

**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

Science Fiction/Fantasy

Adams, Douglas. Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (1): Arthur Dent travels the galaxy with his pal, Ford Prefect, getting into horrible messes and generally wreaking hilarious havoc.

Adams, Richard. Watership Down (2): Chronicles the adventures of a group of rabbits searching for a safe place to establish a new warren where they can live in peace.

Anderson, MT. Feed (1): This brilliant satire is set in a future world where television and computers are connected directly into people's brains when they are babies. The result is a chillingly recognizable consumer society where empty-headed kids are driven by fashion and shopping and the avid pursuit of silly entertainment

Asimov, Isaac. I. Robot (2): A story of robots gone mad, mind-reading robots, robots with a sense of humor, robot politicians, and robots who secretly run the world, all told with a dramatic blend of science fact and science fiction.

Atwood, Margaret. The Handmaid's Tale (3): A futuristic, frightening tale in which women are valued only as "seed-bearers"

Oryx and Crake (3): Margaret Atwood depicts a near-future world that turns from the merely horrible to the horrific, from a fool's paradise to a bio-wasteland. Snowman (once known as Jimmy) sleeps in a tree and just might be the only human left on our devastated planet. He is not entirely alone, however.

Bear, Greg. Darwin's Children (3): Parents of Stella, a genetically-enhanced child born as a result of mutations in the human genome caused by the SHEVA virus, lose the struggle to keep their daughter safe from a repressive government that wants to control the virus children by isolating them from the general population.

Darwin's Radio (2): Biologist Kay Lang, a specialist in retroviruses, teams up with virus hunter and anthropologist in an attempt to trace the ancient source of a flu-like disease that is killing expectant mothers and their offspring and threatening the future of the human race.

Bradbury, Ray. Fahrenheit 451 (2): In this frightening vision of the future, firemen don't put out fires--they start them in order to burn books. Bradbury's vividly painted society holds up the appearance of happiness as the highest goal--a place where trivial information is good, and knowledge and ideas are bad.

Something Wicked This Way Comes (1): The memorable story of two boys, James Nightshade and William Halloway, and the evil that grips their small Midwestern town with the arrival of a "dark carnival" one Autumn midnight. How these two innocents, both age 13, save the souls of the town (as well as their own), makes for compelling reading on timeless themes.

Brooks, Terry. The Sword of Shannara Trilogy (1): Long ago, the wars of the ancient Evil had ruined the world and forced mankind to compete with many other races---gnomes, trolls, dwarfs, and elves. But in peaceful Shady Vale, half-elfin Shea Ohmsford knew little of such troubles.

Burgess, Anthony. A Clockwork Orange (3): Told by the central character, Alex, this brilliant, hilarious, and disturbing novel creates an alarming futuristic vision of violence, high technology, and authoritarianism. Burgess' 1963 classic stands alongside Orwell's *1984* and Huxley's *Brave New World* as a classic of 20th century post-industrial alienation, often shocking us into a thoughtful exploration of the meaning of free will and the conflict between good and evil.

Butler, Octavia. Parable of the Talents (2): Lauren Olamina, a black teenager, grew up in a 21st-century America that was tearing itself apart. Global warming, massive unemployment, gang warfare and corporate greed combined to break down society in general and her impoverished southern California neighborhood in particular. A victim of hyperempathy syndrome, a disorder that compels its victims to believe they feel others' pain, Lauren found herself homeless and alone in a violent world.

Kindred (2): Dawn introduces the reader to a fascinating alien race that intends to save a post-nuclear holocaust earth by repopulating it with half-human, half-alien beings.

Card, Orson Scott. The Ender's series (1): Ender Wiggin is a very bright young boy with a powerful skill. One of a group of children bred to be military geniuses and save Earth from an inevitable attack by aliens, known here as "buggers," Ender becomes unbeatable in war games and seems poised to lead Earth to triumph over the buggers.

Clarke, Arthur C. Childhood's End (2): Great alien masters descend on Earth and take control of the world, ushering in a golden age that may be cleverly disguised creative slavery. But Clarke's legendary novel isn't about a human rebellion against alien overlords, but the evolution of humanity into its next stage, and the ultimate dwarfing power of the unknowable order of the cosmos.

Colfer, Eoin. Artemis Fowl series (1): Colfer's crime caper fantasy, the first in a series, starts off with a slam-bang premise: anti-hero Artemis Fowl is a boy-genius last in line of a legendary crime family teetering on the brink of destruction. With the assistance of his bodyguard, Butler, he masterminds his plan to regain the Fowls' former glory: capture a fairy and hold her ransom for the legendary fairy gold.

