanor whom they leave behind; and Will's beloved red horse. Readers are caught up in the bloody battles, with alternating chapters revealing what is happening on the "home front," and in the Christian and in the Muslim camps. Tying these stories together is the red horse, Hosanna, who is the book's most compelling and empathetic character. The futility of war is a theme throughout and readers will discover that, much like war today, combat in the 12th century had devastating consequences. The historical setting and the vocabulary may challenge younger readers but ensure that older ones will find the book a rewarding adventure, one not soon forgotten and one that lends itself to great discussion.--*Denise Moore, O'Gorman Junior High School, Sioux Falls, SD*. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

The Blind Side

As he did so memorably for baseball in *Moneyball*, Lewis takes a statistical X-ray of the hidden substructure of football, outlining the invisible doings of unsung players that determine the outcome more than the showy exploits of point scorers. In his sketch of the gridiron arms race, first came the modern, meticulously choreographed passing offense, then the ferocious defensive pass rusher whose bone-crunching quarterback sacks demolished the best-laid passing game, and finally the rise of the left tackle—the offensive lineman tasked with protecting the quarterback from the pass rusher—whose presence is felt only through the game-deciding absence of said sacks. A rare creature combining 300 pounds of bulk with "the body control of a ballerina," the anonymous left tackle, Lewis notes, is now often a team's highest-paid player. Lewis fleshes this out with the colorful saga of left tackle prodigy Michael Oher. An intermittently homeless Memphis ghetto kid taken in by a rich white family and a Christian high school, Oher's preternatural size and agility soon has every college coach in the country courting him obsequiously. Combining a tour de force of sports analysis with a piquant ethnography of the South's pigskin mania, Lewis probes the fascinating question of whether football is a matter of brute force or subtle intellect.

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Great Expectations

Novel by Charles Dickens, first published serially in *All the Year Round* in 1860-61 and issued in book form in 1861. The novel was one of its author's greatest critical and popular successes. The first-person narrative relates the coming-of-age of Pip (Philip Pirrip). Reared in the marshes of Kent by his disagreeable sister and her sweet-natured husband, the blacksmith Joe Gargery, the young Pip one day helps a convict to escape. Later he is sent to live with Miss Havisham, a woman driven half-mad years earlier by her lover's departure on their wedding day. Her other ward is the orphaned Estella, whom she is teaching to torment men with her beauty. Pip, at first cautious, later falls in love with Estella, to his misfortune. When an anonymous benefactor makes it possible for Pip to go to London for an education, he credits Miss Havisham. He begins to look down on his humble roots, but nonetheless Estella spurns him again and marries instead the ill-tempered Bentley Drummle. Pip's benefactor turns out to have been Abel Magwitch, the convict he once aided, who dies awaiting trial after Pip is unable to help him a second time. Joe rescues Pip from despair and nurses him back to health. -- [The Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia of Literature](#)

Protected Reading List

Grade Level: 10

Standard Required Readings:

1. Julius Caesar (Basal Text)
2. Lord of the Flies * (Lexile 770)
3. Antigone (Basal Text)

Honors Required Readings:

1. Julius Caesar (Basal Text)
2. Lord of the Flies *
3. Antigone (Basal Text)

Protected Reading Choices:

Standard classes will choose one book from this list to read. Honors classes will read two books from this list. Honors students may be required to read one book as a class per the teacher's discretion, but they will have a choice to the other book they wish to read.

1. The Jungle (Sinclair)* (Lexile 1170)
2. A Separate Peace (Knowles)* (Lexile 1110)
3. Joy Luck Club (Tan)* (Lexile 930)
4. Oedipus Rex (Sophocles)
5. Snow Falling on Cedars (Guterson)* (Lexile 1080)
6. Things Fall Apart (Achebe) (Lexile 890)
7. A Doll's House (Ibsen)
8. My Sister's Keeper* (Picoult)
9. Friday Night Lights (Bissinger) (Lexile 1260)
10. The Pact (Davis) (Lexile 940)
11. Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister (Maguire)* (Lexile 860)
12. The Green Mile (King)* (Lexile 910)
13. The Lovely Bones (Sebold)* (Lexile 890)
14. The Road (McCarthy)* (Lexile 670)
15. A Lesson Before Dying (Gaines) (Lexile 750)

*These selections may contain subject matter that may be objectionable to some students or families. Students may choose to read an alternate book from this list in lieu of any of these books.

Protected Reading Choices Book Summaries

The Jungle

Upton Sinclair's muckraking masterpiece *The Jungle* centers on Jurgis Rudkus, a Lithuanian immigrant working in Chicago's infamous Packingtown. Instead of finding the American Dream, Rudkus and his family inhabit a brutal, soul-crushing urban jungle dominated by greedy bosses, pitiless con-men, and corrupt politicians. While Sinclair's main target was the industry's appalling labor conditions, the reading public was most outraged by the disgusting filth and contamination in American food that his novel exposed. As a result, President Theodore Roosevelt demanded an official investigation, which quickly led to the passage of the Pure Food and Drug laws. For a work of fiction to have such an impact outside its literary context is extremely rare. Today, *The Jungle* remains a relevant portrait of capitalism at its worst and an impassioned account of the human spirit facing nearly insurmountable challenges. (Product Description from Amazon.com)

