

Summer 2026 Reading Program

Teachers have been asked to suggest a book that they love and would like to share with high school students. All students entering a high school grade will pick two books from this list of teacher selections and read them. The names of the teachers who selected the texts are hidden for now. When we come together in the fall, students who picked a book will meet with the teacher who selected it. There will be a short assessment of your reading of the book and then there will be an open discussion of the work in which the teacher will share what moved him in the text. Students can share impressions and ask questions about the work in this time.

The selections are divided into two categories: 1) 9th & 10th grade books and 2) 11th & 12th grade books. Based on the grade you will be in the Fall of 2026, please select your books from the appropriate category.

In continuity with past practice, each student entering a high school grade will learn a poem over the summer and recite it for his English teacher. These are all Shakespearean sonnets. They are as follows:

9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
Sonnet 18	Sonnet 73	Sonnet 44	Sonnet 29

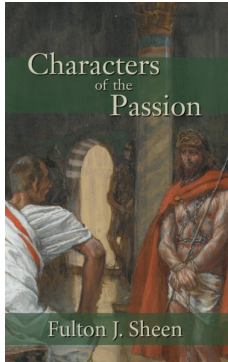
9th and 10th Grade Summer Reading Options

Click the title to read the description

- 1 *Characters of the Passion* — Bishop Fulton Sheen
- 2 *Swami and Friends* — R.K. Narayan
- 3 *The Restless Flame* — Louis de Wohl
- 4 *The Boys in the Boat* — Daniel James Brown
- 5 *The Screwtape Letters* — C.S. Lewis
- 6 *The Sea Wolves: A History of the Vikings* — Lars Brownworth
- 7 *Kidnapped* — Robert Louis Stevenson

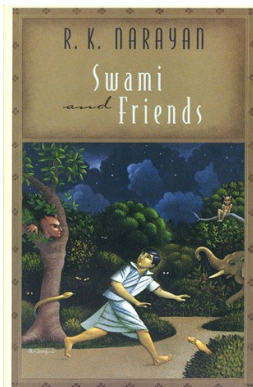
8 *The Apology of Socrates* — Plato

9 *The Ghost Map* — Steven Johnson



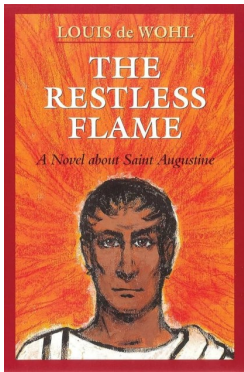
1 *Characters of the Passion* by Bishop Fulton Sheen

Vividly depicting the central figures that surrounded Jesus Christ during his most Holy Passion, Bishop Sheen offers fresh and original insights that stimulate the reader's heart and imagination. Although the text proceeds in a manner that is not difficult nor lengthy, it does require deliberate attention. The well-drawn scenes inspire personal reflection on the perspectives, actions, and involvement of these chosen characters. This book deepens the reader's relationship with the crucified Jesus on every page. Peter, Judas, Pilate, Herod, Barabbas, and others make their appearance, not only as figures of history, but as occasions for deep spiritual reflection for men and women of all times. Bishop Sheen's gifts as a Christian educator are on full display in this marvelous work.



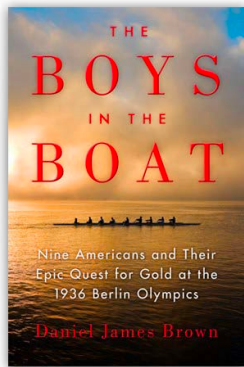
2 *Swami and Friends* by R.K. Narayan

Swaminathan is a normal 10-year-old boy growing up in Malgudi, a small fictional town in southern India. Together with his best friends Mani and Rajam, Swami embarks on hilarious childhood adventures in the midst of 1930's India's realities, which include deep caste divisions (rigid social class distinctions) and a growing national desire for independence from Great Britain. The book offers a delightful glimpse into a particular time and place that is foreign to us, but it also explores eternal themes of friendship, courage and identity. The novel is a pleasure to read. It offers scenes that are very funny, others that are genuinely moving, and others that will help you learn about the history and culture of one of the world's great nations.



