

# Recommended Reads for High Schoolers

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## CLASSICS

Austen, Jane. **Sense and Sensibility**.<sup>\*</sup> 1811.

Lexile: 1180

*Two sisters, one practical and conventional and the other emotional and sentimental, set their sights on men who will perfectly match their disparate personalities, with unexpected results.*

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.*

Dickens, Charles. **Great Expectations**.<sup>\*</sup> 1861.

Lexile: 860

*The orphan, Pip, and the convict, Magwitch; the beautiful Estella and her guardian, Miss Havisham; and the ambitious lawyer, Mr. Jaggers – all have a part to play in the mystery.*

Ellison, Ralph. **Invisible Man**.<sup>\*</sup> 1952.

Lexile: 950

*A young man gives his account of growing up in the Jim Crow South. The last line of the book speaks volumes: “Who knows but that, on the lower frequencies, I speak for you?”*

Forster, E.M. **Howards End**.<sup>\*</sup> 1910.

Lexile: 820

*The disregard of a dying woman’s bequest, a girl’s attempt to help an impoverished clerk and the marriage of an idealist and a materialist all intersect at an estate called Howards End.*

Hemingway, Ernest. **A Farewell to Arms**.<sup>\*</sup> 1929.

Lexile: 730

*A young American, wounded while serving in Italy before the U.S. enters World War I, falls in love with his nurse.*

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

Backderf, Derf. **My Friend Dahmer**. 2012.

*The author offers an account of growing up in the same schools as Jeffrey Dahmer, who went on to become one of the most notorious serial killers and cannibals in U.S. history.*

Haddon, Mark. **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time**.<sup>\*</sup> 2003.

Lexile: 1180

*Despite his overwhelming fear of interacting with people, Christopher, a mathematically-gifted, autistic teen, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secret information about his mother.*

Knisley, Lucy. **Relish: My Life in the Kitchen**. 2013.

Lexile: 970

*This poignant graphic novel is a wonderful journey of cartoonist Lucy Knisley's transition from childhood, to adolescence, to adulthood, framed by the food that shaped her worldview.*

Lutz, Lisa. **The Spellman Files**. 2007.

*Isabel "Izzy" Spellman, a San Francisco private eye with a checkered past, has been working for her family's firm, Spellman Investigations, since she was 12 years-old. Now 28, Izzy thinks she wants out of the family business, but elects to take on a cold case.*

Semple, Maria. **Where'd You Go, Bernadette?**<sup>\*</sup> 2012.

*Through a series of e-mails, letters and FBI files, Bee follows her missing mother's trail to the ends of the earth in this quirky, laugh-out-loud tale.*

### **National Book Award**

Alexie, Sherman. **The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian**.<sup>\*</sup> 2007.

Lexile: 600

*Budding cartoonist Junior leaves his troubled school on the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white farm town school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.*

Blundell, Judy. **What I Saw and How I Lied**. 2008.

Lexile: 620

*In 1947, with her jovial stepfather Joe back from the war and family life returning to normal, teenage Evie, smitten by the handsome young ex-GI who seems to have a secret hold on Joe, finds herself caught in a complicated web of lies whose devastating outcome change her life and that of her family forever.*

**Bomb: The Race to Build - and Steal - the World's Most Dangerous Weapon**<sup>\*</sup> by Steve Sheinkin. 2012.

Lexile: 920

*Recounts the scientific discoveries that enabled atom splitting, the military intelligence operations that occurred in rival countries and the work of brilliant scientists hidden at Los Alamos.*

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### **Printz Award**

Green, John. **Looking for Alaska**.<sup>\*</sup> 2005.

Lexile: 930

*Sixteen-year-old Miles' first year at Alabama's Culver Creek Preparatory School includes good friends and great pranks, but is defined by the search for answers about life and death after a fatal car crash.*

Lockhart, E. **The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks**.<sup>\*</sup> 2008.

Lexile: 890

*Sophomore Frankie starts dating senior Matthew Livingston, but when he refuses to talk about the all-male secret society that he and his friends belong to, Frankie infiltrates the society in order to enliven their mediocre pranks.*

Marchetta, Melina. **Jellicoe Road**. 2008.

Lexile: 820

*Abandoned by her drug-addicted mother at the age of 11, high school student Taylor Markham struggles with her identity and family history at a boarding school in Australia.*

Rowell, Rainbow. **Eleanor and Park**.<sup>\*</sup> 2013.

Lexile: 580

*Set over the course of one school year in 1986, this is the story of two star-crossed misfits – smart enough to know that first love almost never lasts, but brave and desperate enough to try.*

Wein, Elizabeth. **Code Name Verity**.<sup>\*</sup> 2012.

