

**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

Teen

Allende, Isabelle. City of the Beasts & other titles (2): Alexander Cold is sent to accompany his eccentric grandmother, Kate, on a writing assignment in South America to search for a legendary nine-foot-tall "Beast." This marks the beginning of their somewhat surreal journey.

Anderson, Laurie Halse. Speak (1): A traumatic event near the end of the summer has a devastating effect on Melinda's freshman year in high school.

Catalyst (1): Eighteen-year-old Kate, who sometimes chafes at being a preacher's daughter, finds herself losing control in her senior year as she faces difficult neighbors, the possibility that she may not be accepted by the college of her choice, and an unexpected death.

Anderson, M.T. The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation – Volume 1 (2): In this fascinating and eye-opening Revolution-era novel, Octavian, a black youth raised in a Boston household of radical philosophers, is given an excellent classical education. The story's scope is immense, in both its technical challenges and underlying intellectual and moral questions.

Anonymous. Go Ask Alice (2): The torture and hell of adolescence has rarely been captured as clearly as it is in this classic diary by an anonymous, addicted teen.

Asher, Jay. Thirteen Reasons Why (2): When Clay Jenson plays the cassette tapes he received in a mysterious package, he's surprised to hear the voice of dead classmate Hannah Baker. He's one of 13 people who receive Hannah's story, which details the circumstances that led to her suicide.

Banks, Russell. Rule of the Bone (2): The story of a troubled fourteen-year-old boy who, upon leaving an abusive home life, lives on the edge of society, struggling to find himself.

Bardi, Abby. The Book of Fred (2): A teenage survivor of a fallen cult struggles in her new, secular environment.

Bloor, Edward. Taken (1): In 2036 kidnapping rich children has become an industry, but when thirteen-year-old Charity Meyers is taken and held for ransom, she soon discovers that this particular kidnapping is not what it seems.

Blume, Judy. Summer Sisters (1): Victoria and Caitlin, two girls from very different backgrounds, form a friendship

that blooms over the summers spent in Caitlin's privileged world, until heartbreak and betrayal tear them apart.

Boyne, John. The Boy in the Striped Pajamas (2): Bored and lonely after his family moves from Berlin to a place called "Out-With" in 1942, Bruno, the son of a Nazi officer, befriends a boy in striped pajamas who lives behind a wire fence.

Bray, Libba. A Great and Terrible Beauty (1): After the suspicious death of her mother in 1895, Gemma returns to England to attend a finishing school where she becomes aware of her magical powers and ability to see into the spirit world.

Brooks, Kevin. Lucas (1): On an isolated English island, Caitlin makes the painful journey from adolescence to adulthood through her experiences with a mysterious boy, whose presence has an unsettling effect on the island's inhabitants.

Chbosky, Stephen. The Perks of Being a Wallflower (1): Through a collection of letters he sends to an unknown receiver, Charlie, a freshman in high school, explores the dilemmas of growing up.

Conroy, Pat. The Great Santini (2): Eighteen-year-old Ben Meecham, a born athlete, struggles to reconcile his feelings about his father, Bull, a Marine officer whose standards and expectations for his family, and especially his firstborn son, are nearly impossible to meet.

The Lords of Discipline (2): In 1966, Will, a senior at the Carolina Military Institute, finds his views conflicting with those of his conservative, gung-ho classmates.

Cormier, Robert. Tenderness (1): A psychological thriller told from the points of view of a teenage serial killer and the runaway girl who falls in love with him.

Courtenay, Bryce. The Power of One (2): A boy in South Africa during World War II, Peekay turns to two men, one black and one white, to show him how to find the courage to dream, to succeed, to triumph over a world when all seems lost.

Corrigan, Eireann. Splintering (1): Relates, in a series of poems from different perspectives, the events and aftereffects of an intruder's violent attack on a family.

Daly, Maureen. Seventeenth Summer (1): The summer after high school graduation, seventeen-year-old Angie finds herself in love for the first time.

Davis, Amanda. Wonder When You'll Miss Me (2): Sixteen-year-old Faith is running from a brutal assault that led to a suicide attempt and a stay in rehab. Unable to adjust back into school, she invents a new identity and runs away with a traveling group of performers.

Dessen, Sarah. This Lullaby (1): Remy, a master at getting rid of boyfriends, finds herself strangely unwilling to free herself from Dexter, a disorganized musician who she suspects she has come to love.

Donnelly, Jennifer. A Northern Light (1): Mattie, determined to attend college and be a writer against the wishes of her father and boyfriend, takes a job at a hotel in 1906 where the death of a guest renews her determination to live her own life.

Draper, Sharon. Copper Sun (1): This action-packed, multifaceted, character-rich story describes

the shocking realities of the slave trade and plantation life while portraying the perseverance, resourcefulness, and triumph of the human spirit.

Green, John. Looking for Alaska (2): Miles' first year at Culver Creek Preparatory School in Alabama includes good friends and great pranks, but is defined by the search for answers about life and death after a fatal car crash.

Hautman, Pete. Godless (1): Sixteen-year-old Jason Block resists following in the footsteps of his devoutly Catholic father and instead decides to invent a new religion.

Hopkins, Ellen. Crank (2): Kristina's life is turned upside-down, when she visits her absentee father, gets turned on to the drug "crank," becomes addicted, and is lead down a desperate path that threatens her mind, soul, and her life.

Hurwina, Davida. A Time for Dancing (2): Seventeen-year-old best friends Samantha and Juliana tell their stories in alternating chapters after Juliana is diagnosed with cancer.