A Separate Peace

From School Library Journal

The volatile world of male adolescence provides the backdrop for John Knowles' engrossing tale of love, hate, war, and peace. Sharing a room at Devon, an exclusive New England prep school, in the summer prior to World War II, Gene and Phineas form a complex bond of friendship that draws out both the best and worst characteristics of each boy and leads ultimately to violence, a confession, and the betrayal of trust. Narrator Scott Snively's ability to switch seamlessly from the perspective of a teenager tormented by feelings he doesn't want to understand to the reflective musing of a man looking back at the formative experience of his youth provide both the story and the setting with an immediacy that quickly engages listeners. Not only does Snively give a distinctive voice to each of the main characters, he also delineates the mannerisms and personalities of the other boys and the teachers surrounding them. Cindy Lombardo, Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Joy Luck Club

A stunning literary achievement, *The Joy Luck Club* explores the tender and tenacious bond between four daughters and their mothers. The daughters know one side of their mothers, but they don't know about their earlier never-spoken-of lives in China. The mothers want love and obedience from their daughters, but they don't know the gifts that the daughters keep to themselves. Heartwarming and bittersweet, this is a novel for mother, daughters, and those that love them. (Product Description from Amazon.com)

Oedipus Rex

Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* has never been surpassed for the raw and terrible power with which its hero struggles to answer the eternal question, "Who am I?" The play, a story of a king who—acting entirely in ignorance—kills his father and marries his mother, unfolds with shattering power; we are helplessly carried along with Oedipus towards the final, horrific truth. (Adapted from the Product Description from Amazon.com)

A Lesson Before Dying

In a small Cajun community in the late 1940s, a young black man named Jefferson is an unwilling party to a liquor store shootout in which three men are killed. The only survivor, he is convicted of murder and sentenced to death. (Product Description from Amazon.com)

Snow Falling on Cedars

Amazon.com Review

Ishmael Chambers, the one-man staff of the newspaper on San Pedro Island in Puget Sound, is covering the 1954 trial of a high school classmate accused of killing another classmate over a land dispute. We learn the sensory details of life in a small fishing community; the emotional lives of people scarred inside and out by World War II; and the deep and unresolved prejudices toward the island's Japanese Americans, who were interned during the war--a tragedy that led to financial advantage for some islanders. Marinker deliberately but nimbly moves from the characters' distinctive voices to the poignant interior perspectives of the soulful, wounded Chambers as he tells a combination love story, murder mystery, and painful history lesson. --*Lou Schuler*

Things Fall Apart

Adapted From Library Journal; Peter Josyph, Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

In direct, almost fable-like prose, this novel depicts the rise and fall of Okonkwo, a Nigerian whose sense of manliness is more akin to that of his warrior ancestors than to that of his fellow clansmen who have converted to Christianity and are appeasing the British administrators who infiltrate their village. The tough, proud, hardworking Okonkwo is at once a quintessential old-order Nigerian and a universal character in whom sons of all races have identified the figure of their father. Achebe creates a many-sided picture of village life and a sympathetic hero.

A Doll's House

Norwegian-born Henrik Ibsen's classic play about the struggle between independence and security still resonates with readers and audience members today. Often hailed as an early feminist work, the story of Nora and Torvald rises above simple gender issues to ask the bigger question: "To what extent have we sacrificed our selves for the sake of social customs and to protect what we think is love?" Nora's struggle and ultimate realizations about her life invite all of us to examine our own lives and find the many ways we have made ourselves dolls and playthings in the hands of forces we believe to be beyond our control. (Adapted from the Product Description from Amazon.com)

Friday Night Lights

Secular religions are fascinating in the devotion and zealotry they breed, and in Texas, high school football has its own rabid hold over the faithful. H.G. Bissinger, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, enters into the spirit of one of its most fervent shrines: Odessa, a city in decline in the desert of West Texas, where the Permian High School Panthers have managed to compile the winningest record in state annals. Indeed, as this breathtaking examination of the town, the team, its coaches, and its young players chronicles, the team, for better and for worse, *is* the town; the communal health and self-image of the latter is directly linked to the on-field success of the former. The 1988 season, the one *Friday Night Lights* recounts, was not one of the Panthers' best. The game's effect on the community--and the players--was explosive. Written with great style and passion, *Friday Night Lights* offers an American snapshot in deep focus; the picture is not always pretty, but the image is hard to forget. (Amazon.com Review)

My Sister's Keeper

Anna was genetically engineered to be a perfect match for her cancer-ridden older sister. Since birth, the 13-year-old has donated platelets, blood, her umbilical cord, and bone marrow as part of her family's struggle to lengthen Kate's life. Anna is now being considered as a kidney donor in a last-ditch attempt to save her 16-year-old sister. As this compelling story opens, Anna has hired a lawyer to represent her in a medical emancipation suit to allow her to have control over her own body. Picoult skillfully relates the ensuing drama from the points of view of the parents; Anna; Cambell, the self-absorbed lawyer; Julia, the court-appointed guardian ad litem; and Jesse, the troubled oldest child in the family. Everyone's quandary is explicated and each of the characters is fully developed. There seems to be no easy answer, and readers are likely to be sympathetic to all sides of the case. This is a real page-turner and frighteningly thought-provoking. The story shows evidence of thorough research and the unexpected twist at the end will surprise almost everyone. The novel does not answer many questions, but it sure raises some and will have teens thinking about possible answers long after they have finished the book. (From School Library Journal - Susan H. Woodcock)

