

**Rising Twelfth Grade Summer Reading
Confirmation**

Name:

Directions: Your summer reading requirements are divided into three sections, each described in the following form. This form should be completed, signed by the student and parent, and turned in by **Friday, August 17**.

Step One:

- Read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.

Step Two:

- Choose a book from the attached list and read your selection in its entirety.

Please list the selected book and author below:

Step Three:

- Read an additional 300 pages from a book or books of your choice. Make sure that your selection is approved by your parent.

Please list the selected book(s), author(s) and number of pages below:

Please choose one of the following options and sign the statement below. Have your parent sign in the space provided.

_____ I completed all three steps as they are described above.

_____ I did not complete all three steps as they are described above. (If you choose this option, you must provide an explanation of what you did and did not complete to receive partial credit. If you do not provide an explanation, you will not receive any participation credit.)

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

**Rising Twelfth Grade
Step Two Summer Reading List**

Remember that you may check www.lexile.com for additional information about each book, including the difficulty level of each book and a summary of the plot.

Tier 1 (940L - 990L)

Achebe, Chinua - *Things Fall Apart*

890L

Things Fall Apart tells two intertwining stories, both centering on Okonkwo, a “strong man” of an Ibo village in Nigeria. The first, a powerful fable of the immemorial conflict between the individual and society, traces Okonkwo’s fall from grace with the tribal world. The second, as modern as the first is ancient, concerns the clash of cultures and the destruction of Okonkwo's world with the arrival of aggressive European missionaries. These perfectly harmonized twin dramas are informed by an awareness capable of encompassing at once the life of nature, human history, and the mysterious compulsions of the soul.

Cisneros, Sandra - *The House on Mango Street*

870L

Acclaimed by critics, beloved by readers of all ages, taught everywhere from inner-city grade schools to universities across the country, and translated all over the world, *The House on Mango Street* is the remarkable story of Esperanza Cordero. Told in a series of vignettes – sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous – it is the story of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Few other books in our time have touched so many readers.

Bradbury, Ray - *Fahrenheit 451*

890L

Guy Montag is a fireman. In his world, where television rules and literature is on the brink of extinction, firemen start fires rather than put them out. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden. Montag never questions the destruction and ruin his actions produce, returning each day to his bland life and wife, Mildred, who spends all day with her television “family.” But then he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people didn’t live in fear and to a present where one sees the world through the ideas in books instead of the mindless chatter of television. When Mildred attempts suicide and Clarisse suddenly disappears, Montag begins to question everything he has ever known. He starts hiding books in his home, and when his pilfering is discovered, the fireman has to run for his life.

Herbert, Frank - *Dune*

800L

Set on the desert planet Arrakis, *Dune* is the story of the boy Paul Atreides, who would become the mysterious man known as Muad'Dib. He would avenge the traitorous plot against his noble family--and would bring to fruition humankind's most ancient and unattainable dream. A stunning blend of adventure and mysticism,

environmentalism and politics, *Dune* won the first Nebula Award, shared the Hugo Award, and formed the basis of what it undoubtedly the grandest epic in science fiction.

Miller, Arthur - *Death of a Salesman*

NP

Ever since it was first performed in 1949, *Death of a Salesman* has been recognized as a milestone of the American theater. In the person of Willy Loman, the aging, failing salesman who makes his living riding on a smile and a shoeshine, Arthur Miller redefined the tragic hero as a man whose dreams are at once insupportably vast and dangerously insubstantial. He has given us a figure whose name has become a symbol for a kind of majestic grandiosity—and a play that compresses epic extremes of humor and anguish, promise and loss, between the four walls of an American living room.

Potok, Chaim - *The Chosen*

970L

It is the now-classic story of two fathers and two sons and the pressures on all of them to pursue the religion they share in the way that is best suited to each. And as the boys grow into young men, they discover in the other a lost spiritual brother, and a link to an unexplored world that neither had ever considered before. In effect, they exchange places, and find the peace that neither will ever retreat from again....

Smith, Betty - *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*

810L

The beloved American classic about a young girl's coming-of-age at the turn of the century, Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* is a poignant and moving tale filled with compassion and cruelty, laughter and heartache, crowded with life and people and incident. The story of young, sensitive, and idealistic Francie Nolan and her bittersweet formative years in the slums of Williamsburg has enchanted and inspired millions of readers for more than sixty years. By turns overwhelming, sublime, heartbreaking, and uplifting, the daily experiences of the unforgettable Nolans are raw with honesty and tenderly threaded with family connectedness - in a work of literary art that brilliantly captures a unique time and place as well as incredibly rich moments of universal experience.

