

English 11

Summer Reading Overview

Dear Students,

Like in years past, you will be required to read a book this summer that aligns with the essential question for English 11, which is: **How do we become ourselves?** As you read, you will want to think critically about how this concept of identity is prevalent and how the person's sense of self develops over the course of the book.

Your book must be an autobiography or a memoir. Since you have a choice of text and topic, it is important to select something that interests you. Attached is a list of titles we personally recommend that will be of interest to you.

Within the first week (or two) of school, be prepared to take an assessment on your book. Be sure to fill in the attached organizer to record your thoughts when you read this summer. That way, you will be better prepared in the fall.

Happy Reading!

Sincerely,

The 11th Grade Teachers

Below are suggested books handpicked by your 11th grade teachers. We encourage you to choose a book of interest to you, whether it be one of the ones below or one of your choice.

***Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt**

The author chronicles his impoverished childhood in Limerick, Ireland in the 1930s and 1940s, describing his father's alcoholism and talent for storytelling; the challenges and tragedies his mother faced, including the loss of three children.

***The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* by Benjamin Franklin**

In "The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin" the life story of one of the most important figures in American history is recounted. Franklin was more than just a founding father of the country; he was also a prolific writer, tradesman, scientist, diplomat, and philosopher. His autobiography tells the story of his life from childhood through the year 1757 where it ends uncompleted. Largely absent from the work is much discussion regarding his role in the American Revolution and the founding of the United States. Readers will find instead more of a focus on his own personal life and exposition of his moral philosophy.

***The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Malcolm X**

In the searing pages of this classic autobiography, originally published in 1964, Malcolm X, the Muslim leader, firebrand, and anti-integrationist, tells the extraordinary story of his life and the growth of the Black Muslim movement. His fascinating perspective on the lies and limitations of the American Dream, and the inherent racism in a society that denies its nonwhite citizens the opportunity to dream, gives extraordinary insight into the most urgent issues of our own time.

***An Autobiography: The Story of my Experiments With Truth* by Mahatma Gandhi**

This is an autobiography in which Indian leader Mohandas K. Gandhi shares the story of his life and the development of his concept of active nonviolent resistance which he employed in the struggle for the independence of India.

***Beautiful Boy: A Father's Journey Through his Son's Addiction* by David Sheff**

Journalist David Sheff tells the story of his son Nic's happy early childhood, the transformation wrought by Nic's addiction to methamphetamine, and his own obsession with Nic's well-being. The plot contains profanity and drug use.

***The Burn Journals* by Brent Runyon**

Brent Runyon was 14 years old when he set himself on fire. This book describes that devastating suicide attempt, his recovery and return home, and the frightening prospect of entering high school.

***The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank**

A thirteen-year-old Dutch-Jewish girl records her impressions of the two years she and seven others spent hiding from the Nazis before they were discovered and taken to concentration camps. The text contains mild profanity.

***Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert**

In her early thirties, Elizabeth Gilbert had everything a modern American woman was supposed to want—husband, country home, successful career—but instead of feeling happy and fulfilled, she was consumed by panic and confusion. This wise and rapturous book is the story of how she left behind all these outward marks of success, and set out to explore three different aspects of her nature, against the backdrop of three different cultures: pleasure in Italy, devotion in India, and on the Indonesian island of Bali, a balance between worldly enjoyment and divine transcendence.

***Girl, Interrupted* by Susanna Kaysen**

In 1967, after a session with a psychiatrist she'd never seen before, eighteen-year-old Susanna was put in a taxi and sent to a psychiatric hospital. Susanna's memoir encompasses horror and razor-edged perception.

***A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* by Dave Eggers**

In this memoir, the author discusses the unrelated deaths of his parents within months of one another, and tells how he came to take responsibility for his eight-year-old brother. The text contains profanity, sexual situations, and graphic violence.

***Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer**

An account of Jon Krakauer's climb of Mount Everest in one of the most deadliest seasons in the history of Everest. The text contains profanity and drug use.

***The Liar's Club: A Memoir* by Mary Karr**

The Liars' Club took the world by storm and raised the art of the memoir to an entirely new level, bringing about a dramatic revival of the form. Karr's comic childhood in an east Texas oil town brings us characters as darkly hilarious as any of J. D. Salinger's—a hard-drinking daddy, a sister who can talk down the sheriff at age twelve, and an oft-married mother whose accumulated secrets threaten to destroy them all. This unsentimental and profoundly moving account of an apocalyptic childhood is as “funny, lively, and un-put-downable” (*USA Today*) today as it ever was.

***Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* by Nelson Mandela**

Nelson Mandela is one of the great moral and political leaders of our time: an international hero whose lifelong dedication to the fight against racial oppression in South Africa won him the Nobel Peace Prize and the presidency of his country. Since his triumphant release in 1990 from more than a quarter-century of imprisonment, Mandela has been at the center of the most compelling and inspiring political drama in the world. As president of the African National Congress and head of South Africa's anti-apartheid movement, he was instrumental in moving the nation toward multiracial government and majority rule. He is revered everywhere as a vital force in the fight for human rights and racial equality. Here for the first time, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela tells the extraordinary story of his life—an epic of struggle, setback, renewed hope, and ultimate triumph.

***Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Frederick Douglass**

Considered as one of the most famous of all the slave narratives ever written, the story recounts Douglass's life from early childhood growing up in Maryland as a slave to his eventual escape to the North. Douglass, former slave turned abolitionist, tells of his life with various owners depicting the cruelty that he himself endured and was witness to. The work of Frederick Douglass would be an early and inspirational voice in the abolitionist movement, one which would give hope to the cause and which would ultimately help to bring about an end to that brutally unjust chapter of American history known as slavery.

***On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* by Stephen King**

King's advice is grounded in his vivid memories from childhood through his emergence as a writer, from his struggling early career to his near-fatal accident in 1999 -- and how the inextricable link between writing and living spurred his recovery.

***Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom**

This book is a chronicle of the time the author spent with his mentor, his former college professor, in the last months of the older man's life. Their rekindled relationship turned into one final "class": lessons in how to live.

***Twelve Years a Slave* by Solomon Northup**

“Twelve Years a Slave” is Solomon Northup's harrowing memoir of being tricked into slavery. Northup, who was a free African American living in Saratoga, New York, had no idea what was in store for him when he was approached by two circus promoters with an offer of a brief high paying job as a musician with their traveling circus. A skilled violinist, Solomon gladly accepted the offer and traveled with the two men to Washington, D.C. When he awoke one morning drugged and bound in a cell for slaves he discovered the men's true intentions of selling him into slavery. What followed was twelve years of bondage during which Northup experienced the gamut of both kindness and cruelty afforded to slaves in the Southern United States just prior to the American Civil War.

***A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail* by Bill Bryson**

After twenty years in Britain, Bill Bryson decided to reacquaint himself with his native country by walking the 2,100 mile Appalachian Trail.

***Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* by Cheryl Strayed**

Cheryl Strayed recounts the impact of her mother's death on her life and chronicles her experiences hiking the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert and into Washington State. The text contains profanity and sexual situations.

II. Divide your book into three sections: beginning, middle, and end. As you read, **record at least 3 quotes** from each section that provide **evidence of the identity progression of the subject of your memoir or autobiography**. **Consider how to logically divide the life experiences your subject shares in his/her memoir or autobiography.**

<p>Quote: Record exact line from text with quotation marks & page number</p>	<p>Explanation: Describe the situation (who's involved/what's happening) Why is it important/what does it show us about the subject's identity development?</p>
BEGINNING	
1	
2	
3	
MIDDLE	
1	

2	
3	
END	
1	
2	
3	