

**INDEPENDENT READING LIST  
ARDSLEY HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
2009- 2010**

Your independent reading selections must be made from the list below, unless you receive approval directly from your teacher. Feel free to select other titles by the authors listed.

For the list below, the accompanying numbers indicate the relative complexity of language and maturity of content.

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3  
Most accessible Most Challenging

**Classics (Choose either the listed title or any novel by the author).**

**Alcott, Louisa May. Little Women (3):** Chronicles the joys and sorrows of the four March sisters as they grow into young women in mid-nineteenth-century New England.

**Austen, Jane. Emma (3):** Emma, whose favorite hobby is matchmaking, learns that the better judgment is not always her own—for fans of Heckerling's *Clueless*.

**Sense and Sensibility (3):** two sisters struggle with poverty and revealing their emotions to their loves

**Pride and Prejudice (3):** Elizabeth learns about love, the folly of humankind and the dangers of judging by first appearances—for fans of Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary*. **(NOTE: THIS IN AN AP12 CORE TEXT).**

**Bronte, Emily. Wuthering Heights (3):** In early nineteenth-century Yorkshire, the passionate attachment between a headstrong young girl and a founding boy brought up by her father causes tragedy for them and many others, even in the next generation.

**Buck, Pearl S. The Good Earth (2):** Wang Lung, a peasant in China in the 1920s, becomes a prosperous landowner with the help of his humble wife, O'Lan, with whom he shares a devotion to duty, land, and survival.

**Burroughs, William S. Naked Lunch (3):** A novel about narcotics addict Bill Lee, his travels in search of drugs, and his eventual descent into the nightmarish fantasy world of Interzone.

**Capote, Truman Breakfast at Tiffany's (2):** The book is the story of Miss Holiday Golightly from the narrator's perspective. She is a woman of mystery to everyone in her life, and the narrator can only learn about her life by watching her through a "window"; he can only see what is on her surface.

**In Cold Blood (3):** The reporter gets so far inside the subject, becomes so familiar, that he projects events and conversations as if he were really there. Two two-time losers living in a lonely house in western Kansas are out to make the heist of their life, but when things don't go as planned, the robbery turns ugly. From there, the book is a real-life look into murder, prison and the criminal mind.

**Crane, Stephen. The Red Badge of Courage (2):** Story of a young Union soldier under fire for the first time during the Civil War.

**Dickens, Charles. A Tale of Two Cities (3):** A young Englishman gives his life during the French Revolution to

save the husband of the woman he loves.

**Dinesen, Isek. Out of Africa (3):** The author describes her life and adventures on a coffee plantation in Kenya for seventeen years before returning to Denmark in 1931 to write.

**Doctorow, E.L. Ragtime (3):** The lives of three remarkable families become entwined with Henry Ford, Harry Houdini, J.P. Morgan, Theodore Dreiser, Sigmund Freud and Emiliano Zapata at the turn of the century.

**Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. Crime and Punishment (3):** Raskolnikov, a former Russian student, murders an old pawnbroker and her sister, but the guilt which enfolds him and with which he struggles result in a tragedy of tension and terror. **(NOTE: THIS IS AN AP 11 CORE TEXT).**

**Ellison, Ralph. Invisible Man (3):** In the course of his wanderings from a Southern college to New York's Harlem, an African-American man becomes involved in a series of adventures.

**Eugenides, Jeffrey. Middlesex (3):** A young person discovers that she is a hermaphrodite and must cope with the consequences.

**Faulkner, William. As I Lay Dying (3):** Describes a family's struggle to get their mother properly buried, while they encounter catastrophes of flood and fire, as well as the chaos of their own feelings.

**The Bear (3):** The story of a young man's development against a background of vanishing wilderness.

**Light in August (3):** Joe Christmas, who appears to be white but is part African-American, kills Joanna Burden, a spinster with whom he has had an affair. He is captured, castrated, and killed by outraged townspeople.

**Fitzgerald, F. Scott. Babylon Revisited (3):** An American expatriate stockbroker Charlie Wales, a recovering alcoholic, returns to his Paris home after Black Thursday to regain custody of his eleven-year-old daughter from his sister-in-law, who blames him for his wife's death.

**This Side of Paradise (3):** Set in the 1920's Amory Blaine, this novel traces the life of Amory Blaine from the end of prep school through Princeton to the start of an uncertain career in NYC.

**Forster, E.M. A Room with a View (3):** A young English woman is soon at war with the snobbery of her class and her own desires when she finds herself attracted to someone socially unsuitable.

**Gogol, Nikolai. Diary of a Madman and other stories (1):** Opening a door to a bizarre world of broad comedy, fantasy, and social commentary, the title story offers an unforgettable depiction of a lunatic civil servant and his struggles to be noticed by the woman he loves.

**Hardy, Thomas. Tess of the D'Urbervilles (3):** A young woman attempts to restore her family's fortunes, is seduced by a heartless aristocrat, and is punished by society's double standards when she gets a chance at real love.

**Heller, Joseph. Catch-22 (3):** A bombardier, based in Italy during World War II, repeatedly tries to avoid flying bombing missions while his colonel tries to get him killed by demanding that he fly more and more missions.

