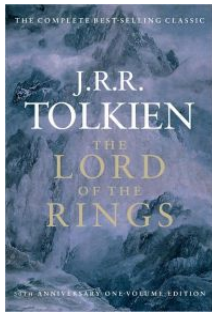


# English 12 Summer Reading 2020

As the English 12 teaching team, we have developed a summer reading assignment that prioritizes student choice and engagement. Below, we have listed the central themes we will explore in our classes throughout the school year, along with suggested books that connect to these themes. Every English 12 student should read 1-4 books connected to the course themes this summer and prepare to participate in class discussions and activities based upon those books. The suggested list represents a wide range of genres, styles, and reading levels. In fact, many of these books are prize-winners and best-sellers that might appeal to parents or other family members as well. We hope that this list will spark shared reading experiences within your families this summer.

While we have selected these books because of their literary merit and thematic connections, we also invite you to expand beyond this list if you find a different book that connects well to one or more of these themes. We also encourage you to do some research before selecting the books you will read this summer. For more guidance and information on book selection, visit [www.commonsemmedia.org](http://www.commonsemmedia.org), [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com), or email the English Department Chair, Lisa Beskenis, at [ltbeskenis@fcps.edu](mailto:ltbeskenis@fcps.edu).

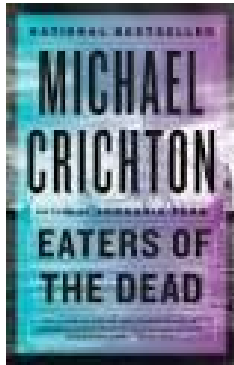
## Beowulf and Mythology as Fiction



### *Lord of the Rings* Trilogy by J. R. R. Tolkien

- Ebook available for free from the [McLean High School Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Fairfax County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Arlington County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Loudoun County Public Library](#)

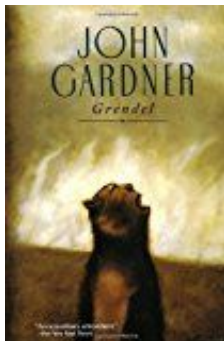
"The Lord of the Rings tells of the great quest undertaken by Frodo and the Fellowship of the Ring: Gandalf the Wizard; the hobbits Merry, Pippin, and Sam; Gimli the Dwarf; Legolas the Elf; Boromir of Gondor; and a tall, mysterious stranger called Strider."-Amazon



### *Eaters of the Dead* by Michael Crichton

- Ebook available for free from [Fairfax County Public Library](#)

"The year is A.D. 922. A refined Arab courtier, representative of the powerful Caliph of Baghdad, encounters a party of Viking warriors who are journeying to the barbaric North. He is appalled by their Viking customs—the wanton sexuality of their pale, angular women, their disregard for cleanliness . . . their cold-blooded human sacrifices. But it is not until they reach the depths of the Northland that the courtier learns the horrifying and inescapable truth: he has been enlisted by these savage, inscrutable warriors to help combat a terror that plagues them—a monstrosity that emerges under cover of night to slaughter the Vikings and devour their flesh . . ."--Amazon

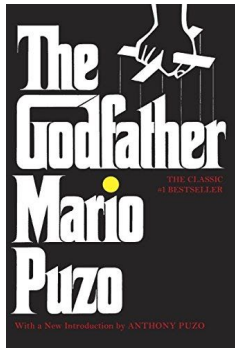


### *Grendel* by John Gardner

The first and most terrifying monster in English literature, from the great early epic *Beowulf*, tells his own side of the story in this frequently banned book. This classic and much lauded retelling of *Beowulf* follows the monster Grendel as he learns about humans and fights the war at the center of the Anglo Saxon classic epic. This is the book William Gass called "one of the finest of our contemporary fictions."