The Pact

Adapted from Amazon.com Review

As teenagers from a rough part of Newark, New Jersey, Sampson Davis, Rameck Hunt, and George Jenkins had nothing special going for them except loving mothers (one of whom was a drug user) and above-average intelligence. Their first stroke of luck was testing into University High, one of Newark's three magnet high schools, and their second was finding each other. They were busy staying out of trouble (most of the time), and discovering the usual ways to skip class and do as little schoolwork as possible, when a recruitment presentation on Seton Hall University reignited George's childhood dream of becoming a dentist. The college was offering a tempting assistance package for minorities in its Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental Plus Program. George convinced his two friends to go to college with him. They would help each other through. None of them would be allowed to drop out and be reabsorbed by the Newark streets. --*Regina Marler*

Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister

Gregory Maguire's chilling, wonderful retelling of *Cinderella* is a study in contrasts. Love and hate, beauty and ugliness, cruelty and charity--each idea is stripped of its ethical trappings, smashed up against its opposite number, and laid bare for our examination. *Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister* begins in 17th-century Holland, where the two Fisher sisters and their mother have fled to escape a hostile England. Maguire's characters are at once more human and more fanciful than their fairy-tale originals. Plain but smart Iris and her sister, Ruth, a hulking simpleton, are dazed and terrified as their mother, Margarethe, urges them into the strange Dutch streets. Within days, purposeful Margarethe has secured the family a place in the home of an aspiring painter, where for a short time, they find happiness. (Adapted from Amazon.com – Review – Therese Littleton)

The Green Mile

Amazon.com Review

This novel taps into what Stephen King does best: character-driven storytelling. The setting is the small "death house" of a Southern prison in 1932. The charming narrator is an old man looking back on the events, decades later. Maybe it's a little too cute, maybe the pathos is laid on a little thick, but it's hard to resist the colorful personalities and simple wonders of this supernatural tale. As *Time* magazine put it, "Like the best popular art, *The Green Mile* has the courage of its cornier convictions ... the palpable sense of King's sheer, unwavering belief in his tale is what makes the novel work as well as it finally does." And it's not a bad choice for giving to someone who doesn't understand the appeal of Stephen King, because the one scene that is out-and-out gruesome can be easily skipped by the squeamish. *The Green Mile* was nominated for a 1997 Bram Stoker Award.

The Road

Adapted From Publishers Weekly; Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. Violence, in McCarthy's postapocalyptic tour de force, has been visited worldwide in the form of a "long shear of light and then a series of low concussions" that leaves cities and forests burned, birds and fish dead and the earth shrouded in gray clouds of ash. In this landscape, an unnamed man and his young son journey down a road to get to the sea. They carry blankets and scavenged food in a shopping cart, and the man is armed with a revolver loaded with his last two bullets. Beyond the ever-present possibility of starvation lies the threat of roving bands of cannibalistic thugs. The man assures the boy that the two of them are "good guys," but from the way his father treats other stray survivors the boy sees that his father has turned into an amoral survivalist, tenuously attached to the morality of the past by his fierce love for his son. McCarthy establishes himself here as the closest thing in American literature to an Old Testament prophet, trolling the blackest registers of human emotion to create a haunting and grim novel about civilization's slow death after the power goes out.

The Lovely Bones

Adapted from Publishers Weekly; Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc

Sebold has taken a grim, media-exploited subject and fashioned from it a story that is both tragic and full of light and grace. The novel begins swiftly. In the second sentence, Sebold's narrator, Susie Salmon, announces, "I was fourteen when I was murdered on December 6, 1973." Susie is taking a shortcut through a cornfield when a neighbor lures her to his hideaway. The description of the crime is chilling, but never vulgar, and Sebold maintains this delicate balance between homely and horrid as she depicts the progress of grief for Susie's family and friends. She captures the odd alliances forged and the relationships ruined: the shattered father who buries his sadness trying to gather evidence, the mother who escapes "her ruined heart, in merciful adultery." At the same time, Sebold brings to life an entire suburban community, from the mortician's son to the handsome biker dropout who quietly helps investigate Susie's murder. Much as this novel is about "the lovely bones" growing around Susie's absence, it is also full of suspense and written in lithe, resilient prose that by itself delights. Sebold's most dazzling stroke, among many bold ones, is to narrate the story from Susie's heaven (a place where wishing is having), providing the warmth of a first-person narration and the freedom of an omniscient one. It might be this that gives Sebold's novel its special flavor, for in Susie's every observation and memory of the smell of skunk or the touch of spider webs is the reminder that life is sweet and funny and surprising.

Protected Reading List

Grade Level: 11

AP Courses are to abide by their approved AP Syllabus and are not required to follow the Protected Reading List.

