

## Summer Reading List 2022

Dear Incoming Juniors,

As high school veterans, you likely already know that reading is the best way to meet academic challenges. What follows, therefore, involves requirements for next year's English class. We expect you to read a minimum of three books over the summer. We are allowing you, the student, to have some choice in what you read. Our goal partly involves you reading for pleasure so, with this aim in mind, we have provided you with a list of books that cover many subjects and interests. For some books, you may finish in days; others may take weeks. Either way, they should add some more excitement to your summer.

Please also note that, while we expect you to read from the lists that follow, we also expect you to briefly write about your understanding of these texts; on these pages, then, please also note shorter reading and writing assignments asking you to combine the most important aspects of what you read this summer.

You must have the required readings with you throughout the first months of school, but feel free to use the New York Public Library as a resource. For more information on *SimplyE*, the library's free version of Kindle, please access this link: <https://www.nypl.org/books-music-movies/ebookcentral/simplye>

If you have any questions, feel free to email Ms. Esposito, the English Department Chairperson, at [mesposito@prestonhs.org](mailto:mesposito@prestonhs.org)

Have fun and see you next year!

Sincerely,  
The Junior-Level Faculty

**Assignment:**

1. We require you to obtain and read Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye*. ISBN information appears below to purchase, but you can also borrow it electronically from *The New York Public Library* through their *SimplyE* app: <https://www.nypl.org/books-music-movies/ebookcentral/simplye>

***The Bluest Eye***

**Toni Morrison (ISBN-10: 0307278441 or ISBN-13: 978-0307278449)**

Originally published in 1970, *The Bluest Eye* is Toni Morrison's first novel. In an afterword written more than two decades later, the author expressed her dissatisfaction with the book's language and structure: "It required a sophistication unavailable to me." Perhaps we can chalk up this verdict to modesty, or to the Nobel laureate's impossibly high standards of quality control. In any case, her debut is nothing if not sophisticated, in terms of both narrative ingenuity and rhetorical sweep. Set in Lorain, Ohio, in 1941, *The Bluest Eye* is something of an ensemble piece. The point of view is passed like a baton from one character to the next, with Morrison's own voice functioning as a kind of gold standard throughout. The focus, though, is on an 11-year-old black girl named Pecola Breedlove, whose entire family has been given a cosmetic cross. (Amazon.com Review)

2. Read and annotate Judith Ortiz Cofer's "The Myth of the Latin Woman" (see link on page 3). After reading, type answers to the questions also appearing on page 3. In September, your teacher will also expect you to upload such responses to Google-Classroom.

3. For the remaining two books, choose one book from the fiction list and one book from the non-fiction list that start on page 4. The non-fiction genre perhaps offers you more helpful writing models because the non-fiction writer must explain and analyze information in a clear and compelling style.

**Information for Judith Ortiz Cofer’s “Myth of the Latin Woman”:**

Link: (Ignore the questions that appear before and after this reading.)

<https://www.vonsteuben.org/ourpages/auto/2015/2/23/48981760/The%20Myth%20of%20the%20Latin%20Woman.pdf>

1. How does Cofer define this myth about Latin women?
2. In the second paragraph, Cofer states, “As a Puerto Rican girl growing up in the United States and wanting like most children, to ‘belong,’ I resented the stereotype that my Hispanic appearance called forth from many people I met.” What does this line mean?
3. How does Cofer’s opening scene—with the British man on the bus—serve as an example of the sentence mentioned in question 1?
4. Summarize Cofer’s description about career day in her high school. Include: Why did she and her Puerto Rican classmates leave feeling “less than”?
5. Describe one incident in *The Bluest Eye* that resembles the career day experience Cofer discusses.
6. According to Cofer, how has society—especially the media—preserved the stereotype, or myth, of the Latin woman?
7. What happens to Latinas who, unlike Cofer, lack the education to address this myth? What self-image do they form?
8. Discuss Cofer’s first public poetry reading. How does it positively affect her still? How does it negatively affect her?