## Shakespearean Tragedy and the Tragic Hero

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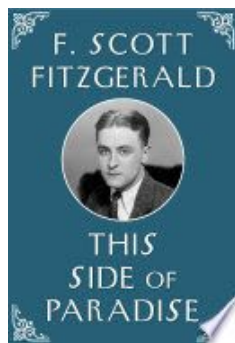


### *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo

- Ebook available for free from [Fairfax County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Arlington County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Loudoun County Public Library](#)

"A number-one *New York Times* bestseller in 1969, Mario Puzo's epic was turned into the incomparable film of the same name, directed by Francis Ford Coppola, which won the Academy Award for Best Picture. It is the original classic that has been often imitated, but never matched. A tale of family and society, law and order, obedience and rebellion, it reveals the dark passions of human nature played out against a backdrop of the American

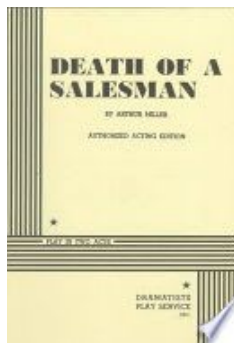
dream."--Amazon



### *This Side of Paradise* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

- Ebook available for free from the [McLean High School Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Fairfax County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Arlington County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Loudoun County Public Library](#)

*This Side of Paradise*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's romantic and witty first novel, was written when the author was only twenty-three years old. This semi-autobiographical story of the handsome, indulged, and idealistic Princeton student Amory Blaine received critical raves and catapulted Fitzgerald to instant fame. Now, readers can enjoy the newly edited, authorized version of this early classic of the Jazz Age, based on Fitzgerald's original manuscript. In this definitive text, *This Side of Paradise* captures the rhythms and romance of Fitzgerald's youth and offers a poignant portrait of the "Lost Generation." (GoodReads Review)

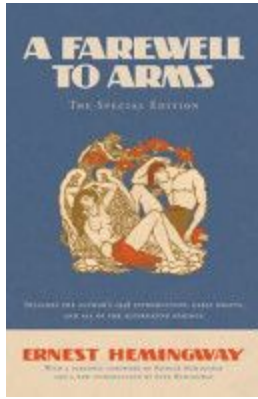


### *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller

- Ebook available for free from [Arlington County Public Library](#)

*'For a salesman, there is no rock bottom to life. He don't put a bolt to a nut, he don't tell you the law or give you medicine. He's a man way out there in the blue, riding on a smile and a shoeshine.'*

Willy Loman has been a salesman for 34 years. At 60, he is cast aside, his usefulness exhausted. With no future to dream about he must face the crushing disappointments of his past. He takes one final brave action, but is he heroic at last or a self-deluding fool? (GoodReads Review)



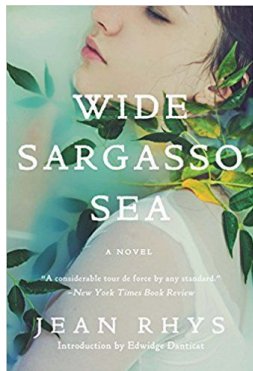
## *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway

→ Ebook available for free from [Arlington County Public Library](#)

In 1918 Ernest Hemingway went to war, to the *war to end all wars*. He volunteered for ambulance service in Italy, was wounded, and twice decorated. Out of his experiences came *A Farewell to Arms*. Hemingway's description of war is unforgettable. He recreates the fear, the comradeship, the courage of his young American volunteer, and the men and women he meets in Italy with total conviction. But *A Farewell to Arms* is not only a novel of war. In it, Hemingway has also created a love story of immense drama and uncompromising passion. (GoodReads Review)

## The Female Perspective

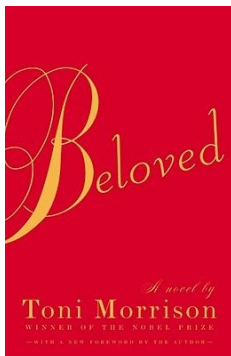
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## *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys

A masterpiece of modern fiction, was Jean Rhys's return to the literary center stage. She had a startling early career and was known for her extraordinary prose and haunting women characters. With *Wide Sargasso Sea*, her last and best-selling novel, she ingeniously brings into light one of fiction's most fascinating characters: the madwoman in the attic from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. This mesmerizing work introduces us to Antoinette Cosway, a sensual and protected young woman who is sold into marriage to the prideful Mr. Rochester. Rhys portrays Cosway amidst a society so driven by hatred, so skewed in its sexual relations, that it can literally drive a woman out of her mind.

