

1984

Orwell, George

Winston Smith is a seemingly average worker of the Ministry of Truth who begins to let his mind wander, an act punishable by death. He purchases a journal where he begins to express his true feeling towards the Party and Big Brother, the ultimate source of power. Even more dangerous than keeping a diary, Winston forms an ongoing love affair which he cleverly hides well. All of these acts, if he is caught, could potentially put him in Room 101, the most terrible punishment ever created. Newspeak, doublethink, thoughtcrime--in 1984, George Orwell creates a whole vocabulary of words concerning totalitarian control that have since passed into our common vocabulary. More importantly, he has portrayed a chillingly credible dystopia. Contains sexual situations and moderate violence.

50 Short Science Fiction Tales

Asimov, Issac (Editor) and Conklin, Groff

Visit a world where robots strain to remember the existence of the humans who created them; hear the tantalizingly brief report of a man who returns from a trip to the future; see the snake-armed Thing that emerges from the minds of the people who conjure it. Meet a souvenir hunter in the Thirtieth Century and a schoolgirl who tries to cope with the teaching methods of the Twenty-second Century. Share the terror of an astronaut in a "haunted" space suit and the dilemma of a wife whose husband knows a common chemical formula for destroying the earth. In short, feel the impact, the originality, and the uncanny atmosphere created by these science fiction experts not once-- but fifty times.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The

Twain, Mark

Recounts the adventures of a young boy and an escaped slave as they travel down the Mississippi River on a raft. Hilariously picaresque, epic in scope, alive with the poetry and vigor of the American people, Mark Twain's story about a young boy and his journey down the Mississippi was the first great novel to speak in a truly American voice. Contains coarse racial language.

Alas Babylon

Frank, Pat

This book is based in the American South in 1960 during the height of the Cold War. Randy Bragg, descendant of an old Florida family, gets a heads-up from his career Air Force brother and prepares his family and his town for when "the button gets pushed." The residents of Fort Repose, Florida learn to adapt to the aftermath of the nuclear holocaust, providing a realistic account of what may have happened. Contains mildly violent situations.

Alive

Read, Piers Paul

Time has not diminished the drama of the tale of the Uruguayan rugby team whose plane crashed in the Andes mountains. Of the forty five people on the plane at the time of the crash, sixteen came down from the mountain about seventy days later with a saga of survival not easily forgotten. It is an account of human endurance that is thought provoking and compelling, a quest to reconcile physical needs with the spiritual. It is, above all, a riveting testament to life.

All Quiet on the Western Front

Remarque, Erich Maria

Paul Baumer enlisted with his classmates in the German army of World War I. Youthful and enthusiastic, they become soldiers. Despite what they have learned, they break into pieces under the first bombardment in the trenches. The intense violence of war is realistically portrayed throughout the book. As horrible war plods on year after year, Paul holds fast to a single vow: to fight against the principles of hate that meaninglessly pits young men of the same generation but different uniforms against each other--if only he can come out of the war alive. Contains violent situations.

All the Pretty Horses

McCarthy, Cormac

The national bestseller and the first volume in Cormac McCarthy's Border Trilogy, *All the Pretty Horses* is the tale of John Grady Cole, who at sixteen finds himself at the end of a long line of Texas ranchers, cut off from the only life he has ever imagined for himself. With two companions, he sets off for Mexico on a sometimes idyllic, sometimes comic journey to a place where dreams are paid for in blood. Contains moderate violence, sexual situations and coarse language.

Andromeda Strain

Crichton, Michael

Some biologists speculate that if we ever make contact with extra terrestrials, those life forms are likely to be--like most life on earth--one-celled or smaller creatures, more comparable to bacteria than little green men. And even though such organisms would not likely be able to harm humans, the possibility exists that first contact might be our last. That's the scientific supposition that Michael Crichton formulates and follows out to its conclusion in his excellent debut novel, *The Andromeda Strain*.

Animal Farm

Orwell, George

This novel is a satirical allegory of the Russian Revolution, particularly directed against Stalin's Russia. Led by the pigs, the animals on Mr. Jones's farm revolt against their human masters. After their victory they decide to run the farm themselves on egalitarian principles. Inspired by the example of Boxer, the hardworking horse, the cooperation prospers. The pigs become corrupted by power however, and a new tyranny is established under the pig Napoleon (Stalin). "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." Napoleon says, as Snowball (Trotsky), an idealist, is driven out.

Annie John

Kincaid, Jamaica

Kincaid's second book, *Annie John*, is comprised of short stories that first appeared in The New Yorker. This coming-of-age story remains Kincaid's best-known work. Through Annie, Kincaid has brilliantly brought girlhood in the West Indies to literature as a masterful work of art. That art is a prose blend of European, American, and Caribbean folk forms of expression. The result is an effective rendering of a girl's struggle to discover her own identity. Annie is a girl growing up in an idyllic garden setting. At first she is the sole figure in that Eden— she has only her parents and Miss Maynard to interact with—and she maintains her sense of singularity when she finally begins mixing with others. Her omnipotent mother keeps the powers of the world and of death at a distance. Gradually, however, her mother introduces death and separation in order to mature Annie and prepare her for the world. The story of the mother creating the daughter is not unlike the works of Mary Shelley (*Frankenstein*) or John Milton (*Paradise Lost*) in the sense that the created becomes more than the creator intended. Contains sexual references."

Anthem

Rand, Ayn

Rand examines a frightening future in which individuals have no name, no independence, and no values. Equality 7-2521 lives in the dark ages of the future where all decisions are made by committee, all people live in collectives, and all traces of individualism have been wiped out. Despite such a restrictive environment, the spark of individual thought and freedom still burns in him—a passion which he has been taught to call sinful. In a purely egalitarian world, Equality 7-2521 dares to stand apart from the herd--to think and choose for himself, to discover electricity, and to love the woman of his choice. This book was selected for its relevant themes and for the inclusion of a piece of science fiction in the course.

Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man

Johnson, James Weldon

Johnson's theme of moral cowardice sets his tragic story of a multiracial man in the United States above other sentimental narratives. The unnamed narrator, the offspring of a black mother and white father, tells of his coming-of-age at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. Light-skinned enough to pass for white but emotionally tied to his mother's heritage, he ends up a failure in his own eyes after he chooses to follow the easier path while witnessing a white mob set fire to a black man. Contains sexual references, violent situations and some coarse racial language.

Bean Trees, The

Kingsolver, Barbara

Feisty Marietta Greer changes her name to "Taylor" when her car runs out of gas in Taylorville, Ill. By the time she reaches Oklahoma, this strong-willed young Kentucky native with a quick tongue and an open mind is catapulted into a surprising new life. Taylor leaves home in a beat-up '55 Volkswagen bug, on her way to nowhere in particular, savoring her freedom. But when a forlorn Cherokee woman drops a baby in Taylor's passenger seat and asks her to take it, she does. Taylor playfully names her little foundling "Turtle," because she clings with an unrelenting, reptilian grip; at the same time, Taylor aches at the thought of the silent, staring child's past suffering. With Turtle in tow, Taylor lands in Tucson, Arizona, with two flat tires and decides to stay. Taylor finds that motherhood, responsibility and independence are thorny, if welcome, gifts. Contains mildly violent situations.

Bell Jar

Plath, Sylvia

The Bell Jar chronicles the crack-up of Esther Greenwood: brilliant, beautiful, enormously talented, and successful, but slowly going under — maybe for the last time. Esther also struggles to determine what it takes to be an independent woman and still seek love. Sylvia Plath masterfully draws the reader into Esther's breakdown with such intensity that Esther's insanity becomes completely real and even rational, as probable and accessible an experience as going to the movies. Such deep penetration into the dark and harrowing corners of the psyche is an extraordinary accomplishment and has made *The Bell Jar* a haunting American classic. Contains sexual situations.