Standard Required Readings:

1. The Autobiography of Ben Franklin (Basal Excerpt)
2. The Crucible (Basal Text)
3. Moby Dick or Walden (Basal Excerpt)

Honors Required Readings:

1. The Autobiography of Ben Franklin (Basal Excerpt)
2. The Crucible (Basal Text)
3. Moby Dick or Walden (Basal Excerpt)

Protected Reading Choices:

Standard classes will choose one book from this list to read. Honors classes will read two books from this list. Honors students may be required to read one book as a class per the teacher's discretion, but they will have a choice to the other book they wish to read.

1. The Scarlet Letter (Hawthorne) (Lexile 1420)
2. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Twain)* (Lexile 990)
3. The Great Gatsby (Fitzgerald)* (Lexile 1070)
4. Into the Wild (Krakauer)* (Lexile 1270)
5. The Grapes of Wrath (Steinbeck)* (Lexile 680)
6. The Catcher in the Rye (Salinger)* (Lexile 790)
7. The Wizard of Oz (Baum) (Lexile 1000)
8. Their Eyes Were Watching God (Hurston)* (Lexile 1080)
9. Death of a Salesman (Miller) (Lexile 1320)
10. Tuesdays with Morrie (Albom) (Lexile 830)
11. The Rainmaker (Grisham) (Lexile 830)
12. The Things They Carried (O'Brien)* (Lexile 880)
13. No Country for Old Men (McCarthy)*
14. Ellen Foster (Gibbons) (Lexile 870)
15. Beloved (Morrison)* (Lexile 870)

*These selections may contain subject matter that may be objectionable to some students or families. Students may choose to read an alternate book from this list in lieu of any of these books.

Protected Reading Choices Book Summaries

The Scarlett Letter

America's first psychological novel, *The Scarlet Letter* is a dark tale of love, crime, and revenge set in colonial New England. It revolves around a single, forbidden act of passion that forever alters the lives of three members of a small Puritan community: Hester Prynne, an ardent and fierce woman who bears the punishment of her sin in humble silence; the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, a respected public figure who is inwardly tormented by long-hidden guilt; and the malevolent Roger Chillingworth, Hester's husband—a man who seethes with an Ahab-like lust for vengeance. The landscape of this classic novel is uniquely American, but the themes it explores are universal—the nature of sin, guilt, and penitence, the clash between our private and public selves, and the spiritual and psychological cost of living outside society. Constructed with the elegance of a Greek tragedy, *The Scarlet Letter* brilliantly illuminates the truth that lies deep within the human heart. (Adapted from the Product Description on Amazon.com)

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Huckleberry Finn had a tough life with his drunk father until an adventure with Tom Sawyer changed everything. But when Huck's dad returns and kidnaps him, he must escape down the Mississippi river with runaway slave, Jim. They encounter trouble at every turn, from floods and gunfights to armed bandits and the long arm of the law. Through it all the friends stick together - but can Huck and Tom free Jim from slavery once and for all? (Adapted from the Product Description on Amazon.com)

The Great Gatsby

Adapted from Amazon.com Review

Self-made, self-invented millionaire Jay Gatsby embodies some of Fitzgerald's--and his country's--most abiding obsessions: money, ambition, greed, and the promise of new beginnings. Gatsby's rise to glory and eventual fall from grace becomes a kind of cautionary tale about the American Dream. It's also a love story, of sorts, the narrative of Gatsby's quixotic passion for Daisy Buchanan. The pair meet five years before the novel begins, when Daisy is a legendary young Louisville beauty and Gatsby an impoverished officer. They fall in love, but while Gatsby serves overseas, Daisy marries the brutal, bullying, but extremely rich Tom Buchanan. After the war, Gatsby devotes himself blindly to the pursuit of wealth by whatever means--and to the pursuit of Daisy, which amounts to the same thing. His millions made, Gatsby buys a mansion across Long Island Sound from Daisy's patrician East Egg address, throws lavish parties, and waits for her to appear. When she does, events unfold with all the tragic inevitability of a Greek drama, with detached, cynical neighbor Nick Carraway acting as chorus throughout

Into the Wild

Amazon.com Review

"God, he was a smart kid..." So why did Christopher McCandless trade a bright future--a college education, material comfort, uncommon ability and charm--for death by starvation in an abandoned bus in the woods of Alaska? This is the question that [Jon Krakauer's](#) book tries to answer. While it doesn't—cannot—answer the question with certainty, *Into the Wild* does shed considerable light along the way. Not only about McCandless's "Alaskan odyssey," but also the forces that drive people to drop out of society and test themselves in other ways. Krakauer quotes [Wallace Stegner's](#) writing on a young man who similarly disappeared in the Utah desert in the 1930s: "At 18, in a dream, he saw himself ... wandering through the romantic waste places of the world. No man with any of the juices of boyhood in him has forgotten those dreams." *Into the Wild* shows that McCandless, while extreme, was hardly unique; the author makes the hermit into one of us, something McCandless himself could never pull off. By book's end, McCandless isn't merely a newspaper clipping, but a sympathetic, oddly magnetic personality. Whether he was "a courageous idealist, or a reckless idiot," you won't soon forget Christopher McCandless.