A new introduction by the award-winning Edwidge Danticat, author most recently of *Claire of the Sea Light*, expresses the enduring importance of this work. Drawing on her own Caribbean background, she illuminates the setting's impact on Rhys and her astonishing work. (New York Times)



## *Beloved* by Toni Morrison

- Ebook available for free from [Fairfax County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Arlington County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Loudoun County Public Library](#)

Staring unflinchingly into the abyss of slavery, this spellbinding novel transforms history into a story as powerful as Exodus and as intimate as a lullaby.

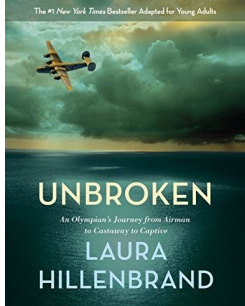
Sethe was born a slave and escaped to Ohio, but eighteen years later she is still not free. She has too many memories of Sweet Home, the beautiful farm where so many hideous things happened. Her new home is haunted by the ghost of her baby, who died nameless

and whose tombstone is engraved with a single word: Beloved.

Filled with bitter poetry and suspense as taut as a rope, *Beloved* is a towering achievement by Nobel Prize laureate Toni Morrison. (GoodReads Review)

## ***The Stranger* and Existentialism**

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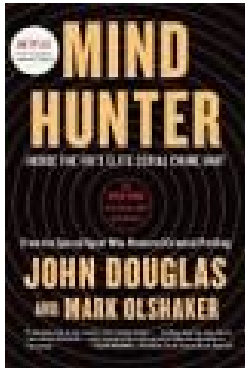


### ***Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand**

- Ebook available for free from [Fairfax County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Arlington County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Loudoun County Public Library](#)

In boyhood, Louis Zamperini was an incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when World War II began, the athlete became an airman, embarking on a journey that led to a doomed flight on a May afternoon in 1943. When his Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean, against all odds, Zamperini survived, adrift on a foundering life raft. Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would be suspended on the fraying wire of his will.

*Unbroken* is an unforgettable testament to the resilience of the human mind, body, and spirit, brought vividly to life by *Seabiscuit* author Laura Hillenbrand.--Amazon



### ***Mindhunter* by John Douglas and Mark Olshaker**

- Ebook available for free from the [McLean High School Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Fairfax County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Arlington County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Loudoun County Public Library](#) (**audio**)

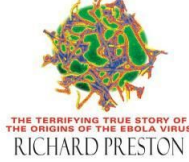
Discover the classic, behind-the-scenes chronicle of John E. Douglas' twenty-five-year career in the FBI Investigative Support Unit, where he used psychological profiling to delve into the minds of the country's most notorious serial killers and criminals.

In chilling detail, the legendary Mindhunter takes us behind the scenes of some of his most gruesome, fascinating, and challenging cases—and into the darkest recesses of our worst nightmares. During his twenty-five year career with the Investigative Support Unit, Special Agent John Douglas became a legendary figure in law enforcement, pursuing some of the most notorious and sadistic serial killers of our time: the man who hunted prostitutes for sport in the woods of Alaska, the Atlanta child murderer, and Seattle's Green River killer, the case that nearly cost Douglas his life.

As the model for Jack Crawford in *The Silence of the Lambs*, Douglas has confronted, interviewed, and studied scores of serial killers and assassins, including Charles Manson, Ted Bundy, and Ed Gein, who dressed himself in his victims' peeled skin. Using his uncanny ability to become both predator and prey, Douglas examines each crime scene, reliving both the killer's and the victim's actions in his mind, creating their profiles, describing their habits, and predicting their next moves.--Amazon