Beloved

Morrison, Toni

This is the story--set in post-Civil War Ohio--of Sethe, an escaped slave who has risked death in order to wrench herself from a living death; who has lost a husband and buried a child; who has borne the unthinkable and not gone mad: a woman of "iron eyes and backbone to match." Sethe's struggle to keep the apparition of her daughter Beloved from gaining full possession of her present--and to throw off the long, dark legacy of her past--is at the center of this profoundly affecting and startling novel. But its intensity and resonance of feeling, and the boldness of its narrative, lift it beyond its particulars so that it speaks to our experience as an entire nation with a past of both abominable and ennobling circumstance. Contains violent situations.

Black Boy

Wright, Richard

Black Boy is a classic of American autobiography, a subtly crafted narrative of Richard Wright's journey from innocence to experience in the Jim Crow South. An enduring story of one young man's coming of age during a particular time and place, *Black Boy* remains a seminal text in our history about what it means to be a man, black, and Southern in America. Contains moderate violence and coarse language.

Brave New World

Huxley, Aldous

"Community, Identity, Stability" is the motto of Aldous Huxley's utopian World State. Here everyone consumes daily grams of soma to fight depression, babies are born in laboratories, and the most popular form of entertainment is a "Feelie," a movie that stimulates the senses of sight, hearing, and touch. Though there is no violence and everyone is provided for, Bernard Marx feels something is missing and senses his relationship with a young woman has the potential to be much more than the confines of their existence allow. Contains mild drug and sexual references.

Breaking Through

Jimenez, Francisco

Francisco Jimenez continues the moving tale of his early youth begun with a dozen autobiographical short stories in *The Circuit*. *Breaking Through* chronicles the author's teenage years. At the age of fourteen, Francisco and his family are caught by la migra (immigration officers) and forced to leave their California home but soon find their way back. The author explores the prejudice and challenges they face while also relaying universal adolescent experiences of school, dances, and romances.

Call of the Wild, The

London, Jack

Jack London's masterpiece tells the gripping tale of a dog named Buck who is wrenched out of his life of ease and luxury to become a sled dog in Alaska. Drawing on his wolf heritage, Buck must fight for survival in an alien environment.

Catcher in the Rye, The

Salinger, J.D.

Since his debut in 1951 in *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. His constant wry observations about what he encounters, from teachers to phonies, capture the essence of the eternal teenage experience of alienation. Contains strong coarse language, sexual references, drug references, and mildly violent situations.

Chocolate War, The

Cormier, Robert

A high school freshman discovers the devastating consequences of refusing to join in the school's annual fund raising drive and arousing the wrath of the school bullies. Contains some sexual situations and moderate violence.

Chosen, The

Potok, Chaim

In 1940s Brooklyn, New York, an accident throws Reuven Malter and Danny Saunders together. Despite their differences (Reuven is a Modern Orthodox Jew with an intellectual, Zionist father; Danny is the brilliant son and rightful heir to a Hasidic rebbe), the young men form a deep friendship. Together they negotiate adolescence, family conflicts, the crisis of faith when Holocaust stories begin to emerge in the U.S., loss, love, and the journey to adulthood. The intellectual and spiritual clashes between fathers, between son and father, and between the two young men provide a unique backdrop for this exploration of fathers, sons, faith, loyalty, and, ultimately, the power of love.

Circuit, The

Jimenez, Francisco

Francisco Jimenez has created a moving autobiography that some critics have compared to John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. The story begins in Mexico when the author is very young and his parents inform him that they are going on a very long trip to "El Norte." What follows is a series of stories of the family's unending migration from one farm to another as they search for the next harvesting job in rural California.

Complete Stories, The

O'Connor, Flannery

The publication of this extraordinary volume of thirty-one stories firmly established Flannery O'Connor's monumental contribution to American fiction. Taken together, these stories reveal a lively, penetrating talent that has given us some of the most powerful fiction of the Twentieth Century. Contains some mildly violent situations and infrequent coarse language.

Count of Monte Cristo, The

Dumas, Alexandre

This enduringly popular tale of love and revenge in the post-Napoleonic era follows Edmond Dantes as he prepares to captain his own ship and marry his beloved Mercedes. But on his wedding day, he is betrayed by spiteful enemies and arrested on trumped-up charges. Condemned to lifelong imprisonment, he befriends Faria, a priest and fellow inmate with an escape plan. When Faria dies, Edmond escapes alone. Free at last, and incredibly wealthy, Edmond enters society posing as the Count of Monte Cristo to reclaim his lost love and enact a terrible vengeance on his accusers. Contains some mildly violent situations.

Crime and Punishment

Dostoevsky, Fyodor

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. Contains moderately violent situations.

Cry, the Beloved Country

Paton, Alan

When first published in 1948 in apartheid South Africa, *Cry, the Beloved Country* raised more than eyebrows as a powerful book about the power of unity and an author's unflinching hope of a future where segregation no longer exists. The book summoned feelings of pride, optimism, and anticipation of a long-desired goal. But Paton's lyrical, poetic prose is not your typical run-of-the-mill anger evoking story about discrimination. The story is a humanizing experience that evokes feelings of sympathy and understanding, not hatred for a system so blatantly wrong.

Dance Hall of the Dead

Hillerman, Tony

First published in 1973, *Dance Hall of the Dead* is considered the best of Tony Hillerman's "Joe Leaphorn" novels, a series set on Southwestern Native American lands and following the adventures of Lt. Leaphorn as he investigates crimes on the reservation. In this novel, Leaphorn, a Navajo, is summoned to Zunni lands to assist in a particularly unpleasant crime: a Zunni teenager's blood has soaked the land, but his body is missing--and so is the Navajo teenager who was with him. Hillerman writes in a strong prose voice, and much of the novel's interest stems from his depiction of the character, traditions, and lore of Native Americans who live on the reservation. Contains references to violence.

Death of a Salesman

Miller, Arthur

This play is about Willy Loman, a salesman who has reached the end of the road in his career, and his relationship to his family and his work. It explores the American dream, self-delusions, and the American work ethic. Contains sexual references, a drug reference, and infrequent coarse language.

Demian: The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth

Hesse, Hermann

Demian: The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth (1919) is a semi-autobiographical novel by German writer Hermann Hesse. *Demian* was published in the aftermath of World War I and grew out of Hesse's experience of psychoanalysis with Carl Jung and J. B. Lang. The novel is set in Germany in the decade preceding World War I. Narrated by Emil Sinclair, *Demian* describes Sinclair's personal inward journey to a genuine understanding of his deep inner self. The character Max Demian, Sinclair's schoolmate, helps to open Sinclair's mind to unconventional ways of thinking that ultimately lead to self-discovery. Through his years of grade school, high school, and university education, Sinclair encounters several personal teachers who lead him toward a revelation of true self-knowledge. The novel ends during World War I, when both young men have been wounded in battle. *Demian* applies concepts of Jungian psychoanalysis in a strongly symbolic narrative drawing from Christian theology, Nietzschean philosophy, and Eastern mysticism. *Demian* struck a chord with Germany's postwar youth, who felt it expressed a common search for personal identity. Contains moderate violence and sexual references.

Detective Stories

Pullman, Phillip

An unusual collection of tales from across the past century. Authors include masters such as Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie and lesser known or newer writers such as Andrew Vachss and Raymond Smullyan. In addition, Pullman has chosen the work of some authors not normally considered "detective" writers at all, such as, Isaac Asimov, Italo Calvino, and Damon Runyon.

