

# Recommended Reads for High Schoolers

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## CLASSICS

Bronte, Charlotte. **Jane Eyre**.<sup>\*</sup> 1847.

Lexile: 890

*Orphaned governess Jane falls in love with her employer, a brooding man with a terrible secret.*

Cather, Willa. **My Ántonia**.<sup>\*</sup> 1918.

Lexile: 990

*A young man reminisces about his boyhood in Nebraska, in particular his friendship with a young girl named Ántonia, and their experiences together.*

Crane, Stephen. **The Red Badge of Courage**.<sup>\*</sup> 1895.

Lexile: 890

*During the American Civil War, a young private named Henry Fleming flees the field of battle.*

Garcia Marquez, Gabriel. **One Hundred Years of Solitude**.<sup>\*</sup> 1970.

*The rise and fall of the mythical town of Macondo is told through the history of the Buendia family.*

Kesey, Ken. **One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest**.<sup>\*</sup> 1962.

Lexile: 1110

*McMurphy, a criminal who feigns insanity, is admitted to a mental hospital where he challenges the autocratic authority of the head nurse.*

Morrison, Toni. **Beloved**. 1987.

Lexile: 870

*An escaped slave living in post-Civil War Ohio is haunted by memories of the farm that enslaved her, and by the ghost of her dead baby girl, whom she sacrificed.*

Orwell, George. **1984**. 1949.

Lexile: 1090

*In the future, a totalitarian government watches over all citizens and directs all activities.*

Paton, Alan. **Cry, the Beloved Country**.<sup>\*</sup> 1948.

Lexile: 860

*A novel depicting the racial ferment in the beautiful country of South Africa in 1948.*

Plath, Sylvia. **The Bell Jar**.<sup>\*</sup> 1963.

Lexile: 1140

*Esther Greenwood, a talented and successful writer, finally succumbs to madness when the world around her begins to falter.*

Steinbeck, John. **East of Eden**.<sup>\*</sup> 1952.

Lexile: 700

*The biblical account of Cain and Abel is echoed in the history of two generations of the Trask family in California.*

Vonnegut, Kurt. **Slaughterhouse-Five**.<sup>\*</sup> 1969.

Lexile: 850

*A fourth-generation German-American is tortured by his memories of the firebombing of Dresden in 1944, which he witnessed while a prisoner of war.*

Wells, H.G. **The War of the Worlds.**\* 1898.

Lexile: 1040

*An English astronomer, in company with an artilleryman, a country curate and others, struggle to survive the Martian invasion of Earth in 1894.*

Wharton, Edith. **The Age of Innocence.**\* 1920.

Lexile: 1170

*Newland Archer begins to question the values the high society in Victorian New York when he finds himself torn between two very different women—his proper young fiancée and her exotic cousin.*

Woolf, Virginia. **To the Lighthouse.**\* 1927.

Lexile: 1030

*At their second home on the Isle of Skye, the Ramsay family surrounds itself with friends and colleagues. They contend with World War I, family deaths and hardships both spoken and unspoken.*

## AWARD WINNERS

### Alex Award

DeAngelis, Camille. **Bones & All.** 2015.

*Sixteen-year-old Maren literally eats the ones who love her, bones and all. When her mother abandons her, Maren sets out to find the father she has never met, hoping he can help her understand why she is a monster.*

Gattis, Ryan. **All Involved.**\* 2015.

*A look inside the 1992 LA riots as told through 17 interconnected first-person narratives.*

**Humans of New York: Stories** by Brandon Stanton. 2015.

*In pictures and interviews that captivate, puzzle and reveal, photojournalist Stanton collects an immeasurable range of human emotions and perspectives.*

974.71 STA

Novic, Sara. **Girl at War.** 2015.

*When her happy life in 1991 Croatia is shattered by civil war, 10-year-old Ana is embroiled in a world of guerrilla warfare and child soldiers before making a daring escape to America, where years later, she struggles to hide her past.*

### National Book Award

**Between the World and Me**\* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. 2015.

Lexile: 1090

*In a series of essays, written as letters to his son, Coates confronts the notion of race in America and how it has shaped American history.*

305.8009 COA

**Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War** by Mark Bowden. 1999.

Lexile: 970

*The rationales behind a disastrous 1993 raid, that resulted in the deaths of 18 Americans and more than 500 Somalis, in Mogadishu, is examined.*

967.7305 BOW

Shusterman, Neil. **Challenger Deep.**\* 2015.