Cook, Robin. Chromosome 6 (2): A medical examiner in New York worried by some odd autopsy findings and a scientist in equatorial Africa performing genetic experiments that could dramatically alter life on earth are drawn together in Cook's latest medical thriller.

Cormier, Robert. Fade (2): In the summer of 1938, Paul Moreaux, the thirteen-year-old son of French Canadian immigrants, inherits the ability to become invisible, but this power soon leads to death and destruction.

Crichton, Michael. Jurassic Park (2): An island off Costa Rica will soon be the world's most ambitious theme park--a dinosaur preserve. A visionary financier's biotechnology company has succeeded in cloning these extinct reptiles. When a rival genetics firm attempts to steal frozen dinosaur embryos, things go haywire.

Sphere (2): The focus is humankind's encounter with an alien life form. Within a space ship lying on the sea bottom is a mysterious sphere that promises each of the main characters a personal reward: military might, professional prestige, power and understanding. Trapped underwater with the sphere, the humans confront eerie and increasingly dangerous threats after communication with the alien object has been achieved.

Timeline (2): How do you find a missing colleague who inserted a message for help in a 600 year old document, keep your head on, and get home? Imagine being transported to an ancient world that is as real to you as a telephone only to find that the world is as you imagined, but very different and laden with more pitfalls than you thought.

Dick, Philip K. Dr. Futurity (1): Jim Parsons is a talented doctor, skilled at the most advanced medical techniques and dedicated to saving lives. But after a bizarre road accident leaves him hundreds of years in the future, Parsons is horrified to discover an incredibly advanced civilization that zealously embraces death. Now, he is caught between his own instincts and training as a healer and a society where it is illegal to save lives.

Finney, Jack. Time and Again (1): Simon Morley, an illustrator, is enlisted by a secret government project to hypnotize himself into 1880s New York. He is successful, and goes back to investigate a mystery. As we are overwhelmed with details of 1880s New York, we can almost believe that this time travel is possible.

Funke, Cornelia. The Thief Lord (1): A novel about thieving children, a disguise-obsessed detective and a magical merry-go-round. After their mother dies, 12-year-old Prosper and his brother, Bo, five, flee from Hamburg to Venice (an awful aunt plans to adopt only Bo). They live in an abandoned movie theater with several other street children under the care of the Thief Lord, a cocky youth who claims to rob "the city's most elegant houses."

Goodkind, Terry. Temple of the Winds (1): Richard, the Seeker of Truth, is caught up in a world of magic, war and extraordinary dangers. His actions and decisions determine the fate of this world.

Haldeman, Joe. The Accidental Time Machine (2): Hugo-winner Haldeman's skillful writing makes this unusually thoughtful and picaresque tale shine. Matt Fuller, a likable underachiever stuck as a lab assistant at a near-future MIT, is startled when the calibrator he built begins disappearing and reappearing, jumping forward in time for progressively longer intervals

Camouflage (2): When the Navy's efforts to raise a wrecked submarine uncover an artifact from another world, they call in marine biologist Russell Sutton to help decipher what it means, but the end result of Sutton's investigation could have catastrophic consequences for the world.

Heinlein, Robert. The Puppet Masters (1): Earth was being invaded by aliens and the top security agencies were helpless: the aliens were controlling the mind of every person they encountered. It was up to Sam Cavanaugh, secret agent for a powerful and deadly spy network, to find a way to stop them.

Herbert, Frank. Dune (2): Set on the desert planet Arrakis, Paul Atreides must avenge the traitorous plot against his noble family.

Hoffman, Alice. Practical Magic (2): A tale of two sisters, Gillian and Sally Owens, brought up by their two elderly guardian aunts in a world of spells from which they eventually escape—one by running away, the other by marrying—but which never escapes from them.