Dune

Frank Herbert

Set in the far future amidst a sprawling feudal interstellar empire where planetary fiefdoms are controlled by noble Houses that owe an allegiance to the Imperial House Corrino, *Dune* tells the story of young Paul Atreides (heir apparent to Duke Leto Atreides and scion of House Atreides) as he and his family accept control of the desert planet Arrakis, the only source of the spice melange, the most important and valuable substance in the universe. The story explores the complex and multilayered interactions of politics, religion, ecology, technology and human emotion, as forces of the Empire confront each other for control of Arrakis and its spice. Contains mild sexual references and mild violence.

Ethan Frome

Wharton, Edith

Ethan Frome is the story of a man living in a loveless marriage. He is downtrodden and melancholy until the day he meets his wife's young and beautiful cousin Mattie Silver. Mattie will be staying at the Frome's New England farm, and in the passing year, Ethan becomes a new man as Mattie brings out a passionate side in him. When Mattie is forced to leave, Ethan is desperate to make a change in his life as well. The results are tragic. Contains a mildly violent situation.

Fahrenheit 451

Bradbury, Ray

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. Fire Captain Beatty explains it this way: "Give the people contests they win by remembering the words to more popular songs.... Don't give them slippery stuff like philosophy or sociology to tie things up with. That way lies melancholy." Contains mildly violent situations.

Fallen Angels

Meyers, Walter Dean

A coming of age tale for young adults set in the trenches of the Vietnam War in the late 1960s, *Fallen Angels* is the story of Perry, a Harlem teenager who volunteers for the service when his dream of attending college falls through. Sent to the front lines, Perry and his platoon come face-to-face with the Vietcong and the real horror of warfare. But violence and death aren't the only hardships. As Perry struggles to find virtue in himself and his comrades, he questions why black troops are given the most dangerous assignments and why the U.S. is there at all. *Fallen Angels* won the 1989 Coretta Scott King Award. Contains violent situations, coarse language, and some sexual references.

Farewell to Manzanar

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James Houston

Jeanne Wakatsuki was seven years old in 1942 when her family was uprooted from their home and sent to live at Manzanar internment camp--with 10,000 other Japanese Americans. *Farewell To Manzanar* is the true story of one spirited Japanese American family's attempt to survive the indignities of forced detention . . . and of a native-born American child who discovered what it was like to grow up behind barbed wire in the United States.

Four Great Plays

Ibsen, Henrik

Four major plays by the first modern playwright, Henrik Ibsen. *Ghosts*—the startling portrayal of a family destroyed by disease and infidelity. *The Wild Duck*—A poignant drama of lost illusions. *An Enemy Of The People*—Ibsen's vigorous attack on public opinion. And *A Doll's House*—the play that scandalized the Victorian world with its unsparing views of love and marriage, featuring one of the most controversial heroines -- and one of the most famous exits -- in the literature of the stage. Details of each play are in the following listings.

Four Great Plays-Ghosts

Ibsen, Henrik

The "ghosts" in this play are the taboo topics that cannot be openly discussed. This drama is one of Ibsen's most powerful works, but also one of his most controversial. Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* surprises modern audiences with some of the issues that it discusses, including out-of-wedlock children, venereal disease, incest, infidelity, and euthanasia. It is the story of a woman, Mrs. Alving, who is preparing for the opening of an orphanage in memory of her husband, Captain Alving, on the tenth anniversary of his death. The captain was an important and respected man in his community, and Mrs. Alving plans to raise this one great memorial to him so that she will not ever have to speak of him again. She wants to avoid the awful truth: that he was a cheating, immoral philanderer whose public reputation was a sham. Contains sexual references.

Four Great Plays-The Wild Duck

Ibsen, Henrik

When *The Wild Duck* opened in Scandinavia early in 1885, critics paid relatively little attention to it. The play soon traveled throughout the continent. While a few luminaries commended it, notably the playwright George Bernard Shaw and the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, most early critics found the play incomprehensible and incoherent. Unlike earlier Ibsen plays, *The Wild Duck* emphasizes characterization rather than social realism. It represented a transition for the playwright toward tragic-comedy and heavy use of symbolism. With *The Wild Duck*, an already esteemed playwright showed his continued interest in exploring new interests and concerns through his work.

Four Great Plays-An Enemy of the People

Ibsen, Henrik

First published in 1882, *An Enemy of the People* chronicles the story of Dr. Thomas Stockmann, a public-minded doctor in a small town famous for its public baths, who discovers that the water supply for the baths is contaminated and has probably been the cause of illness among the tourists who are the town's economic lifeblood. The play continues to offer a relevant discussion of medical and scientific ethics in the face of competing public, political, and economic interests. In his effort to clean up the water supply, Dr. Stockmann runs into political cowards, sold-out journalists, shortsighted armchair economists, and a complacent citizenry. Ridiculed and persecuted by the townsfolk for his honesty, he is declared an "enemy of the people." For his own part, Dr. Stockmann suffers from a professional blindness that keeps him from understanding how anyone could possibly disagree that his scientific "truth" requires rebuilding the town's waterworks.

Four Great Plays-A Doll's House

Ibsen, Henrik

This is one of the best-known, most frequently performed of modern plays, displaying Ibsen's genius for realistic prose drama. A classic expression of women's rights, the play builds to a climax in which the central character, Nora, rejects a smothering marriage and life in "a doll's house." This play established Ibsen as the "father of modern drama" because he elevated theater from entertainment to a forum for exposing social problems.

Frankenstein

Shelley, Mary

Swiss medical student Victor Frankenstein discovers the secret of life (which he never reveals, lest someone repeat the mistake). He puts together a body, essentially a man, from various corpses. Horrified by the creature he has built, the scientist abandons him. The creature, suffering a great deal of neglect and abuse, becomes a monster. Contains mildly violent situations.

Gathering of Old Men, A

Gaines, Ernest J.

A Gathering of Old Men, set in 1970s Louisiana, is one of the richest and most powerful novels about race relations written in the last few decades. It's really a simple story that could be told fairly quickly, but the event upon which the novel is based is in some ways peripheral to the story. The novel pries deeply into the hearts and minds of men, both black and white. It reveals the pains and struggles of humanity in a group of brave old men who are determined to take advantage of one last opportunity to stand up for themselves, their friends and families, and their ancestors. Contains mild violent situations and coarse language.

Go Ask Alice

Anonymous

The torture and hell of adolescence has rarely been captured as clearly as it is in this classic diary by an anonymous, addicted teen. Lonely, awkward, and under extreme pressure from her “perfect” parents, “Anonymous” swings madly between optimism and despair. When one of her new friends spikes her drink with LSD, this diarist begins a frightening journey into darkness. The drugs take the edge off her loneliness and self-hate, but they also turn her life into a nightmare of exalting highs and excruciating lows. Contains drug use and coarse language.

Good Earth, The

Buck, Pearl S.

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. The author 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. Contains references to violence.

Grapes of Wrath, The

Steinbeck, John

When *The Grapes of Wrath* was published in 1939, America, still recovering from the Great Depression, came face to face with itself in a startling, lyrical way. John Steinbeck gathered the country's recent shames and devastation--the Hoovervilles, the desperate, dirty children, the dissolution of kin, the oppressive labor conditions--in the Joad family. John Steinbeck won the Pulitzer in 1940 for this realistic portrayal of human suffering during the Great Depression. Contains infrequent coarse language and mildly violent situations.