**Hemingway, Ernest. A Farewell to Arms (2):** An American ambulance officer serving on the Austro-Italian front deserts to join an English nurse after the retreat of Caporetto.

**Hurston, Zora Neale. Their Eyes Were Watching God (3):** An African-American woman searches for a fulfilling relationship through two loveless marriages and finally finds it in an itinerant laborer and gambler.

**Joyce, James. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (3):** An autobiographical novel depicting the childhood, adolescence, and early manhood of Stephen Dedalus.

**Marquez, Gabriel Garcia. 100 Years of Solitude (3):** Story of the rise and fall, birth and death of a mythical town of Macondo through the history of the Buendía family.

**Love in the Time of Cholera (3):** A love story that ranges from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early decades of our own, tracing the lives of three people and their entwined fates.

**Maugham, Somerset W. The Painted Veil (2):** in this suspenseful novel set in colonial China, a bored English wife sees her affair take a nasty turn.

**Up at the Villa (2):** People whose seemingly steady lives become completely and utterly altered. This text was made into a feature film in 2000.

**Mitchell, Margaret. Gone With the Wind (3):** After the Civil War sweeps away the genteel life to which she has been accustomed, Scarlett O'Hara sets about to salvage her plantation home.

**Morrison, Tony. Beloved (3):** Sethe, an escaped slave who now lives in post-Civil War Ohio works hard at "beating back the past." She struggles to keep Beloved, an intruder, from gaining possession of her present while throwing off the legacy of her past. **(NOTE: THIS IS AN AP12 CORE TEXT).**

**The Bluest Eye (3):** An African-American girl in Ohio, in the early 1940s, prays for her eyes to turn blue so that she will be beautiful.

**Sula (3):** Traces the lives of two African-American heroines from their growing up together in a small Ohio town, to their sharply divergent paths of womanhood, to their ultimate confrontation and reconciliation.

**Paton, Alan. Cry, the Beloved Country (3):** Accused of murdering a white man, a young black man in South Africa is helped by his minister father and by a white attorney, but racism prevents justice from being done.

**Potok, Chaim. The Chosen (2):** Recounts the story of Reuven Malter and Danny Saunders--one an orthodox Jew, the other the son of a Hasidic rabbi--and the course of their friendship as they grow up in Brooklyn.

**Rand, Ayn. The Fountainhead (3):** The story of a gifted young architect, his violent battle against conventional standards, and his explosive love affair with a beautiful woman who struggles to defeat him.

**Roth, Philip. American Pastoral (3):** Seymour "Swede" Levov, a hard working man who came of age in triumphant postwar America, must give up his dreams of a peaceful life when his daughter grows up to be a 1960s revolutionary terrorist.

**Human Stain (3):** Coleman Silk, a New England professor forced into retirement on false charges of racism, has a fifty-year-old secret.

**Smith, Betty. A Tree Grows in Brooklyn (1):** Francie Nolan experiences the problems of growing up in a Brooklyn, New York slum in the early 1900's.

**Steinbeck, John. East of Eden (2):** Presents a centennial edition of the 1952 novel in which Cal and Aron, twin brothers in early twentieth-century California, act out a modern-day version of the Bible story of Cain and Abel.

**Of Mice and Men (2):** Sustained by the hope of someday owning a farm of their own, two migrant laborers arrive to work on a ranch in central California.

**The Pearl (2):** Terrible events follow the discovery of a magnificent pearl by a poor Mexican fisherman.

**Styron, William. Sophie's Choice (3):** Three friends, Stingo, a twenty-two-year-old writer; Sophie, a survivor of the Nazi camps; and Nathan, her mercurial lover, share magical, heart-warming times until doom overtakes them as Sophie's and Nathan's darkest secrets are revealed.

**Twain, Mark. Huckleberry Finn (3):** Huck and Jim experience adventures along the Mississippi River. Along the way, they experience excitement, danger and self-discovery, along with a host of nutty characters.

**Vonnegut, Kurt. Slaughterhouse Five (3):** 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.

**Wilde, Oscar. The Picture of Dorian Gray (2):** A youth of exceptional beauty gets his wish to remain untouched by the passage of time when it is arranged that his portrait will age in his place.

**Walker, Alice. The Color Purple (2):** Tells the story of two African-American sisters: Nettie, a missionary in Africa, and Celie, a child-wife living in the south, in the medium of their letters to each other.

**Woolf, Virginia. To the Lighthouse (3):** Examines the complicated relationships between members of the Ramsay family and their guests during stays at their summer home in Scotland between 1910 and 1920.

**Wouk, Herman. The Caine Mutiny : A novel of World War II (3):** This book is the account of a well-to-do man who serves on a minesweeper during World War II, describing the events on the Navy ship Caine and what ultimately led the first mate, Lieutenant Maryk, a man with little schooling or experience, to take command of the vessel from Captain Queeg and the subsequent court-martial of Maryk.

**The Winds of War : A Novel (3):** The lives of the members of the Henry family, headed by Naval Commander 'Pug' Henry, are irrevocably changed in the days heading up to the outbreak of World War II.

**Wright, Richard. Native Son (2):** A young African-American man, trapped in the poverty-stricken ghetto of Chicago's South Side, kills a rich white girl in a moment of panic, and finds himself on a path to self-destruction.