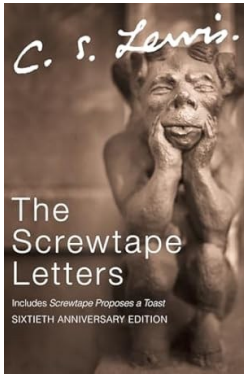
3 *The Restless Flame* by Louis de Wohl

This stirring novel, set in the turbulent atmosphere of the Roman Empire in its last days of decadence, tells the transformative story of a vain, sensual youth who becomes the brilliant, truth-seeking, devout writer and theologian, Augustine of Hippo. De Wohl has carefully recreated the dramatic historical background of the time, skillfully weaving together the personalities whose lives closely affected Augustine: Monica, his saintly and heroic mother; majestic Ambrose, Bishop of Milan; and many others who lend richness and depth to the life story of this great Doctor of the Church. *The Restless Flame* burns with imagination and scholarship. A great storyteller vividly recreates St. Augustine's remarkable life in a genuine and entertaining manner.



4 *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown

The Boys in the Boat tells the inspiring true story of nine working-class American teenagers who overcame poverty, hardship, and doubt to compete in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. Written by Daniel James Brown, the book combines sports, history, and vivid personality portraits to provide a pleasurable reading experience. The boat crew's perseverance and ability to work together under intense pressure pull you into the drama of their quest. The story also offers a fascinating look at the Great Depression and the tense atmosphere of pre-World War II Germany as Hitler and the Nazi Party were rising to power. Fast-paced and uplifting, the book shows how ordinary young people can achieve extraordinary things through discipline and teamwork.

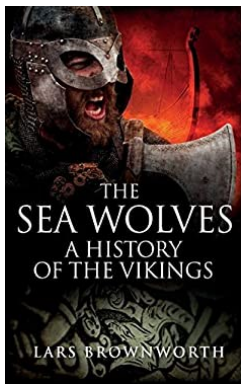


5 *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis

Have you considered the Devil's trickery? Did you ever think he may be trying to trip you up? Do you want to fall for it or would you rather turn the tables on him? Read this little "Devil How-To Guide" to get a peek behind the veil. You'll still need Grace, as nothing can trump that, but knowing how the "bad guy" works will give you a great leg up.

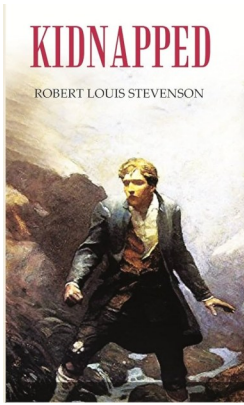
In this wise and humorous text, one of the greatest Christian apologists of the 20th century gives you a little help in getting wise to the ways of the common enemy of mankind.

The Devil doesn't want you to know what he's up to. Finish this little book (and the rest of your summer reading) before he leads you astray with distractions and procrastination. **C'mon... Everybody's doing it!**



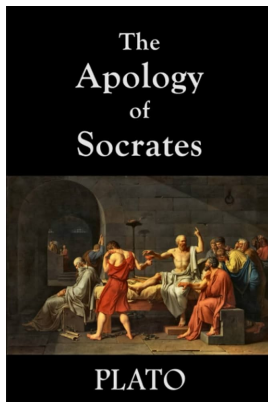
6 *The Sea Wolves: A History of the Vikings* by Lars Brownworth

The Sea Wolves: A History of the Vikings takes readers on a thrilling journey into the world of the Vikings—fearless explorers, warriors, traders, and storytellers who reshaped medieval Europe. This history captures the intelligence, ambition, and adventurous spirit of Viking society as well as the ruthlessness of these ferocious raiders. The fast-paced storytelling depicts dramatic battles, daring sea voyages, and fascinating historical figures who changed the course of history. The book also explores how the Viking phenomenon influenced medieval Europe, impacting cultures and political structures from Russia to Sicily to Ireland. For readers who enjoy action, exploration, and real history, this book is an unforgettable and eye-opening read.