Lexile: HL800

*Caden Bosch is on a ship that's headed for the deepest point on earth: Challenger Deep.*

### Printz Award

Farmer, Nancy. **The House of the Scorpion.**\* 2002.

Lexile: 660

*In a future where humans despise clones, Matt enjoys special status as the young clone of El Patrón, the 142-year-old leader of a corrupt drug empire nestled between Mexico and the United States.*

Nelson, Jandy. ***I'll Give You the Sun***.\* 2014.

Lexile: 740

*A story of first love, family, loss and betrayal told from different points in time, and in separate voices, by artists Jude and her twin brother Noah.*

Ruby, Laura. ***Bone Gap***.\* 2015.

Lexile: 810

*Eighteen-year-old Finn, an outsider in his quiet, Midwestern town, is the only witness to Roza's abduction, but his inability to distinguish between faces makes it difficult for him to help with the investigation, and subjects him to even more ridicule and bullying.*

Tamaki, Mariko. ***This One Summer***. 2014.

Lexile: 300

*Rose and her parents have been going to Awago Beach since she was a little girl. Her friend Windy is always there, too, but this summer is different. Rose's mom and dad won't stop fighting, and Rose and Windy have gotten tangled up in a local tragedy-in-the-making.*

Yang, Gene Luen. ***American Born Chinese***. 2006.

Lexile: 530

*All Jin Wang wants is to fit in, but when his family moves to a new neighborhood, he finds that he's the only Chinese American student at his school.*

### **Pulitzer Prize**

Chabon, Michael. ***The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay***.\* 2000.

Lexile: 1170

*In 1939 New York City, Joe Kavalier, a refugee from Hitler's Prague, joins forces with his Brooklyn-born cousin, Sammy Clay, to create comic-book superheroes inspired by their own fantasies, fears and dreams.*

Diaz, Junot. ***The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao***.\* 2007.

Lexile: 1010

*Living with an old-world mother and rebellious sister, an urban New Jersey misfit dreams of becoming the next J.R.R. Tolkien, and believes that a long-standing family curse is thwarting his efforts to find love and happiness.*

Doerr, Anthony. ***All the Light We Cannot See***.\* 2014.

Lexile: 880

*The paths of a blind French girl and German boy collide in occupied France as they both try to survive the devastation of World War II.*

Egan, Jennifer. ***A Visit from the Goon Squad***. 2010.

Lexile: N/A

*Working side-by-side for a record label, former punk rocker Bennie Salazar and the passionate Sasha hide illicit secrets from one another while interacting with a motley assortment of equally troubled people from 1970s San Francisco to the post-war future.*

Eugenides, Jeffrey. ***Middlesex***.\* 2002.

*Calliope's friendship with a classmate and her sense of identity are compromised by the adolescent discovery that she is a hermaphrodite, a situation with roots in her grandparent's desperate struggle for survival in the 1920s.*

Lahiri, Jhumpa. ***Interpreter of Maladies***. 1999.

Lexile: 1050

*Nine stories, imbued with the vibrant details of Indian culture, explore the emotional journeys of characters seeking love beyond the barriers of nations and generations.*

Tartt, Donna. ***The Goldfinch***.\* 2013.

*A young boy in New York City miraculously survives an accident that kills his mother. Alone and abandoned by his father, Theo is taken in by a friend's family and struggles to make sense of his new life.*

### **YA PICKS**

Garvin, Jeff. ***Symptoms of Being Human***. 2016.

Lexile: N/A

*A gender-fluid teenager, who struggles with identity, creates a blog on the topic that goes viral, and faces ridicule at the hands of fellow students.*

Grant, Michael. **Front Lines**. 2016.

Lexile: 890

*In this World War II, women and girls fight, too. As the fate of the world hangs in the balance, three girls sign up to fight. Each has her own reasons for volunteering. Not one expects to see actual combat.*

Heilig, Heidi. **The Girl from Everywhere**. 2016.