Steinbeck, John - *The Grapes of Wrath*

680L

First published in 1939, Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize-winning epic of the Great Depression chronicles the Dust Bowl migration of the 1930s and tells the story of one Oklahoma farm family, the Joads—driven from their homestead and forced to travel west to the promised land of California. Out of their trials and their repeated collisions against the hard realities of an America divided into Haves and Have-Nots evolves a drama that is intensely human yet majestic in its scale and moral vision, elemental yet plainspoken, tragic but ultimately stirring in its human dignity. A portrait of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, of one man's fierce reaction to injustice, and of one woman's stoical strength, the novel captures the horrors of the Great Depression and probes into the very nature of equality and justice in America. At once a naturalistic epic,

captivity narrative, road novel, and transcendental gospel, Steinbeck's powerful landmark novel is perhaps the most American of American Classics.

Stockett, Kathryn - *The Help*

730L

Aibileen is a black maid in 1962 Jackson, Mississippi, who's always taken orders quietly, but lately she's unable to hold her bitterness back. Her friend Minny has never held her tongue but now must somehow keep secrets about her employer that leave her speechless. White socialite Skeeter just graduated college. She's full of ambition, but without a husband, she's considered a failure. Together, these seemingly different women join together to write a tell-all book about work as a black maid in the South, that could forever alter their destinies and the life of a small town...

Wilde, Oscar - *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

970L

In this celebrated work, his only novel, Wilde forged a devastating portrait of the effects of evil and debauchery on a young aesthete in late-19th-century England. Combining elements of the Gothic horror novel and decadent French fiction, the book centers on a striking premise: As Dorian Gray sinks into a life of crime and gross sensuality, his body retains perfect youth and vigor while his recently painted portrait grows day by day into a hideous record of evil, which he must keep hidden from the world. For over a century, this mesmerizing tale of horror and suspense has enjoyed wide popularity. It ranks as one of Wilde's most important creations and among the classic achievements of its kind.

Williams, Tennessee - *The Glass Menagerie*

NP

Abandoned by her husband, Amanda Wingfield comforts herself with recollections of her earlier, more gracious life in Blue Mountain when she was pursued by 'gentleman callers'. Her son Tom, a poet with a job in a warehouse, longs for adventure and escape from his mother's suffocating embrace, while Laura, her shy crippled daughter, has her glass menagerie and her memories. Amanda is desperate to find her daughter a husband, but when the long-awaited gentleman caller does arrive, Laura's romantic illusions are crushed.

Zusak, Markus - *The Book Thief*

730L

It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still. Liesel Meminger is a foster girl living outside of Munich, who scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement. In superbly crafted writing that burns with intensity, award-winning author Markus Zusak, author of *I Am the Messenger*, has given us one of the most enduring stories of our time.

Tier 2 (991L - 1140L)

Angelou, Maya - *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

1070L

Here is a book as joyous and painful, as mysterious and memorable, as childhood itself. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* captures the longing of lonely children, the brute insult of bigotry, and the wonder of words that can make the world right. Maya Angelou's debut memoir is a modern American classic beloved worldwide.

Sent by their mother to live with their devout, self-sufficient grandmother in a small Southern town, Maya and her brother, Bailey, endure the ache of abandonment and the prejudice of the local "powhitetrash." At eight years old and back at her mother's side in St. Louis, Maya is attacked by a man many times her age—and has to live with the consequences for a lifetime. Years later, in San Francisco, Maya learns that love for herself, the kindness of others, her own strong spirit, and the ideas of great authors ("I met and fell in love with William Shakespeare") will allow her to be free instead of imprisoned. Poetic and powerful, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* will touch hearts and change minds for as long as people read.

Hurston, Zora Neale - *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

1080L

When Janie, at sixteen, is caught kissing shiftless Johnny Taylor, her grandmother swiftly marries her off to an old man with sixty acres. Janie endures two stifling marriages before meeting the man of her dreams, who offers not diamonds, but a packet of flowering seeds ... One of the most important and enduring books of the twentieth century, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* brings to life a Southern love story with the wit and pathos found only in the writing of Zora Neale Hurston. Out of print for almost thirty years—due largely to initial audiences' rejection of its strong black female protagonist—Hurston's classic has since its 1978 reissue become perhaps the most widely read and highly acclaimed novel in the canon of African-American literature.

Lewis, Sinclair - *Main Street*

1010L

The first of Sinclair Lewis's great successes, *Main Street* shattered the sentimental American myth of happy small-town life with its satire of narrow-minded provincialism. Reflecting his own unhappy childhood in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, Lewis's sixth novel attacked the conformity and dullness he saw in midwestern village life. Young college graduate Carol Milford moves from the city to tiny Gopher Prairie after marrying the local doctor, and tries to bring culture to the small town. But her efforts to reform the prairie village are met by a wall of gossip, greed, conventionality, pitifully unambitious cultural endeavors, and—worst of all—the pettiness and bigotry of small-town minds.