The Grapes of Wrath

Adapted From Library Journal

Controversial, even shocking, when it was written, the work continues to be so even today. The keen listener can hear why, because it poses fundamental questions about justice, the ownership and stewardship of the land, the role of government, power, and the very foundations of capitalist society. As history, this brings the Dust Bowl years to life in a most memorable way. Steinbeck is a master storyteller and manages to engage the listener's sympathy with this epic story. Nancy Paul, Brandon P.L., WI. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The Catcher in the Rye

Review – from Amazon.com

Novel by J.D. Salinger, published in 1951. The influential and widely acclaimed story details the two days in the life of 16-year-old Holden Caulfield after he has been expelled from prep school. Confused and disillusioned, he searches for truth and rails against the "phoniness" of the adult world. He ends up exhausted and emotionally ill, in a psychiatrist's office. After he recovers from his breakdown, Holden relates his experiences to the reader.

The Wizard of Oz

Amazon.com Review

In spite of the fact that L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) is one of the most popular stories in America, relatively few people have actually read the book. It's well worth the effort! Young readers expecting rainbows, Munchkin songs, and wicked witches with burning brooms will instead find a complex country populated with mocking Hammerhead men, dainty people made out of china, and fierce monsters with heads of tigers and bodies of bears. Through the fantastic land of Oz ramble Dorothy and her trusty companions--Toto, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and the Lion--each seeking his or her heart's desire. Although the premise of the book and the 1939 movie is the same, the book--as so often is the case--delivers a far more subtle and intricate plot. A child's imagination will run rampant in these pages as one extraordinary creature after another leads the motley crew into strange and magical adventures. --*Emilie Coulter*

Their Eyes Were Watching God

Their Eyes Were Watching God, an American classic, is the 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 70 years. This poetic, graceful love story, rooted in Black folk traditions and steeped in mythic realism, celebrates boldly and brilliantly African-American culture and heritage. And in a powerful, mesmerizing narrative, it pays quiet tribute to a Black woman who, though constricted by the times, still demanded to be heard. (Adapted from the Product Description on Amazon.com)

Death of a Salesman

Adapted from Amazon.com Review

Arthur Miller's 1949 *Death of a Salesman* has sold 11 million copies, and Willy Loman didn't make all those sales on a smile and a shoeshine. This play is the genuine article--it's got the goods on the human condition, all packed into a day in the life of one self-deluded, self-promoting, self-defeating soul. It's a sturdy bridge between kitchen-sink realism and spectral abstraction, the facts of particular hard times and universal themes. --*Tim Appelo*

The Rainmaker

Amazon.com Review

Rudy Baylor, a new law school graduate, once dreamed of the good life as a corporate attorney. Now he faces joblessness and bankruptcy--unless he can win an insurance case against a heavyweight team of lawyers, a case that starts small but mushrooms into a frightening war of nerve and legal skill that could cost Rudy not only his future, but also his life.

Ellen Foster

In *Ellen Foster*, the title character is an 11-year-old orphan who refers to herself as "old Ellen," an appellation that is disturbingly apt. Ellen is an old woman in a child's body; her frail, unhappy mother dies, her abusive father alternately neglects her and makes advances on her, and she is shuttled from one uncaring relative's home to another before she finally takes matters into her own hands and finds herself a place to belong. There is something almost Dickensian about Ellen's tribulations; like *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* or a host of other literary child heroes, Ellen is at the mercy of predatory adults, with only her own wit and courage--and the occasional kindness of others--to help her through. That she does, in fact, survive her childhood and even rise above it is the book's bittersweet victory. (Adapted from Amazon.com review)

Tuesdays with Morrie

This true story about the love between a spiritual mentor and his pupil has soared to the bestseller list for many reasons. For starters: it reminds us of the affection and gratitude that many of us still feel for the significant mentors of our past. It also plays out a fantasy many of us have entertained: what would it be like to look those people up again, tell them how much they meant to us, maybe even resume the mentorship? Plus, we meet Morrie Schwartz--a one of a kind professor, whom the author describes as looking like a cross between a biblical prophet and Christmas elf. And finally we are privy to intimate moments of Morrie's final days as he lies dying from a terminal illness. Even on his deathbed, this twinkling-eyed mensch manages to teach us all about living robustly and fully. Kudos to author and acclaimed sports columnist Mitch Albom for telling this universally touching story with such grace and humility. (Amazon.com Review – Gail Hudson)

Beloved

Product Description

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is a spellbinding and dazzlingly innovative portrait of a woman haunted by the past. Sethe was born a slave and escaped to Ohio, but eighteen years later she is still not free. She has borne the unthinkable and not gone mad, yet she is still held captive by memories of Sweet Home, the beautiful farm where so many hideous things happened. Meanwhile Sethe's house has long been troubled by the angry, destructive ghost of her baby, who died nameless and whose tombstone is engraved with a single word: *Beloved*. Sethe works at beating back the past, but it makes itself heard and felt incessantly in her memory and in the lives of those around her. When a mysterious teenage girl arrives, calling herself Beloved, Sethe's terrible secret explodes into the present. Combining the visionary power of legend with the unassailable truth of history, Morrison's unforgettable novel is one of the great and enduring works of American literature.