Lexile: 1020

*In 1943, a British fighter plane crashes in Nazi-occupied France and the survivor tells a tale of friendship, war, espionage and great courage as she relates what she must do to survive while keeping secret all that she can.*

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.*

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

*Bennie Salazar, an aging former punk rocker and record executive, and Sasha, the troubled young woman he employs, confront their pasts in this powerful story about how rebellion ages, influence corrupts, habits turn to addictions, lifelong friendships fluctuate and turn and how art and music have the power to redeem.*

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.*

McCarthy, Cormac. **The Road**.\* 2006.

Lexile: 670

*After an ecological disaster, a man and his son struggle to find a home in an American wasteland.*

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.*

## **YA PICKS**

Eulberg, Elizabeth. **Better Off Friends**. 2014.

Lexile: 590

*Can guys and girls ever really be just friends, or are they always one fight away from not speaking again — and one kiss away from true love?*

Herbach, Geoff. **Fat Boy vs. the Cheerleaders**. 2014.

*It's geeks versus jocks in an epic battle of the beverages!*

Meyer, Marissa. **Cinder**.\* 2012.

Lexile: 790

*In this futuristic take on the Cinderella story, Cinder, a gifted mechanic and cyborg, becomes involved with handsome Prince Kai, and must uncover secrets about her past in order to protect the plague-ravaged Earth.*

Smith, Andrew. **Winger**. 2013.

Lexile: 890

*Two years younger than his classmates at a prestigious boarding school, 14-year-old Ryan Dean West grapples with living in the troublemakers' dorm, falling for his female best friend and playing wing on the varsity rugby team with some of his frightening new dorm-mates.*

Smith, Jennifer E. **This is What Happy Looks Like**. 2013.

Lexile: 1010

*Perfect strangers Graham Larkin and Ellie O'Neill meet online when Graham accidentally sends Ellie an e-mail about his pet pig, Wilbur. When the relationship goes from online to in-person, they find out whether it can be the real thing.*

Summers, Courtney. **This is Not a Test.** 2012.

Lexile: 610

*Sloane Price is barricaded in Cortège High with five other teens as zombies try to get in. She observes her fellow captives become more unpredictable and violent as time passes, although they each have much more reason to live than she has.*

Terrill, Cristin. **All Our Yesterdays.** 2013.

*Em must travel back in time to prevent a catastrophic time machine from ever being invented, while Marina battles to prevent the murder of the boy she loves.*

Yancey, Richard. **The 5th Wave.\*** 2013.

Lexile: 690

*Cassie Sullivan, the survivor of an alien invasion, must rescue her young brother from the enemy with help from a boy who may be one of them.*

Zadoff, Allen. **Boy Nobody.\*** 2013.

*Sixteen-year-old Boy Nobody, an assassin controlled by a shadowy government organization, considers sabotaging his latest mission because his target reminds him of the normal life he craves.*

## CONTEMPORARY WORKS

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. **Americanah.** 2013.

*A young woman from Nigeria leaves behind her home and her first love to start a new life in America, only to find her dreams are not all she expected.*

Bradley, C. Alan. **The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie.\*** 2009.

Lexile: 960

*Eleven-year-old Flavia de Luce, an aspiring chemist with a passion for poison, is propelled into a mystery when a man is found murdered on the grounds of her family's decaying English mansion and Flavia's father becomes the main suspect.*

Eggers, Dave. **The Circle.\*** 2013.

*Hired to work for the Circle, the world's most powerful Internet company, Mae Holland begins to question her luck as life beyond her job grows distant, a strange encounter with a colleague leaves her shaken and her role at the Circle becomes increasingly public.*

Gaiman, Neil. **The Ocean at the End of the Lane.\*** 2013.

*Returning to his childhood home in the English countryside for a funeral, the narrator finds himself drawn to an ordinary-looking farmhouse that's anything but. As long-buried memories surface, he recalls the haunting and mystical events that occurred at Hempstock Farm when he was seven.*

McCreight, Kimberly. **Reconstructing Amelia.** 2013.

*When her high-achieving, 15-year-old daughter Amelia supposedly commits suicide after she is caught cheating, litigation lawyer and single mother Kate Baron, leveled by grief, must reconstruct the pieces of Amelia's life to find the truth and vindicate the memory of the daughter whose life she could not save.*

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.*

Picoult, Jodi. **My Sister's Keeper.\*** 2004.

Lexile: 840

*Conceived to provide a bone marrow match for her leukemia-stricken sister, teenage Anna begins to question her moral obligations in light of countless medical procedures, and decides to fight for the right to make decisions about her own body.*

Shannon, Samantha. **The Bone Season.\*** 2013.

