

# McKinley High School English III **Gifted & Great Scholars** SUMMER Reading

Why pre-course reading? Reading increases students' vocabulary, spelling, and writing skills, as well as help students gain new perspectives on life situations. The more reading people do, the more information they gain, and the better their reading skills become. Reading is an effective means of preparing for standardized tests such as the ACT.



\*\*\*A note to parents: Please review the selection with your student because some books may make references to societal events and language that you may wish to discuss with your child.

Step 1: Select one (1) book from both the fiction **and** non-fiction list to read this summer.

Step 2: **Annotate** your books using the following guidelines:

1. Use sticky notes to identify the following:
  - Words/phrases/sentences whose style stand out to you
  - Significant people/characters and their “revealing” words and actions
  - Aspects that illustrate something about America
2. Put the sticky notes on loose leaf paper identifying page #'s.
3. Identify what you are noting from the list in #1.
4. Comment: Why are you marking this passage? Why does it stand out? Why is it significant? What do you like/dislike about it? How does it build the plot (fiction or argument (nonfiction))?
5. **Do not just summarize.**
6. As a guideline make 10-15 notes for each book (around 5 for the beginning, middle and end; 20-30 total/combined).
7. Be prepared to bring annotations to class the 1<sup>st</sup> week of school.

## **Reading Assessment:**

- ~ You will write an essay using one of the books as support and complete a project using the other.
- ~ Details, directions, and rubrics for these assessments will be provided the 1<sup>st</sup> week of school.
- ~ These assessments typically will take place within the first three weeks of the first semester.

## **Fiction – read one:**

### *The Bell Jar* – Sylvia Plath

Sylvia Plath's shocking, realistic, and intensely emotional novel about a woman falling into the grip of insanity. Esther Greenwood is brilliant, beautiful, enormously talented, and successful, but slowly going under—maybe for the last time.

### *The Secret Life of Bees* - Sue Monk Kidd

Set in South Carolina during 1964, *The Secret Life of Bees* tells the story of a fourteen year old white girl, Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed.

### *Invisible Man* – Ralph Ellison

The nameless narrator of the novel describes growing up in a black community in the South, at tending a Negro college from which he is expelled, moving to New York and becoming the chief spokesman of the Harlem branch of "the Brotherhood", and retreating amid violence and confusion to the basement lair of the Invisible Man he imagines himself to be.

### *A Confederacy of Dunces* – John Kennedy Toole

A Confederacy of Dunces is an American comic masterpiece. John Kennedy Toole's hero, one Ignatius J. Reilly, is "huge, obese, fractious, fastidious, a latter-day Gargantua, a Don Quixote of the French Quarter. His story bursts with wholly original characters, denizens of New Orleans' lower depths, incredibly true-to-life dialogue, and the zaniest series of high and low comic adventures." (Henry Kisor, Chicago Sun-Times).

### *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* – Sherman Alexie

Bestselling author Sherman Alexie tells the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the rez to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.

### *A Gathering of Old Men* – Ernest Gaines

Set on a Louisiana sugarcane plantation in the 1970s, **A Gathering of Old Men** is a powerful depiction of racial tensions arising over the death of a Cajun farmer at the hands of a black man. "Poignant, powerful, earthy...a novel of Southern racial confrontation in which a group of elderly black men band together against whites who seek vengeance for the murder of one of their own."—*Booklist*

### **Nonfiction – read one:**

#### *Black Boy*-Richard Wright

Black Boy, an autobiography of Richard Wright's early life, examines Richard's tortured years in the Jim Crow South from 1912 to 1927. In each chapter, Richard relates painful and confusing memories that lead to a better understanding of the man a black, Southern, American writer who eventually emerges.

#### *Assassination Vacation* – Sarah Vowell

Sarah Vowell exposes the glorious conundrums of American history and culture with wit, probity, and an irreverent sense of humor. With Assassination Vacation, she takes us on a road trip like no other—a journey to the pit stops of American political murder and through the myriad ways they have been used for fun and profit, for political and cultural advantage.

#### *In Cold Blood* - Truman Capote

As Truman Capote reconstructs the murder and the investigation that led to the capture, trial, and execution of the killers, he generates both mesmerizing suspense and astonishing empathy. *In Cold Blood* is a work that transcends its moment, yielding poignant insights into the nature of American violence.

#### *Sisters': The Lives of America's Suffragists* – Jean H. Baker

For the first time, the eminent historian Jean H. Baker tellingly interweaves Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frances Willard, Alice Paul's private lives with their public achievements, presenting these revolutionary women in three dimensions, humanized, and marvelously approachable.

#### *Desert Solitaire* – Edward Abbey

The legendary author vividly captures the essence of his life during three seasons as a park ranger in southeastern Utah. This is a rare view of a quest to experience nature in its purest form -- the silence, the struggle, the overwhelming beauty. But this is also the anguished cry of a man of character who challenges the growing exploitation of the wilderness by oil and mining interests, as well as by the tourist industry.

#### *Bunch of Amateurs: A Search for the American Character* – Jack Hitt

From a tattooed young woman in the Bay Area trying to splice a fish's glow-in-the-dark gene into common yogurt to a space fanatic on the brink of developing the next generation of telescopes from his mobile home, Hitt not only tells the stories of people in the grip of a passion but argues that America's history is bound up in a cycle of amateur surges.