1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

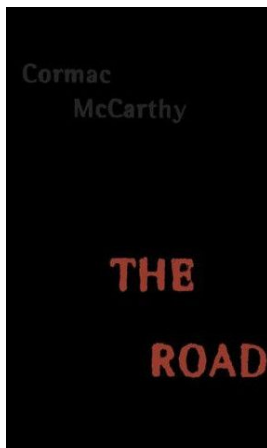
# THE HOT ZONE



## *The Hot Zone* by Richard Preston

- Ebook available for free from the [McLean High School Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Fairfax County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Arlington County Public Library](#) (audio)
- Ebook available for free from [Loudoun County Public Library](#)

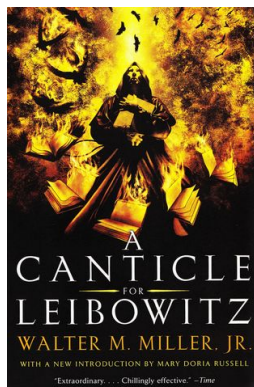
Science and literature come together in this story of a real life Ebola scare right down the road. **The bestselling landmark account of the first emergence of the Ebola virus.** A highly infectious, deadly virus from the central African rain forest suddenly appears in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. There is no cure. In a few days 90 percent of its victims are dead. A secret military SWAT team of soldiers and scientists is mobilized to stop the outbreak of this exotic "hot" virus. *The Hot Zone* tells this dramatic story, giving a hair-raising account of the appearance of rare and lethal viruses and their "crashes" into the human race. Shocking, frightening, and impossible to ignore, *The Hot Zone* proves that truth really is scarier than fiction.--Amazon



## *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy

- Ebook available for free from the [McLean High School Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Fairfax County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Arlington County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Loudoun County Public Library](#)

A searing, post apocalyptic novel destined to become Cormac McCarthy's masterpiece. A father and his son walk alone through burned America. Nothing moves in the ravaged landscape save the ash on the wind. It is cold enough to crack stones, and when the snow falls it is gray. The sky is dark. Their destination is the coast, although they don't know what, if anything, awaits them there. They have nothing; just a pistol to defend themselves against the lawless bands that stalk the road, the clothes they are wearing, a cart of scavenged food—and each other. (GoodReads Review)

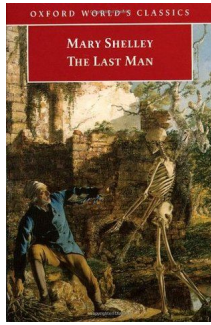


## *A Canticle for Leibowitz* by Walter Miller

- Ebook available for free from the [McLean High School Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Fairfax County Public Library](#) (audio)
- Ebook available for free from [Arlington County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Loudoun County Public Library](#)

Winner of the 1961 Hugo Award for Best Novel and widely considered one of the most accomplished, powerful, and enduring classics of modern speculative fiction, Walter M. Miller, Jr.'s *A Canticle for Leibowitz* is a true landmark of twentieth-century literature—a chilling and still provocative look at a post-apocalyptic future.

In a nightmarish ruined world slowly awakening to the light after sleeping in darkness, the infant rediscoveries of science are secretly nourished by cloistered monks dedicated to the study and preservation of the relics and writings of the blessed Saint Isaac Leibowitz. From here the story spans centuries of ignorance, violence, and barbarism, viewing through a sharp, satirical eye the relentless progression of a human race damned by its inherent humanness to recelebrate its grand foibles and repeat its grievous mistakes. Seriously funny, stunning, and tragic, eternally fresh, imaginative, and altogether remarkable, *A Canticle for Leibowitz* retains its ability to enthrall and amaze. It is now, as it always has been, a masterpiece.



## *The Last Man* by Mary Shelley

- Ebook available for free from the [McLean High School Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Fairfax County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Arlington County Public Library](#)
- Ebook available for free from [Loudoun County Public Library](#)

A futuristic story of tragic love and of the gradual extermination of the human race by plague, *The Last Man* is Mary Shelley's most important novel after *Frankenstein*. With intriguing portraits of Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron, the novel offers a vision of the future that expresses a reaction against Romanticism, and demonstrates the failure of the imagination and of art to redeem the doomed characters. (GoodReads Review)