*Paige Mahoney is a Dreamwalker, a rare type of clairvoyant employed by a powerful criminal syndicate that operates within a dystopian 21st-century London. When she's captured by government agents, she ends up in Sheol, a prison camp where she and others will be trained for battle. First in a planned series.*

Simsion, Graeme. **The Rosie Project.\*** 2013.

*Don Tillman, a professor of genetics, sets up a project designed to find him the perfect wife. Then he meets Rosie, who is everything he's not looking for in a wife, but they become friends as he helps her try to find her biological father.*

Waters, M.D. **Archetype**. 2014.

*Waking in the hospital with no memory, Emma learns her seemingly happy life story from her powerful, seductive husband. However, tormenting dreams suggest a completely different past shaped by war, a camp where girls are trained to be wives and her love for another man.*

## SCIENCE

**Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness\*** by Susannah Cahalan. 2012.

*The author's struggle with a rare, brain-attacking autoimmune disease traces how she woke up in a hospital room with no memory of baffling psychotic symptoms, and describes the last-minute intervention of a doctor who identified the source of her illness.*

616.832 CAH

**Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal** by Mary Roach. 2013.

*Gulp investigates the beginning, and end, of our food, addressing such questions as why crunchy food is so appealing, how much we can eat before our stomachs burst and whether constipation killed Elvis.*

612.3 ROA

**Hallucinations\*** by Oliver Sacks. 2012.

*A provocative investigation into the types, physiological sources and cultural resonances of hallucinations traces everything from the disorientations of sleep and intoxication to the manifestations of injury and illness.*

616.89 SAC

**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

**Packing for Mars: The Curious Life of Science in the Void\*** by Mary Roach. 2010.

Lexile: 1070

*How do you digest your lunch in space? Go to the bathroom? With her trademark humor and indefatigable curiosity, Roach looks hard at why humans, who are fundamentally not built for outer space, insist on risking their lives by heading for the stars.*

629.477 ROA

**The Poisoner's Handbook: Murder and the Birth of Forensic Medicine in Jazz Age New York\*** by Deborah Blum. 2010.

*This book tracks the fascinating, perilous days of an era when untraceable poisons offered an easy path to the perfect crime.*

614.13 BLU

**Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things** by Randy O. Frost. 2010.

*With vivid portraits that show us the traits by which you can identify a hoarder, Stuff explains the causes and outlines the often ineffective treatments for the disorder while illuminating the pull that possessions exert on all of us.*

616.8522 FRO

## SOCIAL STUDIES

**Into the Wild\*** by John Krakauer. 1996.

Lexile: 1270

*In April 1992, 24-year-old Chris McCandless left civilization behind and headed into the remote Alaskan wilderness. Four months later, his emaciated corpse was found at his campsite by a hunter. Into the Wild explores clues to the drives and desires that propelled McCandless on his journey.*

917.98 KRA

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

*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 HER

**Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking\*** by Susan Cain. 2012.

*A fascinating look at how introverts have contributed to society, and how it can be a good thing to be "quiet."*

155.232 CAI

**Unorthodox: The Scandalous Rejection of My Hasidic Roots** by Deborah Feldman. 2012.

*Brought up in a Hasidic community in Brooklyn, strict rules governed Feldman's life, including an arranged marriage at 17 and the birth of her son, which led to her plan to leave and forge her own path in life.*

974.7044 FEL

**Working in the Shadows: A Year of Doing the Jobs (Most) Americans Won't Do** by Gabriel Thompson. 2010.

*What is it like to do the back-breaking work of immigrants? To find out, Thompson spent a year working alongside Latino immigrants, who initially thought he was either crazy or an undercover immigration agent.*

331.62 THO

## MISCELLANEOUS

**A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail** by Bill Bryson. 1998.

Lexile: 1210

*Traces the author's adventurous trek along the Appalachian Trail past its natural pleasures, human eccentrics and offbeat comforts.*

917.4 BRY

**Blankets: An Illustrated Novel** by Craig Thompson. 2003.

*An illustrated memoir chronicles the sibling rivalry of two brothers growing up in the isolated country, the budding romance of two coming-of-age lovers and the emotional conflict engendered by the author's fundamentalist upbringing.*

741.5973 THO

**Me Talk Pretty One Day** by David Sedaris.\* 2000.

*In a collection of essays, observations and commentaries, the humorist describes his recent move to Paris, life as an American in Paris, his struggle to learn French, his family and restaurant meals.*

818.5402 SED

\*Available on audio

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