

**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

**Drama**

**Aeschylus. Agamemnon (3):** Ancient Greek trilogy which traces the chain of murder and revenge within the royal house of Artreus.

**Albee, Edward. Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf? (3):** A dark comedy that portrays husband and wife George and Martha in a night of dangerous fun and games. By the evening's end, a stunning, almost unbearable revelation provides a climax that has shocked audiences for years.

**Anderson, Maxwell. Anne of the Thousand Days (2):** Presents the script of a 1948 play about the lives of England's King Henry VIII and his wife, Anne Boleyn.

**Anderson, R. Tea and Sympathy (2):** English teashop and restaurant in New York, based on her time working there as a waitress, and includes sixty recipes from owner Nicola Perry.

**Chase, Mary. Harvey (1):** When Elwood P. Dowd starts to introduce his imaginary friend Harvey, a six and a half foot rabbit, to guests at a dinner party, his sister, Veta, has seen as much of his eccentric behavior as she can tolerate. She decides to have him committed to a sanitarium to spare her daughter, Myrtle Mae, and their family from future embarrassment.

**Chekhov, Anton. Uncle Vanya (3):** This drama takes place on an estate in 19th-century Russia and explores the complex interrelationships between a retired professor, his second wife, and the daughter and brother-in-law from his first marriage. Interwoven themes of weakness, delusion, and despair—balanced by an underlying message of courage and hope—make this one of the most expressive of Chekhov's works.

**Christie, Agatha. Witness for the Prosecution (1):** Witness for the Prosecution: A murder trial takes a diabolical turn when the wife of the accused takes the stand...A woman's sixth sense—and a loaded revolver—signal premonitions of doom...

**Durang, Christopher. The Actor's Nightmare (2):** Having casually wandered on stage, George is informed that one of the actors, Eddie, has been in an auto accident and he must replace him immediately. Apparently no one is sure of what play is being performed but George.

**Euripedes. Medea (3):** Wife of Jason of the Argonauts seeks revenge on husband for abandoning her. One cannot imagine a more diabolical revenge scheme.

**Fugard, Athol. Master Harold and the Boys (3):** Set in apartheid South Africa, this is a roller coaster of emotions that hits hard. Anyone who has ever experienced racism ought to read this, and anyone who thinks they've never encountered it—much less handed it out themselves, must read it!

- Hart, Moss. The Man Who Came to Dinner (1):** Presents the text of the 1939 play in which Sheridan Whiteside, having dined with the Stanleys, slips on their doorstep and breaks his hip, requiring him to take up residence with the Stanleys for the duration of his convalescence, and turning the Stanley's household upside down.
- Hellman, Lillian. The Little Foxes (3):** Picture a charming home in the South. Into this peaceful scene put the wicked Hubbard family and the lonely Birdie.
- Henrick Ibsen. A Doll's House (3):** Torvald's little doll Nora may not stay caged forever in this beautiful play about the desire for freedom.
- Howard, Lindsay. Clarence Day's Life With Father (1):** Contains the script for the play "Life With Father" in which a family struggles to decide whether or not to have their father properly baptized.
- Ives, David. All in the Timing and other plays (2):** A collection of fourteen plays by David Ives that portray the idiosyncrasies that exist in American society.
- Kesselring, Joseph. Arsenic and Old Lace (2):** A comedy about charming and innocent ladies, the antics of their brother who thinks he is Teddy Roosevelt, and the activities of the other brother.
- Kushner, Tony. Angels in America (3):** Characters of different backgrounds are confronted by AIDS, homophobia and difficult choices and decisions.
- Mamet, David. American Buffalo (2):** A classic tragedy, *American Buffalo* is the story of three men struggling in the pursuit of their distorted vision of the American Dream.
- McCullers, Carson. Member of the Wedding (1):** Twelve-year-old Frankie is bored with life until she hears about her older brother's wedding. Frankie takes on an overly active role in the wedding, hoping even to go, uninvited, on the honeymoon, so deep is her desire to be the member of something larger, more accepting than herself.
- McDonagh, Martin. The Beauty Queen of Leenane (3):** A darkly funny portrait of an Irish mother and her daughter in a small village...dramatic turns develop.
- Miller, Arthur. All My Sons (3):** Joe Keller and Herbert Deever, partners in a machine shop during the war, turned out defective airplane parts, causing the deaths of many men. Deever was sent to prison while Keller escaped punishment and went on to make a lot of money.
- Molnar, Ferenc. Liliom (2):** It tells the story of a carousel barker who falls in love with a common girl. It shows the beauty of love, and the horrors of physical abuse.
- Osborne, John. Look Back in Anger (3):** Jimmy Porter plays trumpet badly. He browbeats his flatmate, terrorizes his wife, and is not above sleeping with her best friend-who loathes Jimmy almost as much as he loathes himself.
- Patric, John. The Teahouse of the August Moon (2):** A comedy first performed in 1953 about the efforts of America's occupation troops to bring democracy to the small village of Tobiki.
- Shaffer, Peter. Equus (3):** A disturbed teenage boy meets with a psychiatrist to uncover the reasons behind his antisocial and violent behavior.

**Shaw, George Bernard. Pygmalion (2):** An idealistic professor transforms an unsophisticated Cockney girl into a refined young lady in turn-of-the-century London.

**Sheridan, Richard Brinsley. The Rivals (3):** Brilliant comic masterpiece revolving around false identities, romantic entanglements, and parental disapproval satirizes the pretentiousness and sentimentality of 18th-century society.

**Simon, Neil. Lost in Yonkers (2):** After the death of their mother, two boys in 1940s New York are sent to live with their difficult grandmother.

**Barefoot in the Park (1):** Set in 1964, Barefoot in the Park follows the lives of newlyweds Paul and Connie Bratter as they adjust to married life in a tiny Greenwich Village apartment. Paul is a lawyer who's wound up a little too tight, while Connie is a free spirit bubbling over with romantic notions

**Sophocles. Electra (3):** Electra anxiously awaits for the return of her brother Orestes. Together, they avenge the death of their father at the hands of their mother and her lover Aegisthus.

**Synge, John. The Playboy of the Western World (3):** Christy Mahon turns up at the home of Michael Flaherty and his daughter, Peegen Mike, and is accepted by the town as a hero following his boastful story of murdering his tyrannical father. The town, especially the women, is seduced by Christy but ultimately turns savagely against him when his "slain" father appears looking for his son.

**Wilde, Oscar. The Importance of Being Earnest (3):** The play pokes fun of society and manners. The characters' plans are constantly sent topsy-turvy by unexpected turns of events. And, of course, everyone wants to *be* or to *marry* an Earnest.

**Wilder. Thornton. Our Town (2):** Taking as his material three periods in the history of a placid New Hampshire town, Mr. Wilder has transformed the simple events of human life into universal reverie. He has given familiar facts a deeply moving, philosophical perspective.

**Williams, Tennessee. The Glass Menagerie (3):** Williams' alter ego, a young man, recounts his shy sister's difficulties with her overbearing mother, who is determined to make her something she is not or

**Wilson, August. Joe Turner Has Come and Gone (2):** It is August in Pittsburgh, 1911. The sun falls out of heaven like a stone.