Great Expectations

Dickens, Charles

In what may be Dickens's best novel, humble, orphaned Pip is apprenticed to the dirty work of the forge but dares to dream of becoming a gentleman. One day, under sudden and enigmatic circumstances, he finds himself in possession of “great expectations.” In this gripping tale of crime and guilt, revenge and reward, the compelling characters of Dickens' classic rags to riches tale show the reader that affection, loyalty, and conscience are more important than wealth, class, and social standing.

Great Gatsby, The

Fitzgerald, F. Scott

In this great American classic, narrator Nick Carraway tells the story of a mysterious man named Jay Gatsby, who lives in a gigantic Gothic mansion and throws extravagant parties every Saturday night. Gatsby's life slowly unravels as he pursues Daisy Buchanan, the wife of Tom Buchanan. The story illuminates the life of the idle rich in the 1920s and is rich in symbolism and its exploration of the American dream. Contains mildly violent situations, sexual references, drug references, and infrequent coarse language.

Gulliver's Travels

Swift, Jonathan

Read by children as an adventure story and by adults as a devastating satire of society, Gulliver and his four journeys make for a fascinating blend of travelogue, realism, symbolism, and fantastic voyage all with a serious philosophical intent. Contains minor violent situations.

Hamlet

Shakespeare, William

The play concerns the dilemma of Prince Hamlet, whose father, the King of Denmark, dies suddenly. The King's brother Claudius had himself proclaimed king and cemented his claim to the throne by marrying Hamlet's mother Gertrude, the widowed queen. Hamlet soon encounters the ghost of his dead father, who informs him that he was murdered by Claudius, and commands Hamlet to avenge him. Hamlet contemplates the nature of life, death, and revenge. Contains references to violent situations and sex.

Heart of Darkness

Conrad, Joseph

This story is a profound exploration of the human subconscious twinned with a terrifying portrayal of the dangers of imperialism. A work of immense significance, it has been hailed as the first novel of the Twentieth Century. In this searing tale, Seaman Marlow recounts his journey to the dark heart of the Belgian Congo in search of the elusive Mr. Kurtz. Far from civilization as he knows it, he comes to reassess not only his own values, but also those of nature and society. For in this heart of darkness, it is the fearsome face of human savagery that becomes most visible. Contains mildly violent situations.

Hiroshima

Hersey, John

When the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, few could have anticipated its potential for devastation. Pulitzer prize-winning author John Hersey recorded the stories of Hiroshima residents shortly after the explosion and, in 1946, *Hiroshima* was published, giving the world firsthand accounts from people who had survived it. The words of Miss Sasaki, Dr. Fujii, Mrs. Nakamura, Father Kleinsorg, Dr. Sasaki, and the Reverend Tanimoto gave a face to the statistics that saturated the media and solicited an overwhelming public response. Whether you believe the bomb made the difference in the war or that it should never have been dropped, *Hiroshima* is a must read for all of us who live in the shadow of armed conflict.

Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, The

Adams, Douglas

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. Through humorous 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. Required reading for science fiction fans.

The Hot Zone

Richard Preston

A highly infectious, deadly virus from the central African rain forest suddenly appears in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. There is no cure. In a few days 90 percent of its victims are dead. A secret military SWAT team of soldiers and scientists is mobilized to stop the outbreak of this exotic "hot" virus. *The Hot Zone* tells this dramatic story, giving a hair-raising account of the appearance of rare and lethal viruses and their "crashes" into the human race. Contains detailed descriptions of the impact of the disease.

House of Spirits, The

Allende, Isabel

Isabel Allende's compelling magical-realist saga about the Trueba family in Chile is a political and social history of the country, as well as a powerful novel of family relationships. On the surface, Allende's novel is the story of Esteban Trueba, his wife, his children, and his illegitimate granddaughter. However, throughout the novel, Allende offers an explicit commentary on Chile's recent historical past—a story of political corruption, patriarchal authority, feminine oppression, and the movement from the old world into the new. Although in the book Chile is never named, history and events correspond to events that occurred there. Contains moderate violence.

House on Mango Street, The

Cisneros, Sandra

Esperanza Cordero, a girl coming of age in the Latino quarter of Chicago, uses poems and stories to express thoughts and emotions about her oppressive environment. *The House on Mango Street* is a vivid portrayal of growing up a Latina in America. Contains infrequent sexual references.

How to Read Literature Like a Professor

Foster, Thomas C.

In this practical and amusing guide to literature, Thomas C. Foster shows how easy and gratifying it is to unlock those hidden truths and to discover a world where a road leads to a quest: a shared meal may signify a communion, and rain, whether cleansing or destructive, is never just rain.

Importance of Being Earnest, The

Wilde, Oscar

Oscar Wilde's madcap farce about mistaken identities, secret engagements, and lovers' entanglements still delights readers more than a century after its 1895 publication. The rapid-fire wit and eccentric characters 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.

In the Wilderness

Barnes, Kim

In the mid-1960s, as mechanization and the forests' depletion drove many loggers into the cities, Kim Barnes' parents turned to fundamentalism to sustain their increasingly difficult life. The author struggled to live by this religion's exacting tenets, but her chilling descriptions of the harsh punishments meted out for lapses make us understand why she ultimately had to leave it behind. She conveys understanding and love for the rigid yet secure world of her youth in this haunting memoir of faith and loss in the Idaho woods. Contains a sexual reference.

Into the Wild

Krakauer, Jon

After graduating from Emory University in Atlanta in 1992, top student and athlete Christopher McCandless abandoned his possessions, gave his entire \$24,000 savings account to charity, and hitchhiked to Alaska, where he went to live in the wilderness. Four months later, he turned up dead. In a moving narrative, Krakauer probes the mystery of McCandless' death, which he attributes to logistical blunders and to accidental poisoning from eating toxic seed pods. Contains infrequent coarse language.

Into Thin Air

Krakauer, John

This is a riveting firsthand account of a catastrophic expedition up Mount Everest. Despite the expertise of leaders, by the end of summit day eight people were dead. Written within months of the events it chronicles, *Into Thin Air* clearly evokes the majestic Everest landscape. As the journey up the mountain progresses, Krakauer puts it in context by recalling the triumphs and perils of other Everest trips throughout history. The author's own anguish over what happened on the mountain is palpable as he leads readers to ponder timeless questions. Contains a sexual reference and infrequent coarse language.

Jane Eyre

Brönte, Charlotte

Written in 1847, this novel remains a favorite, especially among younger readers. Orphaned into the household of her Aunt Reed at Gateshead and subject to the cruel regime at Lowood charity school, Jane Eyre nonetheless emerges unbroken in spirit and integrity. She takes up the post of governess at Thornfield Hall, falls in love with Mr. Rochester, and discovers the impediment to their lawful marriage in a story that transcends melodrama to portray a woman's passionate search for a richer life than that traditionally allowed women in Victorian society.

Joy Luck Club, The

Tan, Amy

This novel features four mothers, four daughters, four families whose histories shift with the four winds depending on who's "saying" the stories. In 1949 four Chinese women, recent immigrants to San Francisco, begin meeting to eat dim sum, play mahjong, and talk. United in shared unspeakable loss and hope, they call themselves the Joy Luck Club. Rather than sink into tragedy, they choose to gather to raise their spirits and money. Forty years later the stories and history continue. With wit and sensitivity, Amy Tan examines the sometimes painful, often tender, and always deep connection between mothers and daughters. As each woman reveals her secrets, trying to unravel the truth about her life, the strings become more tangled, and more entwined. Mothers boast or despair over daughters, and daughters roll their eyes even as they feel the inextricable tightening of their matriarchal ties.