**Section One: Choose at least one *fiction* book from this section.  
Feel free to read more.**

***The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Vol. 1 (The Pox Party)***, by M. T. Anderson

It sounds like a fairy tale. He is a boy dressed in silks and white wigs and given the finest of classical educations. Raised by a group of rational philosophers known only by numbers, the boy and his mother — a princess in exile from a faraway land — are the only persons in their household assigned names. As the boy's regal mother, Cassiopeia, entertains the house scholars with her beauty and wit, young Octavian begins to question the purpose behind his guardians' fanatical studies. Only after he dares to open a forbidden door does he learn the hideous nature of their experiments — and his own chilling role in them. Set against the disquiet of Revolutionary Boston, M. T. Anderson's extraordinary novel takes place at a time when American patriots rioted and battled to win liberty while African slaves were entreated to risk their lives for a freedom they would never claim.

***The Sweet Hereafter***, by Russell Banks

In *The Sweet Hereafter*, Russell Banks tells a story that begins with a school bus accident. Using four different narrators, Banks creates a small-town morality play that addresses one of life's most agonizing questions: when the worst thing happens, who do you blame?

***On the Road***, by Jack Kerouac

Poetic, open and raw, Kerouac's prose lays out a cross-country adventure as experienced by Sal Paradise, an autobiographical character. A writer holed up in a room at his aunt's house, Paradise gets inspired by Dean Moriarty (a character based on Kerouac's friend Neal Cassady) to hit the road and see America. From the moment he gets on the No. 7 train out of New York City, he takes the reader through the highs and lows of hitchhiking and bonding with fellow explorers. First published in 1957, Kerouac's perennially hot story continues to express the restless energy and desire for freedom that makes people rush out to see the world.

***In the Time of the Butterflies (En el Tiempo de las Mariposas)***, by Julia Alvarez (in English or Spanish)

A skillful blend of fact and fiction, *In the Time of the Butterflies* is inspired by the true story of the three Mirabal sisters who, in 1960, were murdered for their part in an underground plot to overthrow the government. Alvarez breathes life into these historical figures--known as "las mariposas," or "the butterflies," in the underground--as she imagines their teenage years, their gradual involvement with the revolution, and their terror as their dissentience is uncovered.

***Cold Mountain***, by Charles Frazier

The hero of Charles Frazier's beautifully written and deeply-imagined first novel is Inman, a disillusioned Confederate soldier who has failed to die as expected after being seriously wounded in battle during the last days of the Civil War. Rather than waiting to be redeployed to the front, the soul-sick Inman deserts, and embarks on a dangerous and lonely odyssey through the devastated South, heading home to North Carolina, and seeking only to be reunited with his beloved, Ada, who has herself been struggling to maintain the family farm she inherited. *Cold Mountain* is an unforgettable addition to the literature of one of the most important and transformational periods in American history.

***Cat's Cradle***, by Kurt Vonnegut

The book, one of Vonnegut's most entertaining novels, is filled with scientists, government agents and even ordinary folks caught up in the game. These assorted characters chase each other around in search of the world's most important and dangerous substance, Ice Nine, a new form of ice that freezes at room temperature. The novel is a delightful combination of science fiction and satire, very popular in the 1960s. Go to Vonnegut's website for information about the novel.

***Crooked Little Heart***, by Anne Lamott Lamott depicts the tsunami of adolescence that nearly drowns Rosie, a 13-year-old tennis champion, and her tennis partner and best friend, the luscious Simone, and that capsizes Rosie's fragile mother, Elizabeth. Happily married to James but still in mourning for Rosie's dead father, Elizabeth isn't up to the arduous work of guiding her daughter through this sea change and collapses into the black hole of depression just when Rosie has to face a series of painful situations both on the tennis court and off.

***The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman***, by Earnest Gaines

Set in rural southern Louisiana, the novel spans 100 years of American history--from the early 1860s to the onset of the civil rights movement in the 1960s--in following the life of the elderly Jane Pittman, who witnessed those years. A child at the end of the Civil War, Jane survives a massacre by former Confederate soldiers. She serves as a steadying influence for several black men who work hard to achieve dignity and economic as well as political equality. After the death of her husband, Joe Pittman, Jane becomes a committed Christian and a spiritual guide in her community. Spurred on by the violent death of a young community leader, Jane finally confronts a plantation owner who represents the white power structure to which she has always been subservient.