- Huxley, Aldous. Brave New World (2):** Huxley’s vision of the future in his astonishing 1931 novel—a world of tomorrow in which capitalist civilization has been reconstituted through the most efficient scientific and psychological engineering. **(NOTE: THIS IS AN AP ENGLISH 11 CORE TEXT).**
- Keyes, Daniel. Flowers for Algernon (1):** Mentally retarded Charlie Gordon participates in an experiment which turns him into a genius but only temporarily.
- Lawrence, Michael. A Crack in the Line (1):** Alaric and Naia, both 16, have nearly identical lives in parallel worlds. Their parents, their house, and their circumstances are the same, with one major difference. Alaric's mother was killed in a train wreck, while Naia's mother survived. This story of alternate realities raises questions about how one's life might be changed forever by a certain turn of events.
- LeGuin, Ursula K. The Gift (2):** A boy must learn to cope with his destructive gift in this fantastic, other-world setting.
- Lewis, C.S. The Chronicles of Narnia Series (1):** Enter Lewis’ magical world where a witch decrees eternal winter; where there are more talking animals than people; and where battles are fought by Centaurs, Giants, and Fauns.
- MacLeod, Ken. The Execution Channel (2):** In the years following the War on Terrorism, people around the world cope with terrorist attacks and governments intentionally misinforming its citizens, making the only place to receive true information a rogue media outlet.
- Maguire, Gregory. Wicked (2):** A tale told from the perspective of the so-called “Wicked Witch of the West.”
- Niffenegger, Audrey. The Time Traveler’s Wife (3):** A man with an amazing gift falls in love in this gripping and unorthodox novel.
- Orwell, George. 1984 (2):** George Orwell's prophetic, nightmarish vision of "Negative Utopia" is timelier than ever—and its warnings more powerful. **(NOTE: THIS IS AN AP ENGLISH 11 CORE TEXT).**
- Paolini, Christopher. Eragon Series (1):** In Aagaesia, a fifteen-year-old boy of unknown lineage, called Eragon, finds a mysterious stone that weaves his life into an intricate tapestry of destiny, magic, and power, peopled with dragons, elves and monsters.
- Piers, Anthony. Incarnations of Immaturity Series (2):** New York Times bestselling author Piers Anthony’s long-awaited conclusion to the seven volume series—a playful, provocative, and stunning tale of morality, magic and grand adventure.
- Pratchett, Terry. Monstrous Regiment (2):** Polly Perks, an unassuming barmaid from Borogravia, cuts her hair, pretends to be a young man, and joins the army in hopes of finding her brother Paul, who marched off to war a year ago and hasn't been heard from in months.
- Pullman, Philip. The Golden Compass (His Dark Materials Series) (1):** The Saga of Lara Silvertongue, whose adventures in a parallel world (Oxford, the North Pole) invite more characters and danger with each installment.
- Rice, Anne. Interview with a Vampire Series (2):** Here are the confessions of a vampire. Hypnotic, shocking, this is a novel of mesmerizing beauty and astonishing force—a story of danger and flight, of love and loss, of suspense and resolution, and of the extraordinary power of the senses.

- Rowe, Rebecca. Forbidden Cargo (2):** Creid Xerkler, creator of the Molecular Advantage Machine that grants access to all human knowledge, is placed in a difficult position when the government Council asks him to discover whether the Imagofas, a race of illegally engineered human/machine hybrids, really exist.
- Rowling, J.K. Harry Potter series (1):** The celebrated wizard's challenges and love interests grow more complex with every book in this collection.
- Shute, Neil. On the Beach (2):** This is the classic tale of post-nuclear existence that was made into a stunning film of the 1960s.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. Treasure Island (2):** While going through the possessions of a deceased guest who owed them money, the mistress of the inn and her son find a treasure map that leads them to a pirate's fortune.
- Stirling, S.M. The Sky People (2):** Marc Vitrac is sent to the U.S. Commonwealth base on the planet Venus, where he studies the different types of life found on the planet and tries to learn how they evolved and adapted.
- Thomson, Rupert. The Divided Kingdom (3):** The leaders of a morally bankrupt country pursue reform by redistributing the population according to personality type. The "Rearrangement" results in four distinct quarters: Red (sanguine), Green (melancholic), Blue (phlegmatic), and Yellow (choleric). Details of the eerie social experiment are revealed by Thomas Parry, who is snatched from his childhood home and indoctrinated as a Red Quarter civil servant.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. Lord of the Rings series (2):** Frodo must band with the forces of good to rid the world of the evil ring and save his beloved Shire.
- Watts, Peter. Blindsight (2):** Two months after the Earth is taken over by an alien species, a space probe detects a faint signal from the edge of the solar system and attempts to make contact, despite the dangers the signal hints at, relying on a linguist with multiple personalities to make the first contact and attempt a peace agreement.
- Wells, H.G. The Time Machine (1):** A scientist invents a time machine and uses it to travel hundreds of thousands of years into the future, where he discovers the childlike Eloi and the hideous underground Morlocks.
- Zimmer-Bradley, Marion. The Mists of Avalon (2):** Even readers who don't normally enjoy Arthurian legends will love this version, a retelling from the point of view of the women behind the throne. Morgaine (more commonly known as Morgan Le Fay) and Gwenhwyfar (a Welsh spelling of Guinevere) struggle for power, using Arthur as a way to score points and promote their respective worldviews.