Lexile: N/A

*Sixteen-year-old Nix has sailed across the globe and through centuries aboard her time-traveling father's ship, but when he gambles with her very existence, it all may be about to end.*

Kaufman, Amie and Jay Kristoff. **Illuminae**.\* 2015.

Lexile: 780

*Caught in the crossfire of a megacorporation rivalry in 2575, Kady and Ezra, who have just broken up, flee their home planet on an evacuation ship that is quickly overwhelmed by a fast-spreading plague.*

Laure, Estelle. **This Raging Light**.\* 2015.

Lexile: N/A

*Seventeen-year-old Lucille struggles to get through each day, paying bills and looking after her little sister, while her father is institutionalized after a breakdown and her mother is "on vacation," but nothing else matters when she is with Digby Jones, her best friend's twin brother.*

Levithan, David. **Every Day**.\* 2012.

Lexile: HL650

*Every morning A wakes in a different person's body, in a different person's life, learning over the years to never get too attached, until he wakes up in the body of Justin and falls in love with Justin's girlfriend, Rhiannon.*

Lindstrom, Eric. **Not If I See You First**. 2015.

Lexile: N/A

*Demanding to be treated the same as everyone else in spite of her blindness, Parker doles out tough-love advice to her peers, refuses to cry after losing her father and stubbornly shuns a boy who broke her heart years earlier.*

Lynch, Chris. **Hit Count**. 2015.

Lexile: 830

*Ignoring warnings about head injuries, Arlo aggressively leads his football team to the championships, convincing himself that everything is all right, in spite of the pain, the pounding, the dizziness and the confusion.*

Matson, Morgan. **The Unexpected Everything**. 2016.

Lexile: 950

*A politician's daughter, who has everything planned out, gets a taste of the unexpected.*

Murphy, Julie. **Dumplin'**.\* 2015.

Lexile: 710

*Questioning her plus-sized body for the first time when an athletic boy appears to return her affections, Willowdean enters her city's beauty pageant and uses her sassy style and talents to compete against thinner contestants.*

Stone, Tamara Ireland. **Every Last Word**. 2015.

Lexile: HL750

*Coping with Purely-Obsessional OCD, high-school junior Samantha McAllister learns to accept herself and take control of her life through her experiences in poetry club.*

Westerfeld, Scott. **Zeroes**.\* 2015.

Lexile: HL660

*Told from separate viewpoints, teens Scam, Crash, Flicker, Anonymous, Bellwether and Kelsie have superhuman abilities that give them interesting, but not heroic lives, until they must work as a community to respond to a high stakes crisis.*

Yoon, Nicola. **Everything, Everything**.\* 2015.

Lexile: HL610

*When a new family moves in next door, a teenage girl, who's literally allergic to the outside world, begins a complicated romance that challenges everything she's ever known. The narrative unfolds via vignettes, diary entries, texts, charts, lists and more.*

## CONTEMPORARY WORKS

Carey, M.R. **The Girl with All the Gifts**.\* 2014.

*Every morning, Melanie waits in her cell to be collected for class. When they come for her, Sergeant Parks keeps his gun pointing at her while two of his people strap her into the wheelchair. She thinks they don't like her. She jokes that she won't bite, but they don't laugh.*

Clegg, Bill. **Did You Ever Have a Family**.\* 2015.

*On the eve of her daughter's wedding, a shocking disaster takes the lives of June Reid's entire family. Alone and directionless, June drives across the country, away from her small Connecticut town.*

Hawkins, Paula. **The Girl on the Train**.\* 2015.

*Rachel takes the same commuter train every morning. Every day, she rattles down the tracks imagining the lives of the people she passes when suddenly she sees something shocking.*

Henriquez, Cristina. **The Book of Unknown Americans**.\* 2014.

*Moving from Mexico to the United States when their daughter suffers a near-fatal accident, the Riveras confront cultural barriers, their daughter's difficult recovery and her developing relationship with a Panamanian boy.*

Moyes, Jojo. **Me Before You**.\* 2013.

*Taking a job as an assistant to an extreme sports enthusiast - wheelchair-bound after a motorcycle accident - Louisa struggles with her employer's acerbic moods. When she learns of his shocking plans, she shows him that life is still worth living.*

Moyes, Jojo. **After You**.\* 2015.