Lewis's portrayal of a marriage torn by disillusionment and a woman forced into compromises is at once devastating social satire and persuasive realism. His subtle characterizations and intimate details of small-town America make *Main Street* a complex and compelling work and established Lewis as an important figure in twentieth-century American literature.

McCarthy, Cormac - *All the Pretty Horses*

940L

The national bestseller and the first volume in Cormac McCarthy's Border Trilogy, *All the Pretty Horses* is the tale of John Grady Cole, who at sixteen finds himself at the end of a long line of Texas ranchers, cut off from the only life he has ever imagined for himself. With two companions, he sets off for Mexico on a sometimes idyllic, sometimes comic journey to a place where dreams are paid for in blood. Winner of the National Book Award for Fiction.

Lewis, C.S. - *Out of the Silent Planet* (or another title from this trilogy)

NP

The first book in C. S. Lewis's acclaimed Space Trilogy, which continues with *Perelandra* and *That Hideous Strength*, *Out of the Silent Planet* begins the adventures of the remarkable Dr. Ransom. Here, that estimable man is abducted by a megalomaniacal physicist and his accomplice and taken via spaceship to the red planet of Malacandra. The two men are in need of a human sacrifice, and Dr. Ransom would seem to fit the bill. Once on the planet, however, Ransom eludes his captors, risking his life and his chances of returning to Earth, becoming a stranger in a land that is enchanting in its difference from Earth and instructive in its similarity. First published in 1943, *Out of the Silent Planet* remains a mysterious and suspenseful tour de force.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher - *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

1050L

Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly, is an anti-slavery novel by American author Harriet Beecher Stowe. Published in 1852, the novel "helped lay the groundwork for the Civil War", according to Will Kaufman. Stowe, a Connecticut-born teacher at the Hartford Female Seminary and an active abolitionist, featured the character of Uncle Tom, a long-suffering black slave around whom the stories of other characters revolve. The sentimental novel depicts the reality of slavery while also asserting that Christian love can overcome something as destructive as enslavement of fellow human beings. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was the best-selling novel of the 19th century and the second best-selling book of that century, following the Bible. It is credited with helping fuel the abolitionist cause in the 1850s.

Tier 3 (1141 - max)

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor - *Crime and Punishment*

990L

One of the supreme masterpieces of world literature, *Crime and Punishment* catapulted Dostoyevsky to the forefront of Russian writers and into the ranks of the world's greatest novelists. Drawing upon experiences from his own prison days, the author recounts in feverish, compelling tones the story of Raskolnikov, an impoverished student tormented by his own nihilism, and the struggle between good and evil. Believing that he is above the law, and convinced that humanitarian ends justify vile means, he brutally murders an old woman — a pawnbroker whom he regards as "stupid, ailing, greedy...good for nothing." Overwhelmed afterwards by feelings of guilt and terror, Raskolnikov confesses to the crime and goes to prison. There he realizes that happiness and redemption can only be achieved through suffering. Infused with forceful religious, social, and philosophical elements, the novel was an immediate success.

Frankl, Viktor - *Man's Search for Meaning*

1300L

Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl's memoir has riveted generations of readers with its descriptions of life in Nazi death camps and its lessons for spiritual survival. Between 1942 and 1945 Frankl labored in four different camps, including Auschwitz, while his parents, brother, and pregnant wife perished. Based on his own experience and the experiences of others he treated later in his practice, Frankl argues that we cannot avoid suffering but we can choose how to cope with it, find meaning in it, and move forward with renewed purpose. Frankl's theory-known as logotherapy, from the Greek word *logos* ("meaning")-holds that our primary drive in life is not pleasure, as Freud maintained, but the discovery and pursuit of what we personally find meaningful.

Lorraine, Hansberry - *A Raisin in the Sun*

NP

Set on Chicago's South Side, the plot of this play revolves around the divergent dreams and conflicts within three generations of the Younger family: son Walter Lee, his wife Ruth, his sister Beneatha, his son Travis and matriarch Lena, called Mama. When her deceased husband's insurance money comes through, Mama dreams of moving to a new home and a better neighborhood in Chicago. Walter Lee, a chauffeur, has other plans, however: buying a liquor store and being his own man. Beneatha dreams of medical school. The tensions and prejudice they face form this seminal American drama. Sacrifice, trust and love among the Younger family and their heroic struggle to retain dignity in a harsh and changing world is a searing and timeless document of hope and inspiration.