Jones, Patrick. Things Change (1): Sixteen-year-old Johanna has her first boyfriend, Paul, the disturbing, anger-filled student body president. As Johanna and Paul become more involved, Johanna's grades drop, her relationships with her parents and best friend are compromised, and her life is jeopardized.

Korman, Gordon. Born to Rock (1): A high school Republican Club president learns that his biological father is the leader of the legendary punk rock band Purge. Narrator Billy Hammond helps young Leo Caraway shed his Brooks Brothers jacket and go on tour with the band to see if dad's rebellious blood truly runs through his veins.

Lynch, Chris. The Inexcusable (2): High school senior and football play Keir sets out to enjoy himself on graduation night, but when he attempts to comfort a friend whose date has left her stranded, things go terribly wrong.

Mazer, Norma Fox. When She Was Good (1): The death of her abusive, manipulative older sister prompts seventeen-year-old Em to remember their unpleasant life together, with their parents and then later on their own.

McCormick, Patricia. Cut (1): Burdened with the pressure of believing she is responsible for her brother's illness, 15-year-old Callie begins a course of self-destruction that leads to her being admitted to Sea Pines, a psychiatric hospital.

McKinley, Robin. Spindle's End (1): The infant princess Briar Rose is cursed on her name day by Pernicia, an evil fairy, and then whisked away by a young fairy to be raised in a remote part of a magical country, unaware of her real identity and hidden from Pernicia's vengeful powers.

Myers, Walter Dean. Fallen Angels (1): Seventeen-year-old Richie, just out of his Harlem high school, enlists in the Army in the summer of 1967 and spends a devastating year on active duty in Vietnam.

Nolan, Han. Dancing on the Edge (1): A young girl from a dysfunctional family creates for herself an alternative world which nearly results in her death but which ultimately leads her to reality.

Oates, Joyce Carol. Big Mouth and Ugly Girl (2): Matt Donaghy makes some remarks that land him in a world of trouble. Yanked out of fifth-period study hall by a policemen, he learns that he's suspected of plotting to bomb the school.

After the wreck, I picked myself up, spread my wings, and flew away (2): Blaming herself for the car accident on the Tappan Zee Bridge that killed her mother, fifteen-year-old Jenna undergoes a difficult physical and emotional recovery

Pausewang, Gudrun. Traitor (2): During the closing months of World War II, a fifteen-year-old German girl must decide whether or not to help an escaped Russian prisoner of war, despite the serious consequences if she does so.

Runyan, Brent. The Burn Journals (2): On the sixteenth page of this incisive memoir, eighth-grader Brent Runyon drenches his bathrobe with gasoline and sets himself on fire. Over the course of the book, readers are immersed in the mind of 14-year-old Brent as he struggles to heal body and mind.

Smith, Dodie. I Capture the Castle (2): A young woman living on the edge of poverty in a crumbling castle with her somewhat eccentric family, whose prospects begin to improve when new neighbors arrive from America.

Spinelli, Jerry. Stargirl (1): Stargirl, a teen who animates quiet Mica High with her colorful personality, suddenly finds herself shunned for her refusal to conform.

Stratton, Alan. Chandra's Wars (2): Chandra Kabelo, a teenaged African girl, must save her younger siblings after they are kidnapped and forced to serve as child soldiers in General Mandiki's rebel army.

Van Draanen, Wendelin. Flipped (1): In alternating chapters, two teenagers describe how their feelings about themselves, each other, and their families have changed over the years.

Werlin, Nancy. The Rules of Survival (1): Werlin tackles the topic of child abuse with grace and insight. Narrated by 17-year-old Matt as a letter to his youngest sister, Emmy, *The Rules of Survival* is his effort to come to terms with the vicious treatment he and his two sisters suffered at the hands of Nikki, their beautiful and unpredictable mother.

Double Helix (2): Eighteen-year-old Eli discovers a shocking secret about his life and his family while working for a Nobel Prize-winning scientist whose specialty is genetic engineering.

Westerfeld, Scott. The Uglies (1): Tally is faced with a difficult choice when her new friend Shay decides to risk life on the outside rather than submit to the forced operation that turns sixteen year old girls into gorgeous beauties.

The Last Days (2): Pearl, Moz, and Zahler team up with a vampire lead singer and a drummer who can foresee future events when a bizarre epidemic hits New York City that threatens total annihilation.

Wolff, Virginia Euwer. True Believer (1): Sequel to: Make Lemonade. Living in the inner city amidst guns and poverty, LaVaughn learns from old and new friends, and inspiring mentors, that life is what you make it--an occasion to rise to.

Zevin, Gabrielle. Elsewhere (1): Elsewhere is where fifteen-year-old Liz Hall ends up, after she has died. It is a place so like Earth, yet completely different. Here Liz will age backward from the day of her death until she becomes a baby again and returns to Earth. This moving, often funny book about grief, death, and loss will stay with the reader long after the last page is turned.

Zusak, Marcus. I am the Messenger (2): After capturing a bank robber, nineteen-year-old cab driver Ed Kennedy begins receiving mysterious messages that direct him to addresses where people need help, and he begins getting over his lifelong feeling of worthlessness.

The Book Thief (3): Trying to make sense of the horrors of World War II, Death relates the story of Liesel--a young German girl whose book-stealing and story-telling talents help sustain her family and the Jewish man they are hiding, as well as their neighbors.