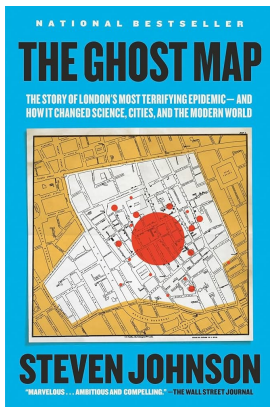
7 *Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson

Kidnapped is a fast-paced adventure filled with danger, betrayal, survival, and courage. Set in eighteenth-century Scotland in the wake of the tragic Scottish defeat at the Battle of Culloden, the novel follows young David Balfour as he is suddenly kidnapped by a treacherous relative and thrown into a high-stakes struggle for justice. Along the way, he faces shipwrecks, dramatic escapes, chases across the rugged Scottish Highlands, and political conflict, while forming an unforgettable friendship with the brave and rebellious Jacobite, Alan Breck Stewart, a character who embodies the spirit of wild and brave Scotland. Written by Robert Louis Stevenson, the story delightfully combines history and suspense. This novel is a classic adventure tale by the author of *Treasure Island* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.



8 *The Apology of Socrates* by Plato

The Apology is far more than an ancient philosophical text—it is the powerful and dramatic defense speech of Socrates as he stands trial for his beliefs and teachings in Athens. Written by Plato, the work explores timeless questions about truth, justice, courage, and the importance of thinking for oneself. Readers through the centuries have been drawn to Socrates' fearless challenge to authority and his refusal to abandon his principles, even when facing death. The dialogue feels surprisingly modern because it deals with those questions human beings must always explore. Short, engaging, and thought-provoking, the book encourages readers to reflect on what it means to live an honest and meaningful life. *The Apology* remains one of the most influential works of philosophy because its ideas continue to challenge and inspire readers today.



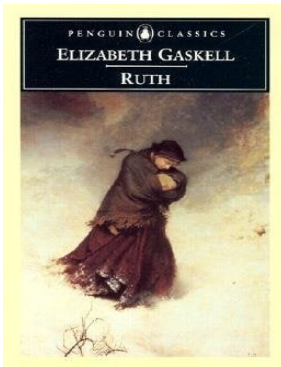
9 *The Ghost Map* by Steven Johnson

The Ghost Map transforms a real historical event into an intense scientific mystery tale. Steven Johnson's account follows the deadly 1854 cholera outbreak in London and the remarkable investigation that changed modern medicine forever. Through the determination of doctor John Snow and a local minister, readers uncover how careful observation, mapping, and critical thinking solved a crisis that terrified an entire city. The suspenseful storytelling carries you along. The vivid descriptions of Victorian London are an added treat, but most of all, the fascinating detective work makes the book quite enjoyable. What emerges in the end is one of history's greatest medical breakthroughs. The book combines science, history, geography, and public health in a way that feels exciting and quite contemporary. It is a delightful combination of the history of scientific discovery and Sherlock Holmes.

11th and 12th Grade Summer Reading Options

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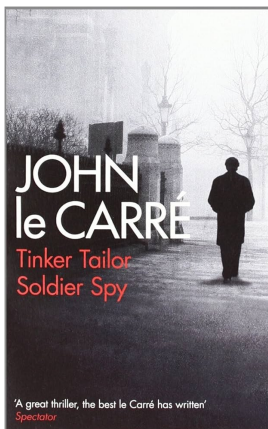
- 1 *Ruth* — Elizabeth Gaskell
- 2 *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* — John Le Carré
- 3 *The Chosen* — Chaim Potok
- 4 *Destiny of the Republic* — Candice Millard
- 5 *The Oresteia* — Aeschylus
- 6 *War in European History* — Michael Howard
- 7 *The Secret Sharer and Typhoon: Two Short Novels* — Joseph Conrad
- 8 *Confessions of Augustine* — Saint Augustine
- 9 *All the Light We Cannot See* — Anthony Doerr



1 *Ruth* by Elizabeth Gaskell

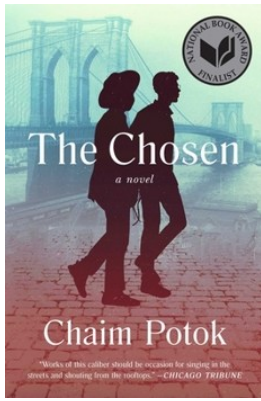
Ruth Hilton is an orphaned young seamstress who catches the eye of a gentleman, Henry Bellingham. He is captivated by her simplicity and beauty and pursues a romantic relationship with her. When she loses her job and home, he offers her comfort and shelter, only to cruelly desert her soon after. Nearly dead with grief and shame, Ruth is offered the chance of a new life among people who give her love and respect, even though they are at first unaware of her secret—an illegitimate child. When Henry enters her life again, however, Ruth must make the impossible choice between social acceptance and personal pride.

