

Synopses of Novels for 2017 Secondary Outside Reading List, Grades 9-12

9th Grade:

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien—Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit who enjoys a comfortable, unambitious life, rarely traveling any farther than his pantry or cellar. But his contentment is disturbed when the wizard Gandalf and a company of dwarves arrive on his doorstep one day to whisk him away on an adventure.

Uglies by Scott Westerfeld—A compulsory operation at sixteen wipes out physical differences and makes everyone “pretty.” The “New Pretties” are then free to play and party, while the younger “Uglies” look on enviously and plot mischievous tricks against their elders.

Pretties by Scott Westerfeld—sequel to *Uglies*

The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros—Told in a series of vignettes—sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous—it is the story of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become.

The Red Pyramid by Rick Riordan—Since their mother's death, Carter and Sadie have become near strangers. While Sadie has lived with her grandparents in London, her brother has traveled the world with their father, the brilliant Egyptologist, Dr. Julius Kane. Soon, Sadie and Carter discover that the gods of Egypt are waking, and the worst of them has his sights on the Kanes.

The Throne of Fire by Rick Riordan—sequel to *The Red Pyramid*

Chasing Lincoln's Killer by James Swanson--New York Times bestselling author delivers a riveting account of the chase for Abraham Lincoln's assassin.

Courage Has No Color: The True Story of the Triple Nickles by Tanya Lee Stone--Examines the little-known history of the Triple Nickles, America's first black paratroopers, who fought in an attack on the American West by the Japanese. The 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, in the words of First Sergeant Walter Morris, "proved that the color of a man had nothing to do with his ability."

10th Grade:

Eragon by Christopher Paolini—Eragon, a young farm boy, finds a marvelous blue stone in a mystical mountain place. Before he can trade it for food to get his family through the hard winter, it hatches a beautiful sapphire-blue dragon, a race thought to be extinct.

Eldest by Christopher Paolini—sequel to *Eragon*.

****The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*** by Mark Twain—Just how much mischief can a young boy get into in a small town? More than you might think!

****Tom Sawyer Abroad*** by Mark Twain—a sequel to *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*., again we meet Tom Sawyer, Jim, and Huck Finn—together now on a fantastical balloon journey across the Atlantic to meet lions and Bedouins in the Sahara.

Pastwatch: The Redemption of Christopher Columbus by Orson Scott Card—What if we could see historical events as clearly as if we were watching a movie? What if we could reach back and change the course of history forever? Should we?

Fever 1793 by Laurie Halse Anderson—When yellow fever strikes Philadelphia in 1793, Mattie flees the city with her grandfather, but she soon discovers that the sickness is everywhere. Being a teen is tough enough without a deadly epidemic, and Mattie has to grow up fast.

Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson—One of today's finest writers tells the moving story of her childhood in mesmerizing verse. Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement.

Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old Man, a Young Man, and Life's Greatest Lesson by Mitch Albom—The author rediscovered Morrie, his old college mentor, in the last months of the older man's life. Knowing he was dying, Morrie visited with Mitch in his study every Tuesday, just as they used to back in college. Their rekindled relationship turned into one final “class”: lessons in how to live.

11th Grade:

The Chosen by Chaim Potok – The now-classic story of two fathers and two sons and the pressures on all of them to pursue the religion they share.

The Murder of Roger Ackroyd by Agatha Christie—Roger Ackroyd is a man who knows too much. He knows the woman he loved poisoned her first husband and someone was blackmailing her, leading to her suicide. When Roger himself is murdered, famous detective Hercule Poirot must find the killer.

All Over but the Shoutin' by Rick Bragg—This moving recollection of a life on the American margin is the story of Rick Bragg, who grew up dirt-poor in northeastern Alabama, seemingly destined for either the cotton mills or the penitentiary, and instead became a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for *The New York Times*.

The Alchemyst: The Secrets of the Immortal Nicholas Flamel by Michael Scott—The truth: Nicholas Flamel was born in Paris on September 28, 1330. Nearly 700 years later, he is acknowledged as the greatest Alchemyst of his day. He's survived centuries on the elixir of life, but now he needs help saving the world.

The Magician: The Secrets of the Immortal Nicholas Flamel by Michael Scott—sequel to *The Alchemyst*

****Cyrano de Bergerac*** by Edmond Rostand—A quarrelsome, hot-tempered, and unattractive swordsman falls hopelessly in love with a beautiful woman and woos her for a handsome but slow-witted suitor. Which will she choose?

Hiroshima by John Hersey—On August 6, 1945, Hiroshima was destroyed by the first atom bomb ever dropped on a city. This book, John Hersey's journalistic masterpiece, tells what happened on that day.

The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference by Malcolm Gladwell—This widely acclaimed bestseller, in which Malcolm Gladwell explores and brilliantly illuminates the tipping point phenomenon, is already changing the way people throughout the world think about selling products and disseminating ideas.

12th Grade:

****Pride and Prejudice*** by Jane Austen—Austen pokes witty fun at the dating game, which hasn't changed as much over the centuries as you might think.

The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien—O'Brien survives Vietnam to tell the story of Alpha Company.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey – Turning conventional notions of sanity and insanity on their heads, the novel tells the unforgettable story of a mental ward and its inhabitants (strong language).

The Host by Stephenie Meyer—Our world has been invaded by an unseen enemy that takes over the minds of human hosts, leaving their bodies intact.

The King's Shadow by Elizabeth Alder—*Evyn*, a young Welsh serf, has dreamed all his life of becoming a storyteller. But in a cruel twist of fate, Evyn and his father suffer a brutal attack that ruins his dream. Evyn assumes he is destined to a life of slavery until he meets some powerful friends.

The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingslover—Follows the gritty, outspoken Taylor Greer, who leaves her native Kentucky to head west. She becomes mother to an abandoned baby and, when her car 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.

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot—She was a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells—taken without her knowledge in 1951—became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, and more. Henrietta's cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet she remains virtually unknown, and her family can't afford health insurance.

*****How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines*** by Thomas C. Foster—Short and to the point, lively and entertaining, Foster lets students in on the secrets of literature interpretation. A great tool for the college-bound student (some mature themes).

*Free electronic versions available at no cost from www.gutenberg.org or <http://moodle.lcsk12.org/course/view.php?id=682#section-1> (student or teacher login required)