The Things They Carried

Adapted from Amazon.com Review

A finalist for both the 1990 Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award. Vietnam is O'Brien's theme, but in this book he seems less interested in the war itself than in the myriad different perspectives from which he depicts it. The narrator of most of these stories is "Tim"; yet O'Brien freely admits that many of the events he chronicles in this collection never really happened. He never killed a man as "Tim" does in "The Man I Killed," and unlike Tim in "Ambush," he has no daughter named Kathleen. But just because a thing never happened doesn't make it any less true. In "On the Rainy River," the character Tim O'Brien responds to his draft notice by driving north, to the Canadian border where he spends six days in a deserted lodge in the company of an old man named Elroy while he wrestles with the choice between dodging the draft or going to war. The real Tim O'Brien never drove north, never found himself in a fishing boat 20 yards off the Canadian shore with a decision to make. The real Tim O'Brien quietly boarded the bus to Sioux Falls and was inducted into the United States Army. But the truth of "On the Rainy River" lies not in facts but in the genuineness of the experience it depicts: both Tims went to a war they didn't believe in; both considered themselves cowards for doing so. Every story in *The Things They Carried* speaks another truth that Tim O'Brien learned in Vietnam; it is this blurred line between truth and reality, fact and fiction, that makes his book unforgettable. --Alix Wilber

No Country for Old Men

Adapted from From Publishers Weekly

In 1980 southwest Texas, Llewelyn Moss, hunting antelope near the Rio Grande, stumbles across several dead men, a bunch of heroin and \$2.4 million in cash. The bulk of the novel is a gripping man-on-the-run sequence relayed in terse, masterful prose as Moss, who's taken the money, tries to evade Wells, an ex-Special Forces agent employed by a powerful cartel, and Chigurh, an icy psychopathic murderer armed with a cattle gun and a dangerous philosophy of justice. Also concerned about Moss's whereabouts is Sheriff Bell, an aging lawman struggling with his sense that there's a new breed of man (embodied in Chigurh) whose destructive power he simply cannot match. In a series of thoughtful first-person passages interspersed throughout, Sheriff Bell laments the changing world, wrestles with an uncomfortable memory from his service in WWII and—a soft ray of light in a book so steeped in bloodshed—rejoices in the great good fortune of his marriage. While the action of the novel thrills, it's the sensitivity and wisdom of Sheriff Bell that makes the book a profound meditation on the battle between good and evil and the roles choice and chance play in the shaping of a life. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Protected Reading List

Grade Level: 12

AP Courses are to abide by their approved AP Syllabus and are not required to follow the Protected Reading List.

Standard Required Readings

1. Macbeth (Basal)
2. Beowulf (Basal excerpt)
3. The Canterbury Tales (Basal excerpt)
4. Gulliver's Travels (Basal excerpt)

Honors Required Readings:

1. Macbeth (Basal)
2. Beowulf (Basal excerpt)
3. The Canterbury Tales (Basal excerpt)
4. Gulliver's Travels (Basal excerpt)

Protected Optional Reading List Recommendations:

Standard classes will choose one book from this list to read. Honors classes will read two books from this list. Honors students may be required to read one book as a class per the teacher's discretion, but they will have a choice to the other book they wish to read.

1. 1984 (Orwell)* (Lexile 1090)
2. Heart of Darkness (Conrad)* (Lexile 1050)
3. Brave New World (Huxley)* (Lexile 870)
4. The Hobbit (Tolkein) (Lexile 1000)
5. The Importance of Being Earnest (Wilde)
6. Pride and Prejudice (Austen) (Lexile 1100)
7. Wuthering Heights (Bronte) (Lexile 1380)
8. Frankenstein (Shelley) (Lexile 1170)
9. Dating Hamlet: Ophelia's Story (Fiedler) (Lexile 860)
10. Angela's Ashes (McCourt)* (Lexile 1110)
11. Grendel (Gardner)* (Lexile 920)
12. The Mousetrap and Witness for the Prosecution **or** Murder on the Orient Express (Lexile 640) (Christie)
13. The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (Adams) (Lexile 1000)
14. The Other Boleyn Girl (Gregory)*
15. Maus I and Maus II :A Survivor's Tale (Spiegelman)

*These selections may contain subject matter that may be objectionable to some students or families. Students may choose to read an alternate book from this list in lieu of any of these books.

Protected Reading Choices Book Summaries

1984

Adapted from the Product Description from Amazon.com

Thought Police. Big Brother. Orwellian. These words have entered our vocabulary because of George Orwell's classic dystopian novel, *1984*. The story of one man's nightmare odyssey as he pursues a forbidden love affair through a world ruled by warring states and a power structure that controls not only information but also individual thought and memory, *1984* is a prophetic, haunting tale. More relevant than ever before, *1984* exposes the worst crimes imaginable—the destruction of truth, freedom, and individuality.

Heart of Darkness

Adapted from a review from Amazon.com

The story reflects the physical and psychological shock Conrad himself experienced in 1890, when he worked briefly in the Belgian Congo. The narrator, Marlow, describes a journey he took on an African river. Assigned by an ivory company to take command of a cargo boat stranded in the interior, Marlow makes his way through the treacherous forest, witnessing the brutalization of the natives by white traders and hearing tantalizing stories of a Mr. Kurtz, the company's most successful representative. He reaches Kurtz's compound in a remote outpost only to see a row of human heads mounted on poles. In this alien context, unbound by the strictures of his own culture, Kurtz has exchanged his soul for a bloody sovereignty, but a mortal illness is bringing his reign of terror to a close. As Marlow transports him downriver, Kurtz delivers an arrogant and empty explanation of his deeds as a visionary quest.