Jungle, The

Sinclair, Upton

Originally published in 1906 by Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* sent shock waves throughout the United States that resulted in cries for labor and agricultural reforms. Sinclair widely utilized the metaphor of the jungle throughout this book to reflect how the vulnerable worker is at the mercy of the powerful packers and politicians. Mother Nature is represented as a machine who destroys the weak and protects the elite powerful. To illustrate his sentiments, Sinclair wrote of family of Jurgis and Ona who immigrated to Chicago from Lithuania in search of the American dream. They arrive in all innocence and believe that hard work would result in a stable income and security. But they soon realize that all the forces are against them. During the subsequent years, Jurgis tries to hold on what he has but he is fighting a losing battle. It is not until he stumbles upon a political meeting that his eyes upon the evils of capitalism and the sacredness of socialism. Contains some violent situations.

Life of Pi

Martel, Yann

A fabulous romp through an imagination by turns ecstatic, cunning, despairing and resilient, this novel is an impressive achievement: “a story that will make you believe in God,” as one character says. Pi Patel spends a beguiling boyhood in Pondicherry, India, as the son of a zookeeper. Growing up beside the wild beasts, Pi gathers an encyclopedic knowledge of the animal world. His curious mind also makes the leap from his native Hinduism to Christianity and Islam, all three of which he practices with joyous abandon. In his 16th year, Pi sets sail with his family and some of their menagerie to start a new life in Canada. Halfway to Midway Island, the ship sinks, leaving Pi stranded on a life raft. Pi is left to survive for 227 days with a large feline companion, using all his knowledge, wits and faith to keep himself alive. The scenes flow together effortlessly, and the sharp observations of the young narrator keep the tale brisk and engaging. Martel's potentially unbelievable plot line soon demolishes the reader's defenses, cleverly set up by events of young Pi's life that almost naturally lead to his biggest ordeal.

Little Women

Alcott, Louisa May

One of the best loved books of all time. Lovely Meg, talented Jo, frail Beth, spoiled Amy: these are the four March sisters, who learn the hard lessons of poverty and of growing up in New England during the Civil War. Through their dreams, plays, pranks, letters, illnesses, and courtships, women of all ages have become a part this remarkable family and have felt their deep sadness when Meg leaves the circle of sisters to be married at the end of Part I. Part II chronicles Meg's joys and mishaps as a young wife and mother, Jo's struggle to become a writer, Beth's tragedy, and Amy's artistic pursuits and unexpected romance. Based on Louisa May Alcott's childhood, this lively portrait of nineteenth-century family life possesses a lasting vitality that has endured it to generations of readers.

Lord of the Flies

Golding, William

This is a classic tale about a group of English schoolboys who are stranded on a deserted island. At first, the stranded boys cooperate, attempting to gather food, make shelters, and maintain signal fires. The situation deteriorates, however, as the trappings of civilization continue to fall away, until one boy discovers that instead of being hunters, he has become the hunted. Golding's gripping novel explores the boundary between human reason and animal instinct, all on the brutal playing field of adolescent competition. Contains violent situations.

Magic Kingdom For Sale-Sold

Brooks, Terry

Brook's best-selling Shannara trilogy may have been at heart a formulaic fantasy, but its vigorous storytelling and intriguing characters won many readers. In his first non-Shannara novel, he takes on another well-worn premise: the contemporary Earthling transported to a fantasy world. Ben Holiday is a lawyer who finds little satisfaction in his work. His yearning for a simpler life seems thwarted when he finds the magic kingdom of Landover, a close analogy of Earth, with precariously balanced powers threatening each other, massive pollution, and general discontent centering on a lack of faith in leaders.

Mayor of Casterbridge

Hardy, Thomas

The story begins when a pastoral laborer, in a drunken rage, sells his wife and child one evening. When he wakes the next morning, abhorred at what he has done, he swears off liquor and decides to make something of his life. The novel truly begins eighteen years later, when his wife and daughter come back to present themselves to him. In the course of the rest of the novel, we witness the fall of the now Mayor of Casterbridge, brought about by his own character flaws and the interventions of fate.

Midsummer's Night Dream

William Shakespeare

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a romantic comedy by William Shakespeare. It was suggested by "The Knight's Tale" from Geoffrey Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales and written around 1594 to 1596. It portrays the adventures of four young Athenian lovers and a group of amateur actors, their interactions with the Duke of Athens, Theseus, the Queen of the Amazons, Hippolyta, and with the fairies who inhabit a moonlit forest. The play is one of Shakespeare's most popular works for the stage and is widely performed across the world. Contains some sexual references.

Montana, 1948

Watson, Larry

It is Montana in 1948, and young David Hayden's father, Wesley, is sheriff of their small town--a position he inherited from his domineering father, Wesley is overshadowed by his older brother, Frank, a war hero who is now the town doctor. When Marie, the Sioux woman who works for the Haydens, falls ill, she adamantly resists being examined by Frank. Some probing reveals that Frank has been molesting the Indian women in his care. Wesley's dilemma--should he turn in his own brother?--is intensified when Marie is found dead and David confesses that he saw his uncle near the house before she died. The moral issues, and the consequences of following one's conscience, are made painfully evident here. Contains mildly violent situations, sexual situations, and infrequent coarse language.

Mythology

Hamilton, Edith

Edith Hamilton loved the ancient Western myths with a passion--and this classic compendium is her tribute. "The tales of Greek mythology do not throw any clear light upon what early humankind was like" Hamilton explains in her introduction. "They do throw an abundance of light upon what early Greeks were like--a matter, it would seem, of more importance to us, who are their descendants intellectually, artistically, and politically. Nothing we learn about them is alien to ourselves." Fans of Greek mythology will find all the great stories and characters here--Perseus, Hercules, and Odysseus--each discussed in generous detail by the voice of an impressively knowledgeable and engaging narrator.

Native Son

Richard Wright

Right from the start, Bigger Thomas had been headed for jail. It could have been for assault or petty larceny; by chance, it was for murder and rape. Native Son tells the story of this young black man caught in a downward spiral after he kills a young white woman in a brief moment of panic. Set in Chicago in the 1930s, Wright's powerful novel is an unsparing reflection on the poverty and feelings of hopelessness experienced by people in inner cities across the country and of what it means to be black in America. Contains sexual references, coarse language, and violent situations.

Never Cry Wolf

Farley Mowat

More than a half-century ago the Canadian Wildlife Service assigned the naturalist Farley Mowat to investigate why wolves were killing arctic caribou. Mowat's account of the summer he lived in the frozen tundra alone--studying the wolf population and developing a deep affection for the wolves (who were of no threat to caribou or man) and for a friendly Inuit tribe known as the Ihalmiut ("People of the Deer")--is a work that has become cherished by generations of readers, an indelible record of the myths and magic of wild wolves.

Nickel and Dime

Ehrenreich, Barbara

The author sets out to survive in America as a low-skilled worker earning six to seven dollars an hour. In 1999 and 2000, for a month at a time, Ehrenreich worked as a waitress in Key West, Fla., as a cleaning

woman and a nursing home aide in Portland, Maine, and in a Wal-Mart in Minneapolis, Minn. During the application process, she faced routine drug tests and “personality tests”; once on the job, she endured constant surveillance and numbing harangues over infractions like serving a second roll and butter. Beset by transportation costs and high rents, she learned the tricks of the trade from her coworkers, some of whom sleep in their cars, and many of whom work when they're vexed by arthritis, back pain or worse, yet still manage small gestures of kindness. Despite her good health and lack of children, in only one instance was Ehrenreich's income enough to cover her month's expenses, when she worked seven days a week at two jobs (one of which provided free meals). Ehrenreich brings the working poor out of shadows and, in the process, reveals the world in which they live—one in which civil liberties are often ignored and hard work frequently fails to live up to its reputation as the ticket out of poverty. Contains references to drug use.