Ruth isn't a perfect heroine, and that's exactly why readers connect with her. Emotional, dramatic, and deeply compassionate, *Ruth* asks an important question: should people be forever judged by their worst moment, or can they grow beyond it?



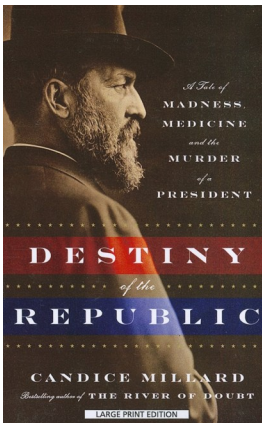
2 *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* by John Le Carré

This is the ultimate spy story for readers who love secrets, betrayals, and mind games. It is based on one of the most dramatic spy episodes of the Cold War in which a very high level British intelligence officer was giving information to the Soviets. But which one? John Le Carré creates a tense world where every conversation hides a lie and nobody can be trusted. The novel follows George Smiley, a quiet but brilliant spy, as he hunts for this dangerous double agent. You will at times be confused by what is going on, but you will love it. You have entered a wilderness of mirrors where nothing is as it seems. What makes the book marvelous is its atmosphere of paranoia and suspense. Every clue matters, every character has something to hide, and the mystery slowly tightens like a trap. Fans of psychological thrillers and complex mysteries will love piecing together the puzzle alongside Smiley. But don't think you can hang with Smiley. He is the GOAT of spies.



3 *The Chosen* by Chaim Potok

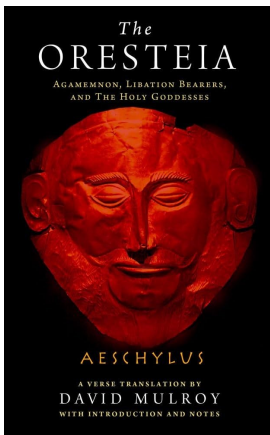
The Chosen is a powerful coming-of-age story about friendship, identity, and the struggle to choose your own path. Set in 1940s Brooklyn, the novel follows two teenage boys from very different Jewish communities: Reuven, a thoughtful and curious orthodox Jew, and Danny, brilliant but trapped by the expectations of his strict Hasidic father. When a fierce baseball game unexpectedly brings them together, their friendship begins to challenge everything they thought they knew about family, faith, and the future. This is a tale that gives a privileged glimpse into a culture you may not be familiar with, but its themes are universal. How do we respond to the tradition we are handed? How do we make it our own without being restricted by it? The novel explores these questions in a deep and reflective manner.



4 *Destiny of the Republic* by Candice Millard

Destiny of the Republic chronicles the extraordinary rise and tragic end of James A. Garfield, the 20th President of the United States. The narrative centers on his 1881 assassination by Charles Guiteau, a delusional office-seeker, but reveals a haunting irony regarding the gunshot wound. Garfield suffered through months of agony under doctors' supervision. These same doctors rejected Joseph Lister's pioneering antiseptic methods and repeatedly probed the wound with unwashed hands.

Despite the desperate efforts of Alexander Graham Bell to locate the bullet using a newly invented metal detector, the president ultimately died eighty days after being shot. This book is filled with real life twists, turns, power grabs and nasty political intrigue. This is a not-to-be missed book that tells a story that is both revealing of its historical moment and timeless in its treatment of truth and power.

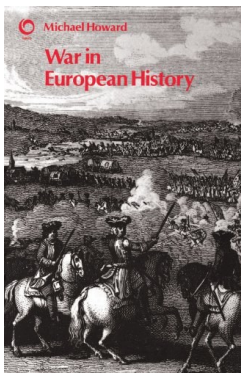


5 *The Oresteia* by Aeschylus

Lord of Men Agamemnon returns home from the Trojan War to a household in chaos. His wife Clytemnestra, furious at Agamemnon's sacrifice of their daughter Iphigenia, and scheming to restore her own family's honor, has hatched a plot with her lover Aegisthus to murder the king and seize power for herself. Agamemnon's son Orestes, torn between his love for his mother and his duty to avenge his father, is finally driven mad by the Furies, who pursue him across Greece.