Brave New World

From Library Journal; *Pat Griffith, Schlow*, Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley is a classic science fiction work that continues to be a significant warning to our society today. Tony Britton, the reader, does an excellent job of portraying clinical detachment as the true nature of the human incubators is revealed. The tone lightens during the vacation to the wilderness and the contrast is even more striking. Each character is given a separate personality by Britton's voices. As the story moves from clinical detachment to the human interest of Bernard, the nonconformist, and John, the "Savage," listeners are drawn more deeply into the plot. Finally, the reasoned tones of the Controller explain away all of John's arguments against the civilization, leading to John's death as he cannot reconcile his beliefs to theirs.

The Importance of Being Earnest

Adapted from the Product Description from Amazon.com

The rapid-fire wit and eccentric characters of *The Importance of Being Earnest* have made it a mainstay of the high school curriculum for decades. Cecily Cardew and Gwendolen Fairfax are both in love with the same mythical suitor. Jack Worthing has wooed Gwendolen as Ernest while Algernon has also posed as Ernest to win the heart of Jack's ward, Cecily. When all four arrive at Jack's country home on the same weekend—the "rivals" to fight for Ernest's undivided attention and the "Ernests" to claim their beloveds—pandemonium breaks loose. Only a senile nursemaid and an old, discarded hand-bag can save the day!

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

Join Douglas Adams's hapless hero Arthur Dent as he travels the galaxy with his intrepid pal Ford Prefect, getting into horrible messes and generally wreaking hilarious havoc. Dent is grabbed from Earth moments before a cosmic construction team obliterates the planet to build a freeway. You'll never read funnier science fiction; Adams is a master of intelligent satire, barbed wit, and comedic dialogue. *The Hitchhiker's Guide* is rich in comedic detail and thought-provoking situations and stands up to multiple reads. Adapted from Amazon.com Review

Pride and Prejudice

Product Description from Amazon.com

Few have failed to be charmed by the witty and independent spirit of Elizabeth Bennet. Her early determination to dislike Mr. Darcy is a prejudice only matched by the folly of his arrogant pride. Their first impressions give way to true feelings in a comedy profoundly concerned with happiness and how it might be achieved.

The Hobbit

The hobbit-hole in question belongs to one Bilbo Baggins, an upstanding member of a "little people, about half our height, and smaller than the bearded dwarves." He is, like most of his kind, well off, well fed, and best pleased when sitting by his own fire with a pipe, a glass of good beer, and a meal to look forward to. Certainly this particular hobbit is the last person one would expect to see set off on a hazardous journey; indeed, when Gandalf the Grey stops by one morning, "looking for someone to share in an adventure," Baggins fervently wishes the wizard elsewhere. No such luck, however; soon 13 fortune-seeking dwarves have arrived on the hobbit's doorstep in search of a burglar, and before he can even grab his hat or an umbrella, Bilbo Baggins is swept out his door and into a dangerous adventure. The dwarves' goal is to return to their ancestral home in the Lonely Mountains and reclaim a stolen fortune from the dragon Smaug. Along the way, they and their reluctant companion meet giant spiders, hostile elves, ravaging wolves--and, most perilous of all, a subterranean creature named Gollum from whom Bilbo wins a magical ring in a riddling contest. It is from this life-or-death game in the dark that J.R.R. Tolkien's masterwork, [The Lord of the Rings](#), would eventually spring. Though *The Hobbit* is lighter in tone than the trilogy that follows, it has, like Bilbo Baggins himself, unexpected iron at its core. Don't be fooled by its fairy-tale demeanor; this is very much a story for adults, though older children will enjoy it, too. By the time Bilbo returns to his comfortable hobbit-hole, he is a different person altogether, well primed for the bigger adventures to come--and so is the reader. (*Amazon.com* --Alix Wilbe)

Wuthering Heights

Product Description from Amazon.com

Emily Brontë's only novel, this tale portrays Catherine and Heathcliff, their all-encompassing love for one another, and how this unresolved passion eventually destroys them both, leading Heathcliff to shun and abuse society. First published in 1847 under the pseudonym Ellis Bell, *Wuthering Heights* is considered to be a classic of English literature.

Frankenstein

Product Description from Amazon.com

Set largely in the haunting Alps of mid-nineteenth century Europe, author Mary Shelley brings to life a gothic tale of horror and humanity. In *Frankenstein*, Shelley chronicles the story of a young physician obsessed with the reanimation of human life. Driven to the brink of insanity in this quest, young Frankenstein fails to give thought to the moral or ethical implications of his actions and when the deed is done finds himself repulsed by the obscenity he has wrought. Abandoned by its "father", the nameless creature is hardened - twisted - by a world in which it has no place. Laying the blame for its blasphemous existence on Frankenstein himself, the beast ultimately finds purpose in the calculated destruction of his creator. Written in 1816, this now classic tale examines the isolation of its two protagonists - creator and creature. Through the intertwined lives of these two characters it profoundly examines human emotions of rejection, isolation and suffering while simultaneously contemplating man's role within the larger scheme of creation.

