

**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

Thrillers/Suspense/Mystery

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.

Brown, Dan. The DaVinci Code (2): Investigating the murder of a Louvre curator, Harvard symbologist and French cryptologist find clues painted into a DaVinci work, inadvertently uncovering a plot involving the Holy Grail and the secret society known as the Priory of Sion.

Caldwell, Ian and Dustin Thomason. The Rule of Four (2): Four Princeton University students confront murder, romance, danger and detection in their race to solve a puzzle in Rome.

Carr, Caleb. The Alienist (2): The year is 1896. The city is New York. The hunt is on for a baffling new kind of criminal--a serial killer.

Chandler, Raymond. The Big Sleep (2): Philip Marlowe, a private detective in Los Angeles in the 1930s, takes a case involving a paralyzed California millionaire, two psychotic daughters, blackmail and murder.

Christie, Agatha. And Then There Were None, Murder on the Orient Express (1): Spirited inspector Hercule Poirot must use his prodigious talent—once again—to foil a killer.

Cornwall, Patricia. The Body of Evidence (2): Forensic sleuth Dr. Kay Scarpetta investigates the circumstances surrounding a stabbed romance novelist.

Connelly, Michael. City of Bones (2): Bosch and his well-dressed partner, Jerry Edgar, are working to identify a child's skeleton, buried for 20 years in the forest off Hollywood's Wonderland Drive, and to bring the killer to belated justice.

Doyle, Arthur Conan. The Hound of the Baskervilles (1): Sherlock Holmes is asked to investigate the tale of a hound that haunts the lonely moors around the Baskervilles' ancestral home.

DuMaurier, Daphne. Rebecca (2): For months after her death, the memory of Rebecca continues to dominate everyone at her former home, Manderley, one of the most famous English country houses.

Dumas, Alexander. The Count of Monte Cristo (2): A young sailor who is falsely imprisoned, escapes and assumes a new identity on the island of Monte Cristo.

- Ferguson, Alane. The Christopher Killer (1) and The Angel of Death (1):** Cameryn Mahoney, the teenaged forensic detective, continues her adventures as assistant to her father, the county coroner of Silverton, CO.
- Follett, Ken. Eye of the Needle (2):** A German spy discovers D-Day plans and tries to alert his government in time.
- Grafton, Sue. A is for Alibi, B is for Burglar and other books in the series (1):** These works are a chronological series of mystery novels set in and around the fictional town of Santa Teresa, California. All novels of the series are written from the perspective of a private investigator named Kinsey Millhone.
- Harris, Thomas. Silence of the Lambs (3):** The infamous Hannibal Lecter strikes fear in FBI trainee, Clarice Starling.
- Higgins-Clark, Mary. Where are the Children? (2):** Nancy Harmon long ago fled the heartbreak of her first marriage, the macabre deaths of her two little children, and the shocking charges against her. Now remarried, she has two more beloved children, and the terrible pain has begun to heal -- until the morning when she looks in the backyard and finds only one red mitten. She knows that the nightmare is beginning again.
- Junger, Sebastian. The Perfect Storm (2):** New England sailors face the worst storm in a region's history in this account of a true story.
- King, Stephen. Carrie (2):** Presents the unnerving story of a terribly ostracized young girl with supernatural powers of telekinesis.
- Misery (2):** A bestselling author is held captive in a wheelchair, made drug-dependent, and locked in his room by an angry nurse who demands he bring her favorite character back to life.
- The Stand (2):** It's 1985 and a deadly 'superflu' practically wipes out the population of the U.S. Gradually survivors trail across a wasteland of horror and death to congregate in two zones, one the embodiment of good, the other the embodiment of evil.
- Koontz, Dean. Velocity (2):** An easy-going bartender's simple life gets complicated when he finds a note with a deadly, time-sensitive ultimatum: in six hours he must choose between the death of a young schoolteacher or an elderly humanitarian.
- Odd Hours (2):** Odd Thomas, who can communicate with the dead, confronts evil forces in a California coastal town.
- Le Carrè, John. The Tailor of Panama (2):** Coerced into working for British Intelligence, a tailor concocts a left-wing movement with the goal of luring the American military to do dirty work--invade Panama à la 1989 and nullify a treaty.
- Ludlum, Robert. The Bourne Identity (2):** A man has been shot and as a result, has no memory; as he searches for his origins he comes to fear he may have been an international assassin.
- McCall-Smith, Alexander. The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency (2):** Precious Ramotswe sets herself up as Botswana's first female detective and decides to go against any conventional notion of what an unmarried woman should do. Once the clients start showing up on her doorstep, Precious enjoys a pleasingly successful series of cases.

O'Flynn, Catherine. What Was Lost. (2): This award winning book accounts how the repercussions of a girl's disappearance can last for decades. In 1984, Kate Meaney is a 10-year-old loner who solves imaginary mysteries and guesses the dark secrets of the shoppers she observes at the Green Oaks mall. Fast forward to 2003, where it's revealed that Kate disappeared nearly 20 years ago the person blamed in her disappearance, also vanished.

Patterson, James. Kiss the Girls (2): Detective Alex Cross is called away from kids and his jazz piano when two murderers, operating on opposite sides of the country, strike at the same time, and one of them has abducted his niece, Naomi.

Pears, Iain. An Instance of the Fingerpost (2): When Dr. Robert Grove is found dead in his Oxford room, hands clenched and face frozen in a rictus of pain, all the signs point to poison. The narrative circles around Grove's murder as four different characters give their version of events.

Rendell, Ruth. The Water's Lovely (2): The act of murder committed by a 15-year-old brings a terrible darkness to those involved.

Ruff, Matt. Bad Monkeys (2): In a holding cell in the psychiatric wing of a prison, a psychologist is interviewing inmate Jane Charlotte. She's been charged with homicide. Although she does not deny it, she weaves an outrageous story about the circumstances surrounding the murder.

Smith, Tom, Rob. Child 44 (3): A horror story set in the Soviet Union. In this worker's paradise where the citizen's needs are met: Leo Demidov is a believer who wants only to serve his Country well. He puts contradictions out of his mind and carries on. Until something happens that he cannot ignore. A serial killer of children is on the loose, and the State cannot admit it.