Night

Wiesel, Elie

A true story of Nobel Prize winning author Elie Wiesel's experiences in Nazi concentration camps during World War II. This novel awakens the shocking memory of evil at its absolute and carries with it the unforgettable message that this horror must never be allowed to happen again. Wiesel's account of his own experiences in the camps has become a classic of the genre. Contains violent situations.

Nine Stories

Salinger, J.D.

Since the publication of *The Catcher in the Rye* in 1951, the works of J.D. Salinger have been acclaimed for their humor, intensity, and their lack of phoniness. A collection of short fiction, *Nine Stories* contains the J.D. Salinger benchmark *A Perfect Day for Bananafish*. In these stories, J.D. Salinger seems bent on exposing the poignant complexities of the people around us. The characters of these timeless narratives are typical American men and women, nestled away in the suburbs; unwinding on summer retreats and buried in apartment complexes; folks who, on the surface, seem fortunate and content. Mr. Salinger peels past their public appearances, throwing them conundrums bound to expose their hidden insecurities, shortcomings and naivety. Fifty years after they were conceived, these characters could still be your neighbors or schoolmates. The vivid portraits of *Nine Stories* are practical assessments for the modern American dream. Contains mildly violent situations and infrequent coarse language.

Of Mice and Men

Steinbeck, John

This novella is considered one of the best pieces of American literature. The tragic story, given poignancy by its objective narrative, is about the complex bond between two migrant laborers. 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. Contains some violent references, sexual references, and coarse language.

Old Man and the Sea

Hemingway, Ernest

Here, for a change, is a fish tale that actually does honor to the author. The novel led directly to his receipt of the Nobel Prize in 1954. 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 challenge. Yet Santiago is too old and infirm to partake of the gun-toting machismo of other Hemingway characters. This is a story of perseverance and dedication.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Kesey, Ken

Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is the seminal novel of the 1960s that has left an indelible mark on the literature of our time. Here is the unforgettable story of a mental ward and its inhabitants,

especially the tyrannical Big Nurse Ratched and Randle Patrick McMurphy, the brawling, fun-loving new inmate who resolves to oppose her. We see the struggle through the eyes of Chief Bromden, the seemingly mute half-Indian patient who witnesses and understands McMurphy's heroic attempt to do battle with the awesome powers that keep them all imprisoned. Contains sexual situations, coarse language, and moderate violence.

Other Voices, Other Vistas

Solomon, Barbara, ed.

An anthology of contemporary world literature ranging from Japan to Africa. The short fiction selections in the anthology explore issues of culture, cultural conflict, post-colonial identity, gender issues within world cultures, and the effects of war and Westernization on developing societies. Contains moderate to intense violence, sexual references, sexual situations, and infrequent coarse language.

Outbreak

Cook, Robin

The heroine is gutsy, naive Dr. Melissa Blumenthal of the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. Sent to report on an exotic killer virus that is claiming victims in every state, the young doctor learns more than she should for her own safety. Melissa methodically investigates the outbreaks, racing against time to save lives. Contains one sexual reference.

Ox-Bow Incident, The

Clark, Walter VanTilburg

Set in 1885, *The Ox-Bow Incident* is a searing and realistic portrait of frontier life and mob violence in the American West. First published in 1940, it focuses on the lynching of three innocent men and the tragedy that ensues when law and order are abandoned. The result is an emotionally powerful, vivid, and unforgettable re-creation of the Western novel, which Clark transmuted into a universal story about good and evil, individual and community, justice and human nature. Contains moderate violence.

Pigman, The

Zindel, Paul

For sophomores John and Lorraine, the world feels meaningless; nothing is important. They certainly can never please their parents, and school is a chore. To pass the time, they play pranks on unsuspecting people. It's during one of these pranks that they meet the "Pigman"--a fat, balding old man with a zany smile plastered on his face. In spite of themselves, John and Lorraine soon find that they're caught up in Mr. Pignati's zest for life. In fact, they become so involved that they begin to destroy the only corner of the world that's ever mattered to them. Originally published in 1968, this novel by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Paul Zindel still sings with sharp emotion as John and Lorraine come to realize that "Our life would be what we made of it--nothing more, nothing less."

Poisonwood Bible, The

Kingsolver, Barbara

The year is 1959 and the place is the Belgian Congo. Nathan, a Baptist preacher, has come to spread the Word in a remote village reachable only by airplane. To say that he and his family are woefully unprepared would be an understatement. They've arrived in the middle of political upheaval as the Congolese seek to wrest independence from Belgium. In addition to poisonous snakes, dangerous animals, and the hostility of the villagers to Nathan's fiery take-no-prisoners brand of Christianity, there are also rebels in the jungle and the threat of war in the air.

Prayer for Owen Meany, A

Irving, John

Owen Meany is a dwarfish boy with a strange voice who accidentally kills his best friend's mom with a baseball and believes--accurately--that he is an instrument of God, to be redeemed by martyrdom. John

Irving's novel, which inspired the 1998 Jim Carrey movie *Simon Birch*, is an odd Christian mystic novel. A rollicking entertainment, *Owen Meany* is also a meditation on literature, history, and God. Contains sexual references, drug use, and mild violence.

Rats Saw God

Thomas, Rob

In order to pass English class and graduate, 18-year-old Steve York has to write a 100-page essay about his life. What sounds like a run-of-the-mill writing assignment, however, becomes an excuse for Steve to reflect on the last four years (from Texas freshman to California senior), and figure out where it all went wrong. No matter where the finger of blame ends up pointing, it's a journey toward self-enlightenment as Steve discovers that not all relationships are permanent, and that some can be mended with a little work. With Steve, author Rob Thomas has taken a teenage outsider and given him a funny, intelligent voice. Contains explicit sexual content, drug use, and strong coarse language.

Rediscovery of North America

Lopez, Barry

One of our premier writers reexamines the imperial attitudes that have underlain the entire European settlement of America beginning with the Spanish conquest and invokes a "rediscovery" of the New World, not as a source of personal wealth, but as a home, a place from which to draw strength and character. Contains mildly violent situations.

Ricochet River

Cody, Robin

Set in a fictional Oregon town in the late 1960s, Cody's superlative coming-of-age novel is the story of Wade, Lorna and Jesse, teenagers preparing to break out of their small-town lives. Wade is the local sports hero. Jesse is his friend, a mythical athlete and the Indian kid who applies his own rules to sports and life. And Lorna is Wade's sweetheart who knows there's no hope in Calamus for a bright, independent girl. The river rushes past the town, linking the three friends with their pasts, their plans, and the world beyond. Contains a sexual situation and infrequent coarse language.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead

Stoppard, Tom

Stoppard takes two bit players from *Hamlet* and moves them center stage. As such, the play requires a degree of familiarity with *Hamlet*—either from stage or the text. For high school readers, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* takes the anachronistic language of Shakespeare and brings it up to an absurd intersection with contemporary drama. The two title characters are swept up in the tide of events set in motion by Claudius's fratri-regicide and seem unable to initiate a counteraction of their own. The play provides Stoppard with a vehicle to consider the meanings of life, death, chance, and fate, against the backdrop of Shakespeare's most famous tragedy. Contains moderate violence, sexual references.

Saint Joan: A Chronicle Play in Six Scenes and an Epilogue

Shaw, George Bernard

With *Saint Joan*, Shaw reached the height of his fame as a dramatist. Fascinated by the story of Joan of Arc, but unhappy with "the whitewash which disfigures her beyond recognition," he presents a realistic Joan: proud, intolerant, naïve, foolhardy, always brave, a rebel who challenged the conventions and values of her day. Contains violent references.