In this trilogy of plays, the only such work to survive in complete from antiquity, Aeschylus asks us to ponder the complexities of love and hate, vengeance and justice.

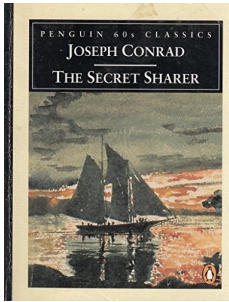
The Complete Aeschylus: Volume I: The Oresteia (Greek Tragedy in New Translations) ISBN 978-0199753635



6 *War in European History* by Michael Howard

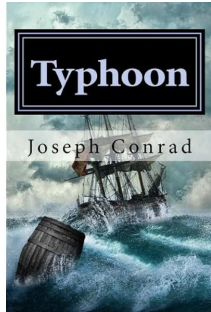
This classic history is an exploration of how war shaped the modern world and the people living in it. Written by renowned historian Michael Howard, the book traces the evolution of warfare across Europe, from knights and castles to modern armies and world wars. But instead of simply listing battles and dates, Howard reveals how politics, technology, culture, and human ambition transformed entire societies.

The work offers a chance to understand the real forces behind the conflicts you learn about in history texts and videos. It asks big questions about power, leadership, and the consequences of violence. Clear, engaging, and surprisingly accessible, *War in European History* helps readers see history as a living story filled with dramatic turning points, and as a source of lessons that still matter in today's world.



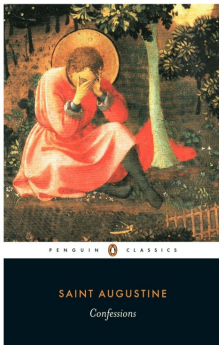
7 *The Secret Sharer and Typhoon: Two Short Novels* by Joseph Conrad

Enjoy two shorter works by the great Polish master of English writing, Joseph Conrad. It's hard to believe when reading Conrad that he didn't learn English until his late teens!



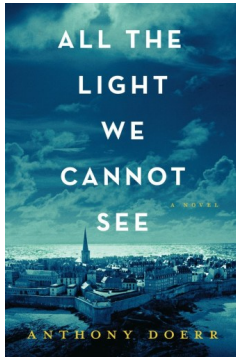
Like many of his works, *The Secret Sharer* and *Typhoon* are sailing stories. The first is about a surprising and unexpected friendship and how it relates to and conflicts with duty. A storm forces a sea captain to make surprising and complex moral choices. The second is about the relationship between competence and imagination, and the disasters that a total lack of the latter can visit upon the former. It is a tale of survival on the South China Sea as ordinary people must face extraordinary danger.

8 *Confessions of Augustine* by Saint Augustine



Confessions is a foundational work of Western culture. It is the first modern autobiography and remains one of the most personal and intimate self-reflections ever written — even though it was created over 1,600 years ago in the final century of the Roman Empire. In this powerful memoir, Augustine of Hippo tells the story of his restless search for meaning. A talented young man destined for status and wealth in the Roman Empire, he was won over by the appeal of Christianity, but struggled mightily to conquer his passions and surrender his pride.

What makes *Confessions* so compelling is its honesty. Augustine openly writes about moral struggle, insecurity, temptation, and the challenge of changing your life when you know you've made mistakes. The book asks questions many people wrestle with in all ages: What makes a meaningful life? Can people really change? And how do you discover and adhere to truth? It is one of the most read books in history.



9 *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr

This novel is a haunting and beautifully written novel set during World War II, following the lives of Marie-Laure, a blind French girl, and Werner, a gifted German orphan whose talent for radio engineering draws him into the Nazi regime. As the war closes in on the occupied French town of Saint-Malo, their paths gradually converge in unexpected and deeply moving ways. The storytelling skillfully shifts between straightforward narrative and subjective perspectives that bring out the emotional depths of the characters. Thoroughly researched to make the period come alive, *All the Light We Cannot See* is a moving story about resilience, hope, and the enduring power of kindness amid the destruction and loss of war.