***Time and Again***, by Jack Finney

"Sleep. And when you awake everything you know of the twentieth century will be gone from your mind. Tonight is January 21, 1882. There are no such things as automobiles, no planes, computers, television. 'Nuclear' appears in no dictionary." Did illustrator Si Morley really step out of his twentieth-century apartment one night -- right into the winter of 1882? The U.S. Government believed it, especially when Si returned with a portfolio of brand-new sketches and tintype photos of a world that no longer existed -- or did it? Part romance, part science fiction, part historical fiction, it's a good read. Read about the history of the Dakota building in Manhattan. The main character lives there...so did John Lennon.

***Stranger in a Strange Land***, by Robert Heinlein

This is the story of Valentine Michael Smith, born during, and the only survivor of, the first manned mission to Mars. Michael is raised by Martians, and he arrives on Earth as a true innocent: he has never seen a woman and has no knowledge of Earth's cultures or religions. But he brings turmoil with him, as he is the legal heir to an enormous financial empire, not to mention de facto owner of the planet Mars. With the irascible popular author Jubal Harshaw to protect him, Michael explores human morality and the meanings of love. He founds his own church, preaching free love and disseminating the psychic talents taught him by the Martians. Ultimately, he confronts the fate reserved for all messiahs.

***Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café***, by Fannie Flagg

Various women's voices tell anecdotes of Whistle Stop, as the chapters jump back and forth through time. We hear from Mrs. Threadgoode, reminiscing fondly from her nursing home in the 1980s, and the chatty Dot Weems, editor of the gossipy town newsletter (1929-1969), and then listen in on spirited dialogue set in the town of Whistle Stop itself. The now-classic novel of two women in the 1980s: of gray-headed Mrs. Threadgoode telling her life story to Evelyn, who is in the sad slump of middle age. The tale she tells is also of two women--of the irrepressibly daredevilish tomboy Idgie and her friend Ruth--who back in the 1930s ran a little place in Whistle Stop, Alabama, a Southern cafe offering good barbecue and good coffee and all kinds of love and laughter, even an occasional murder.

***Crow Lake***, by Mary Lawson

The story, narrated by 26-year-old Kate Morrison, is set in Crow Lake, an isolated rural community where time has stood still. The reader dives in and out of a year's worth of Kate's childhood memories--when she was 7 and her parents were killed in an automobile accident that left Kate, her younger sister Bo, and two older brothers, Matt and Luke, orphaned.

**Section Two: Choose at least one *non-fiction* book from this section.**

**Feel free to read more.**

***The Blue Sweater*** by Jacqueline Novogratz

This is the education of a patient capitalist. Novogratz was an idealistic college graduate hired by Chase Manhattan to investigate and write off loans to the Third World. What she discovers in her journey is a blue sweater she gave away to Goodwill many years early on the back of a small Rwandan boy. This sweater becomes a metaphor for the interconnectedness of the world. Later, Novogratz founds The Acumen Fund which underwrites investments to rising entrepreneurs in the Third World to foster economic growth from the bottom of the pyramid up.

***Warrior Woman***, by Maxine Hong Kingston

This is a pungent, bitter, but beautifully written memoir of growing up Chinese American in Stockton, California. Maxine Hong Kingston stills the dire lessons of her mother's mesmerizing "talk-story" tales of a China where girls are worthless, tradition is exalted and only a strong, wily woman can scratch her way upward. The author's America is a landscape of confounding white "ghosts"--the policeman ghost, the social worker ghost--with equally rigid, but very different rules. Like the woman warrior of the title, Kingston carries the crimes against her family carved into her back by her parents in testimony to and defiance of the pain.

***Don't Know Much About History: Everything You Need About American History but Never Learned***, by Kenneth C. Davis

Kenneth Davis's history of the United States is not a series of isolated incidents that happened long ago with no bearing on contemporary American life. Heroes and villains alike are presented, warts and all, and the "less savory moments" in America's past are discussed frankly. The theme running through the book, from pre-European settlement to the Reagan years, is the struggle for power--the never-ending battle between the haves and have-nots that is the "essence of history." Six hundred years of history are broken up into manageable segments though a series of questions (spoken in a number of different voices to help distinguish them from the main narration), each of which is given a specific answer and then discussed in the context of its contemporary setting and perhaps past and future events. Go to Ken Davis's homepage.

***Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary***, by Juan Williams

Williams retells the story of Thurgood Marshall's successful desegregation of public schools in the U.S. with his victory in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, followed by his appointment to the Supreme Court in 1967 for a 24-year term. But he also recounts how W.E.B. Du Bois, then the head of the NAACP, gave a cold shoulder to the younger Marshall (who eventually helped oust Du Bois from the organization), and describes the tug of war between Marshall and FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, as well as the mind games Lyndon Johnson played on Marshall before nominating him for the Supreme Court. Readers also learn about Marshall's relationship with his replacement, Clarence Thomas, which was surprisingly civil given their contrary views on affirmative action. Williams has captured many examples of Thurgood Marshall's heroism and humanity in this comprehensive yet readable biography of a complex, combative, and courageous civil rights.

***Beyond Mountains: The Quest... The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, The Man Who Would Cure the World***, by Tracy Kidder

Few books aptly capture what it truly means to make a conscious decision in your life to make a difference in the world; this one is perhaps the best of its kind. Paul Farmer made a life-changing trip to Haiti early in his college career and realized that, step-by-step, act-by-act, he could help to improve health care and the lives generally of Haitians by developing a novel approach to health care and community improvement. Farmer, a doctor, founded Partners in Health, an organization that now operates clinics in various parts of the world, all transforming health care in their local communities. This is an inspirational story about how it is possible for each of us to make a profound change in the world with individual effort and passion.

***I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings***, by Maya Angelou

In this first of five volumes of autobiography, poet Maya Angelou recounts a youth filled with disappointment, frustration, tragedy, and finally hard-won independence. Sent at a young age to live with her grandmother in Arkansas, Angelou learned a great deal from this exceptional woman and the tightly knit black community there. These very lessons carried her throughout the hardships she endured later in life.

***Reason for Hope: A Spiritual Journey***, by Jane Goodall & Phillip Berman

Here, Goodall offers a fascinating and candid look at her impressive life. She reveals what her private life was like during the time of her groundbreaking work, and she explores the environmental concerns that now keep her on a hectic lecture and fundraising schedule. What's most enjoyable -- and surprising -- about her memoir is how such a serious and important figure turns out to be vulnerable, romantic, and a bit of an emotional eccentric. Who is Jane Goodall, you may ask? Find the answer here.

***In Code: A Mathematical Journey***, by Sarah & David Flannery

In January 1999, Sarah Flannery, a sports-loving teenager from Blarney in County Cork, Ireland, was awarded Ireland's Young Scientist of the Year for her extraordinary research and discoveries in Internet cryptography. *In Code* is "a wonderfully moving story about the thrill of the mathematical chase" (Nature). A memoir in mathematics, it is all about how a girl next door, nurtured by her family, moved from the simple math puzzles that were the staple of dinnertime conversation to prime numbers, the Sieve of Eratosthenes, Fermat's Little Theorem, googols--and finally into her breathtaking algorithm.

***The Killer Angels***, by Michael Shaara

In the four most bloody and courageous days of our nation's history, two armies fought for two dreams. One dreamed of freedom, the other of a way of life. Far more than rifles and bullets were carried into battle. There were memories. There were promises. There was love. And far more than men fell on those Pennsylvania fields. Shattered futures, forgotten innocence, and crippled beauty were also the casualties of war. Unique, sweeping, and unforgettable, *The Killer Angels* is a dramatic re-creation of the battleground for America's destiny.



*Madam Secretary: A Memoir*, by Madeleine Albright

Madeleine Albright, born in Prague, was confirmed as the sixty-fourth US Secretary of State in 1997. Her distinguished career in government includes positions on the National Security Council, as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and on Capitol Hill. In this outspoken and much-praised memoir, the first female Secretary of State in American history shares her remarkable story and provides an insider's view of world affairs during a period of unprecedented turbulence. *Madam Secretary* combines warm humor with profound insights and personal testament with fascinating additions to the historical record. Read an article about Albright and her book

*The Greatest Generation*, by Tom Brokaw

Brokaw defines "the greatest generation" as American citizens who came of age during the Great Depression and the Second World War and went on to build modern America. The vehicle used to define the generation further is the stories told by a cross section of men and women throughout the country. The approximately 50 stories are listed in the table of contents under eight topics: Ordinary People; Homefront; Heroes; Women in Uniform and Out; Shame; Love, Marriage and Commitment; Famous People; and the Arena.

**If you have any questions, feel free to email Ms. Esposito,  
the English Department Chairperson, at [mesposito@prestonhs.org](mailto:mesposito@prestonhs.org)**