Scarlet Letter, The

Hawthorne, Nathaniel

This novel is considered a masterpiece of American literature and a classic moral study. The novel is set in a village in Puritan New England. The main character is Hester Prynne, a young woman who has borne an

illegitimate child. Hester believes herself a widow, but her husband, Roger Chillingworth, returns to New England very much alive and conceals his identity. He finds his wife forced to wear the scarlet letter A on her dress as punishment for her adultery. Chillingworth becomes obsessed with finding the identity of his wife's former lover. When he learns the identity of the father, Chillingworth proceeds to torment the guilt-stricken young man.

Secret Life of Bees, The

Kidd, Sue Monk

In Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*, 14-year-old Lily Owen, neglected by her father and isolated on their Georgia 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. 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. 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. Contains mildly violent situations.

Separate Peace, A

Knowles, John

This classic novel is set at a boys' boarding school in New England during the early years of World War II. *A Separate Peace* is a harrowing and luminous parable of the dark side of adolescence. Gene is a lonely, introverted intellectual. Phineas is a handsome, taunting, daredevil athlete. What happens between the two friends one summer, like the war itself, banishes the innocence of these boys and their world.

Siddhartha

Hesse, Hermann

In 1946, Hesse was recognized with the Nobel Prize for Literature. Hesse excelled in the depiction of personal crisis and private agony; such literature seems to be particularly popular during periods of cultural crisis, as in the United States during the politically and socially chaotic 1960s and 1970s. In *Siddhartha*, the title character is an intelligent Brahman, a member of the highest caste in the Hindu religion, who seemingly has a well-ordered existence yet feels spiritually hollow. Siddhartha's quest for knowledge passes through several phases. During the first phase, he seeks wisdom in various religious philosophies such as Hinduism, asceticism, and Buddhism. However he abandons these, when he realizes that they all disrupt the unity of life by denying the physical body. Siddhartha then pursues a life of physical pleasures and worldly success. He becomes a great lover and a successful businessman, but he eventually abandons these pleasures after they prove to be too superficial to satisfy his deeper spiritual side. In the third phase of his quest, he tries to reconcile the spiritual and physical sides of himself by becoming a simple ferryman. Siddhartha's search for truth and identity, the "inward journey" as Hesse referred to this recurring theme in his work, is reflective of the autobiographical and introspective nature of Hesse's writing. Contains sexual situations.

Sky Fisherman, The

Lesley, Craig

The tenuous coexistence between whites and Indians in the contemporary Northwest is an element in this story, but the focus is on the coming-of-age of a young white teenager, Culver, growing up with his mother

and his uncle Jake, a river guide and the owner of a sporting goods store. Lurking beneath the perfectly captured camaraderie of Jake and the good ol' boys hanging out at the store is the unresolved question of how Culver's father died in a river accident. Answering this question forces Culver to confront his family's flawed history and eventually leads him to his own epiphany on the river. Contains mildly violent situations, infrequent coarse language, and sexual references.

Snow Falling on Cedars

Guterson, David

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. The plot moves between the trial and the life of the emotionally wounded Chambers as he tells a combination love story, murder mystery, and painful history lesson. Contains moderately violent situations, strong coarse language, and explicit sex scenes.

Speak

Anderson, Laurie

This young adult novel follows the protagonist Melinda Sordino as she suffers through her freshman year at Merryweather High School in silence. Her transition from middle school to high school is complicated by an event which occurred the previous summer. After Melinda calls the police to break up a high school party, she is labeled a social troublemaker by her friends and schoolmates. Gradually, it becomes clear that Melinda is spiraling out of control as she becomes mute and loses interest in herself, her family, and school. Her voice is presented through an inner monologue which becomes stronger and louder as Melinda struggles to reveal the truth behind her actions. Contains sexual violence and drug references.

Stranger, The

Camus, Albert

A young Algerian, Meursault, afflicted with a sort of aimless inertia, and, somewhat inexplicably, ends up killing a man. Once he's imprisoned and eventually brought to trial, his crime, it becomes apparent, is not so much the arguably defensible murder he has committed as it is his deficient character. The trial's proceedings are absurd, so that the eventual sentence the jury issues is both ridiculous and inevitable. Contains moderate violence, sexual references, and coarse language.

Tale of Two Cities, A

Dickens, Charles

Dickens' only serious, uncomic novel, *A Tale of Two Cities* is set during the French Revolution and tells a story of unselfish devotion. The beautiful Lucy Manette marries Charles Darnay, the descendant of an aristocratic French family denounced by the revolutionaries, among whom are the memorably evil fanatic Madame Defarge. When Darnay is arrested and condemned to death, his place is taken at the guillotine by Sidney Carton, who loves Lucy himself and is willing to die to secure her happiness. His last words-- "Tis a far, far better thing that I do than I have ever done..."--have become nearly as famous as the novel itself, one of Dickens's most popular works despite its sober subject matter. Contains references to violent situations.

Taming of the Shrew, The

Shakespeare, William

Renowned as Shakespeare's most boisterous comedy, *The Taming of the Shrew* is the tale of two young men -- the hopeful Lucentio and the worldly Petruchio -- and the two sisters they meet in Padua. Lucentio falls in

love with Bianca, the apparently ideal younger daughter of the wealthy Baptista Minola. But before they can marry, Bianca's formidable elder sister, Katherine, must be wed. Petruccio, interested only in the huge dowry, arranges to marry Katherine -- against her will -- and enters into a battle of the sexes that has endured as one of Shakespeare's most enjoyable works. Contains sexual references.

That Was Then, This Is Now

Hinton, S.E.

Ever since Mark's parents died, he has been living with Bryon. The boys are more like brothers than mere friends. They've been inseparable--until recently. Something seems to be changing between them, and Bryon can't figure it out. Is it Cathy, Bryon's new girlfriend? Is Mark jealous? Bryon is also tired of the street fighting, but Mark seems unable to quit. And where is Mark getting all of that money? *In That Was Then, This Is Now*, one of her most admired novels, S. E. Hinton paints a richly textured portrait of two boys at a crossroads in their friendship. With careful, intimate strokes, Hinton reveals a boy struggling over whether to protect his best friend or to follow his own beliefs about right and wrong. The ending will surprise readers, challenging them to puzzle over Bryon's dilemma in their own hearts. Contains instances of moderate violence and course language.

Theban Plays, The

Sophocles

Aristotle called "*Oedipus The King*," the second-written of the three Theban plays written by Sophocles, the masterpiece of the whole of Greek theater. Today, nearly 2,500 years after Sophocles wrote, scholars and audiences still consider it one of the most powerful dramatic works ever made. The three plays--*Antigone*, *Oedipus the King*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*--are not strictly a trilogy, but all are based on the Theban myths that were old even in Sophocles' time. Contains intense violence and some sexual references.

Their Eyes Were Watching God

Neale Hurston, Zora

One of the most important works of twentieth-century American literature, Zora Neale Hurston's beloved 1937 classic, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is an enduring Southern love story sparkling with wit, beauty, and heartfelt wisdom. Told in the captivating voice of a woman who refuses to live in sorrow, bitterness, fear, or foolish romantic dreams, it is the story of fair-skinned, fiercely independent Janie Crawford, and her evolving selfhood through three marriages and a life marked by poverty, trials, and purpose. A true literary wonder, Hurston's masterwork remains as relevant and affecting today as when it was first published — perhaps the most widely read and highly regarded novel in the entire canon of African American literature. Contains sexual situations.