Dating Hamlet: Ophelia's Story

Adapted from School Library Journal

Ophelia is generally regarded as an unfortunate, weak character. She is known as the young woman driven mad by her love for Hamlet and to despair over her father's murder. The anger unleashed by her suicide leads her brother to agree to fight Hamlet with a poisoned rapier, a precipitating factor in the ultimate death of every major character in one of Shakespeare's great tragedies. However, Fiedler's Ophelia is a woman in love, willing to stand by her man, feign madness, and do whatever is necessary to force Claudius to admit to his despicable crimes. *Dating Hamlet* is an intelligent, inventive roller-coaster ride for teens who know the original story. They will revel in the twists that Fiedler adds to explain the characters' actions. *Betsy Fraser, Calgary Public Library, Canada*. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grendel

Amazon.com Review

Grendel is a beautiful and heartbreaking modern retelling of the Beowulf epic from the point of view of the monster, Grendel, the villain of the 8th-century Anglo-Saxon epic. This book benefits from both of Gardner's careers: in addition to his work as a novelist, Gardner was a noted professor of medieval literature and a scholar of ancient languages.

Angela's Ashes

Amazon.com Review

"Worse than the ordinary miserable childhood is the miserable Irish childhood," writes Frank McCourt in *Angela's Ashes*. "Worse yet is the miserable Irish Catholic childhood." Welcome, then, to the pinnacle of the miserable Irish Catholic childhood. Born in Brooklyn in 1930 to recent Irish immigrants Malachy and Angela McCourt, Frank grew up in Limerick after his parents returned to Ireland because of poor prospects in America. It turns out that prospects weren't so great back in the old country either--not with Malachy for a father. A chronically unemployed and nearly unemployable alcoholic, he appears to be the model on which many of our more insulting clichés about drunken Irish manhood are based. Mix in abject poverty and frequent death and illness and you have all the makings of a truly difficult early life. Fortunately, in McCourt's able hands it also has all the makings for a compelling memoir.

The Mousetrap and Witness for the Prosecution

The Mousetrap (Wikipedia Plot Summary)

The story is about a young couple, Mollie and Giles Ralston, who have started up a new hotel in the converted Monkswell Manor. They are snowed in together with four guests and an additional traveller, who ran his car into a snowdrift. Detective Sergeant Trotter arrives on skis to inform the group that he believes a murderer is on his way to the hotel, following the death of Miss Maureen Lyon in London. When one of the guests – Mrs Boyle – is killed, they realise that the murderer is already there. The suspicion falls first on Christopher Wren, an erratic young man who fits the description of the supposed murderer. However, it quickly transpires that the killer could be any one of the guests, or even the hosts themselves.

Witness for the Prosecution (Adapted from the Wikipedia Plot Summary)

Leonard Vole is arrested for the murder of his elderly friend Emily French, a woman who depended on his advice in managing her money. Because Emily made him her principal heir, not aware that he was a married man, things look bad for Leonard's defense. But the final blow comes when his wife, Romaine, agrees to testify, not in Leonard's defense, but as a witness for the prosecution.

Murder on The Orient Express

Adapted from Amazon.com Product Description

Agatha Christie's most famous murder mystery appeals to the latest generation of Agatha Christie fans and book lovers. Just after midnight, a snowdrift stops the Orient Express in its tracks. The luxurious train is surprisingly full for the time of the year, but by the morning it is one passenger fewer. An American tycoon lies dead in his compartment, stabbed a dozen times, his door locked from the inside. Isolated and with a killer in their midst, detective Hercule Poirot must identify the murderer -- in case he or she decides to strike again.

The Other Boleyn Girl

From Library Journal; Kathy Piehl; Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Before Henry VIII ever considered making Anne Boleyn his wife, her older sister, Mary, was his mistress. Historical novelist Gregory (Virgin Earth) uses the perspective of this "other Boleyn girl" to reveal the rivalries and intrigues swirling through England. The sisters and their brother George were raised with one goal: to advance the Howard family's interests, especially against the Seymours. So when Mary catches the king's fancy, her family orders her to abandon the husband they had chosen. She bears Henry two children, including a son, but Anne's desire to be queen drives her with ruthless intensity, alienating family and foes. As Henry grows more desperate for a legitimate son and Anne strives to replace Catherine as queen, the social fabric weakens. Mary abandons court life to live with a new husband and her children in the countryside, but love and duty bring her back to Anne time and again. We share Mary's helplessness as Anne loses favor, and everyone abandons her amid accusations of adultery, incest, and witchcraft. Even the Boleyn parents won't intervene for their children. Gregory captures not only the dalliances of court but the panorama of political and religious clashes throughout Europe. She controls a complicated narrative and dozens of characters without faltering, in a novel sure to please public library fans of historical fiction.

Maus I and Maus II (Graphic Novel)

Product Description from Amazon.com

A son struggles to come to terms with the horrific story of his parents and their experiences during the Holocaust and in postwar America, in an omnibus edition of Spiegelman's two-part, Pulitzer Prize-winning best-seller.