*In the wake of an accident that leaves her back at home and in a support group, Louisa meets paramedic Sam Fielding, a man who might finally understand her, but she is forced to change her plans when someone from her past reappears.*

Price, Daniel. **The Flight of the Silvers**.\* 2014.

*When the world comes to an end, Hannah and Amanda Given are saved by mysterious strangers. Shielded from the devastation by bracelets the strangers gave them, the Givens find themselves in a new world with other survivors. The first in a planned series.*

Solomon, Asali. **Disgruntled**. 2015.

*Kenya Curtis is only eight years old, but she knows she's different, even if she can't put her finger on how or why. It's not that she's black, maybe it's the fact that her family celebrates Kwanzaa, or because she's forbidden from reciting the Pledge of Allegiance?*

## SCIENCE

**An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth**\* by Chris Hadfield. 2013.

*Hadfield developed an unconventional philosophy at NASA: prepare for the worst - and enjoy every moment of it. He takes readers into his years of training and space exploration to show how to make the impossible possible.*

629.45 HAD

**Brilliant Blunders: From Darwin to Einstein—Colossal Mistakes by Great Scientists that Changed Our Understanding of Life and the Universe**\* by Mario Livio. 2013.

*Drawing on the lives of five great scientists, Livio shows how science turned major mistakes into breakthroughs.*

500 LIV

**The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks**\* by Rebecca Skloot. 2010.

Lexile: 1140

*Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor Southern tobacco farmer, yet her cells—taken without her knowledge—became one of the most important tools in medicine.*

616.0277 SKL

**The Man Who Touched His Own Heart: True Tales of Science, Surgery, and Mystery** by Rob Dunn. 2015.

*Tells the raucous, gory, mesmerizing story of the heart, from the first "explorers" who dug up cadavers and plumbed their hearts' chambers, through the first surgeries and transplants, to the latest medical efforts to prolong our hearts' lives.*

612.17 DUN

## SOCIAL STUDIES

**Above the Line: Lessons in Leadership and Life from a Championship Season\*** by Urban Myer. 2015.

*The head football coach of The Ohio State Buckeyes uses examples from the 2014 season to outline lessons in leadership and team building that can be applied in sports, business and family scenarios.*

796.332 MYE

**All the Single Ladies: Unmarried Women and the Rise of an Independent Nation\*** by Rebecca Traister. 2016.

*Presents a portrait of contemporary American life through the lens of the single American woman, covering class, race and sexual orientation, and filled with anecdotes from contemporary and historical figures.*

306.8153 TRA

**Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America\*** by Barbara Ehrenreich. 2008.

Lexile: 1340

*In an attempt to understand the lives of Americans earning near-minimum wages, Ehrenreich works as a waitress in Florida, a cleaning woman in Maine and a sales clerk in Minnesota.*

305.569 EHR

**While the City Slept: A Love Lost to Violence and a Young Man's Descent into Madness** by Eli Sanders. 2016.

*A Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter's gripping account of one young man's path to murder – and a wake-up call for mental healthcare in America.*

364.1523 SAN

**Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail\*** by Cheryl Strayed. 2012.

*A powerful, blazingly honest, inspiring memoir: the story of a 1,100-mile solo hike that broke down a young woman reeling from catastrophe—and built her back up again.*

917.9 STR

## MISCELLANEOUS

**The Freedom Summer Murders** by Don Mitchell. 2014.

Lexile: 1130

*Coinciding with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Freedom Summer Murders, this book traces the events surrounding the KKK lynching of three young civil rights activists who were trying to register African Americans to vote.*

323.1196 MIT

**Laughing At My Nightmare** by Shane Burcaw. 2014.

Lexile: 1110

*With acerbic wit, Burcaw describes the challenges he faces as a 21-year-old with spinal muscular atrophy. From awkward handshakes to having a girlfriend and everything in between, he handles his situation with humor and a "you-only-live-once" perspective on life.*

617.482 BUR

**The Opposite of Loneliness: Essays and Stories\*** by Marina Keegan. 2014.

*Keegan was on the rise when she graduated from Yale in May 2012. Tragically, five days after graduation, she died in a car crash. Shortly thereafter, her last essay for the Yale Daily News, The Opposite of Loneliness, went viral, receiving more than 1.4 million hits.*

818.6 KEE

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