They Cage the Animals at Night

Burch, Jennings Michael

This autobiography of Jennings Michael Burch begins one rainy day in Brooklyn when his mother, too sick to care for him, left him at an orphanage, saying, "I'll be right back." This stay was the first in a series of bleak foster homes and institutions, and he never remained in any of them long enough to make a friend. To protect himself from the dull ache of loneliness, Jennings clung to a tattered stuffed animal, the sole source of warmth in a frightening world. This is the poignant story of his lost childhood, but it is also the triumphant tale of a little boy who finally gained the courage to reach out for love, and found it waiting for him. Contains some mildly violent situations.

Things Fall Apart

Achebe, Chinua

One of Chinua Achebe's many achievements in his acclaimed first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, is his relentlessly unsentimental rendering of Nigerian tribal life before and after the coming of colonialism. First

published in 1958, just two years before Nigeria declared independence from Great Britain, the book eschews the obvious temptation of depicting pre-colonial life as a kind of Eden. Instead, Achebe sketches a world in which violence, war, and suffering exist, but are balanced by a strong sense of tradition, ritual, and social coherence. Contains moderate violence.

Things They Carried, The

O'Brien, Tim

A finalist for both the 1990 Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award, *The Things They Carried* is sly, almost hallucinatory book that is neither memoir nor novel nor collection of short stories but rather an artful combination of all three that plays with truth. The narrator of most of these stories freely admits that many of the events he chronicles in this collection never really happened. But just because a thing never happened doesn't make it any less true. 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. Contains some sexual references, intensely violent war situations, and infrequent coarse language.

Time Machine, The

Wells, H.G.

Wells' imaginative tale of time travel was published in 1895 as a scientist whose magnificent time machine allows him to leap backward and forward in the annals of history. Using flashbacks, he recounts his adventures in the futurist world he visits in his time machine to a group of skeptical friends.

To Kill a Mockingbird

Lee, Harper

Set in the small Southern town of Maycomb, Alabama, during the Depression, *To Kill a Mockingbird* follows three years in the life of 8-year-old Scout Finch, her brother, Jem, and their father, Atticus--three years punctuated by the arrest and eventual trial of a young black man accused of raping a white woman. Though her story explores big themes, Harper Lee chooses to tell it through the eyes of a child. The result is a tough and tender novel of race, class, justice, and the pain of growing up. Contains sexual references and infrequent coarse language.

Touching Spirit Bear

Mikaelsen, Ben

Cole Matthews is a bully who, after beating up a fellow classmate, is banished to a remote Alaskan island to go through an alternative sentencing program. While in Alaska, he is mauled by a bear, then begins the transition from anger to humility. Ben Mikaelsen's depiction of a juvenile delinquent's metamorphosis into a caring, thinking individual is exciting and fascinating, if at times heavy-handed. Cole's nastiness and the vivid depictions of the lengths he must go to survive after the attack by the bear are excruciating at times, but the concept of finding a way to heal a whole community when one individual wrongs another is compelling. Contains some mildly violent situations.

Uncle Tom's Cabin

Beecher Stowe, Harriet

Uncle Tom, Topsy, Sambo, Simon Legree, little Eva: their names are American bywords, and all of them are characters in Harriet Beecher Stowe's remarkable novel of the pre-Civil War South. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

was revolutionary in 1852 for its passionate indictment of slavery and for its presentation of Tom, "a man of humanity," as the first black hero in American fiction. Labeled racist and condescending by some contemporary critics, it remains a shocking, controversial, and powerful work, exposing the attitudes of white nineteenth-century society toward "the peculiar institution" and documenting, in heartrending detail, the tragic breakup of black Kentucky families "sold down the river." An immediate international sensation, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sold 300,000 copies in the first year, was translated into thirty-seven languages, and has never gone out of print. Its political impact was immense and its emotional influence immeasurable. Contains coarse racial language and infrequent sexual situations.

Up Country

Carter, Alden R.

The protagonist Carl knows he's playing with fire every time he fixes up a stolen car stereo to resell. But he needs the money: how else is he going to get away from his boozing mom and her endless parade of "classy guys"? Then one night his mother's drinking gets out of control and Carl's plan to get himself a decent life takes a nosedive. Sent to live with distant relatives far away from the life he has always known, Carl is faced with a decision: run away and stick with The Plan, or come up with a new one . . . fast.

Walden

Henry David Thoreau

Walden is the classic account of two years spent by Henry David Thoreau living at Walden Pond near Concord, Massachusetts. The story is detailed in its accounts of Thoreau's day-to-day activities, observations, and undertakings to survive out in the wilderness for two years. Thoreau's journal is an account of a man seeking a more simple life by living in harmony with nature.

Warriors Don't Cry

Beals, Melba Pattillo

Beals, one of the nine black students who integrated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957, tells an incredible story of faith, family love, friendships, and strong personal commitment. Drawing from the diaries she kept, the author easily puts readers in her saddle oxfords as she struggles against those people in both the white and black communities who would have segregation continue. She shares the physical, mental, and emotional torture and abuse she suffered at the hands of teenagers and adults. She also shares the support, the encouragement, and the help she received from both whites and blacks. Contains mildly violent situations, infrequent coarse language, and one sexual situation.

Weep Not, Child

Thong, Ngugi wa

Weep Not, Child chronicles a young boy, Njoroge, as he grows up amidst the Mau Mau war and the conflict between the African natives and the British colonial rulers. The book is in essence about the hopes and dreams of a young boy being affected by the outside world and how the outside world changes a person. The novel also addresses the political conflict that was occurring in Kenya in the 1950's. The author incorporates a description of the power of the white rulers, the bitterness of the Africans at being enslaved on their own land and their attempt to rise up against the tyranny. Contains violent situations.

Who Killed My Daughter

Duncan, Louis

This is Duncan's account of her daughter's murder in New Mexico in 1989 which is horrifying and at the same time thought provoking. She put all else aside as she followed up on every lead, sought the help of psychics and private investigators, and convinced an aggressive investigative reporter to help. The further she delved into the events of that fateful night, the more mysterious the pieces of the fragmented puzzle

became. All of the elements of a suspenseful mystery are here: intrigue, turns and twists at every corner, cover-ups, and page-turning action; the sobering fact is that they're true. Contains violent references.

Winesburg, Ohio

Anderson, Sherwood

Winesburg, Ohio depicts the strange, secret lives of the inhabitants of a small town. In "Hands," Wing Biddlebaum tries to hide the tale of his banishment from a Pennsylvania town, a tale represented by his hands. In "Adventure," lonely Alice Hindman impulsively walks naked into the night rain. Threaded through the stories is the viewpoint of George Willard, the young newspaper reporter who, like his creator, stands witness to the dark and despairing dealings of a community of isolated people.

Woodsong

Paulsen, Gary

Paulsen, who has received Newberry Honors for three of his novels. *Woodsong* is an autobiographical celebration of his longtime love of dog sledding and sled dogs. In the first part, "Running," Paulsen relates anecdote after anecdote about how his dogs and the frozen, wintry adventures he has had while sledding have taught him to be more human. The anecdotes run the gamut from hilarious to tragic, and truly sing with the wonder, violence and grace of the woods. The second part, "Racing," the pell-mell story of Paulsen's first Iditarod--a sled race across the Alaskan wilderness from downtown Anchorage to downtown Nome. *Woodsong* blends deep introspection with fast-paced action.

Wuthering Heights

Bronte, Emily

Wuthering Heights, first published in 1847, the year before the author's death at the age of thirty, endures today as perhaps the most powerful and intensely original novel in the English language. The epic story of Catherine and Heathcliff plays out against the dramatic backdrop of the wild English moors, and presents an astonishing metaphysical vision of fate and obsession, passion and revenge. Contains moderate violent situations and sexual references.