Lewis, C.S. - *Mere Christianity*

NP

In the classic *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis, one of the most important writers of the 20th century, explores the common ground upon which all of those of Christian faith stand together. Bringing together Lewis' legendary broadcast talks during World War Two from his three previous books *The Case for Christianity*, *Christian Behavior*, and *Beyond Personality*, *Mere Christianity* provides an unequalled opportunity for believers and nonbelievers alike to hear this powerful apologetic for the Christian faith.

Melville, Herman - *Billy Budd, Sailor*

1450L

Aboard the warship *Bellipotent*, the young orphan Billy Budd was called the handsome sailor. Billy was tall, athletic, noble looking; he was friendly, innocent, helpful and ever-cheerful. He was a fierce fighter and a loyal friend. All the men and officers liked him...All but one: Master-at-Arms Claggart. Envious, petty Claggart plotted to make Billy's life miserable. But when a fear of mutinies swept through the fleet, Claggart realized he could do more than just torment the Handsome Sailor...He could frame Billy Budd for treason...

Billy Budd, Sailor has been called the best short novel ever written. In his brilliantly condensed prose, Herman Melville fashions a legal parable in which reason and intellect prove incapable of preserving innocence in the

face of evil. For all those who feel themselves threatened by a hostile and inflexible environment, there is special significance in this haunting story of a handsome sailor who becomes a victim of man's intransigence.

Melville, Herman - *Moby Dick*

1230L

Moby-Dick is the story of Captain Ahab's quest to avenge the whale that 'reaped' his leg. The quest is an obsession and the novel is a diabolical study of how a man becomes a fanatic. But it is also a hymn to democracy. Bent as the crew is on Ahab's appalling crusade, it is equally the image of a co-operative community at work: all hands dependent on all hands, each individual responsible for the security of each. Among the crew is Ishmael, the novel's narrator, ordinary sailor, and extraordinary reader. Digressive, allusive, vulgar, transcendent, the story Ishmael tells is above all an education: in the practice of whaling, in the art of writing.

Sayer, George - *Jack: A Biography of C.S. Lewis*

NP

George Sayer chronicles the life of C.S. Lewis, a devout Christian, gifted literary scholar, best-selling author, and brilliant apologist. Sayer draws from a variety of sources, including his close friendship with Lewis and the million-word diary of Lewis's brother, to paint a portrait of the man whose friends knew him as Jack.

Offering glimpses into Lewis's extraordinary relationships and experiences, Jack details the great scholar's life at the Kilns; days at Magdalen College; meetings with the Inklings; marriage to Joy Davidman Gresham; and the creative process that produced such world-famous works as the classic *Chronicles of Narnia*, *Mere Christianity*, and *The Screwtape Letters*. This book is an intimate account of the man who helped--and through his works, continues to help--generations hear and understand the heart of Christianity.

Sinclair, Upton - *The Jungle*

1170L

An ardent activist, champion of political reform, novelist, and progressive journalist, Upton Sinclair is perhaps best known today for *The Jungle* — his devastating exposé of the meat-packing industry. A protest novel he privately published in 1906, the book was a shocking revelation of intolerable labor practices and unsanitary working conditions in the Chicago stockyards. It quickly became a bestseller, arousing public sentiment and resulting in such federal legislation as the Pure Food and Drug Act. The brutally grim story of a Slavic family who emigrates to America, *The Jungle* tells of their rapid and inexorable descent into numbing poverty, moral degradation, and social and economic despair. Vulnerable and isolated, the family of Jurgis Rudkus struggles — unsuccessfully — to survive in an urban jungle.

A powerful view of turn-of-the-century poverty, graft, and corruption, this fiercely realistic American classic is still required reading in many history and literature classes. It will continue to haunt readers long after they've finished the last page.

Thoreau, Henry David - *Walden*

1420L

Walden by noted transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau, is a reflection upon simple living in natural surroundings. The work is part personal declaration of independence, social experiment, voyage of spiritual discovery, satire, and manual for self-reliance. First published in 1854, it details Thoreau's experiences over the course of two years, two months, and two days in a cabin he built near Walden Pond, amidst woodland owned by his friend and mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson, near Concord, Massachusetts. The book compresses the time into a single calendar year and uses passages of four seasons to symbolize human development. By immersing himself in nature, Thoreau hoped to gain a more objective understanding of society through personal introspection. Simple living and self-sufficiency were Thoreau's other goals, and the whole project was inspired by transcendentalist philosophy, a central theme of the American Romantic Period.

Tolstoy, Leo - *Anna Karenina*

1080L

Described by William Faulkner as the best novel ever written and by Fyodor Dostoevsky as “flawless,” Anna Karenina tells of the doomed love affair between the sensuous and rebellious Anna and the dashing officer, Count Vronsky. Tragedy unfolds as Anna rejects her passionless marriage and thereby exposes herself to the hypocrisies of society. Set against a vast and richly textured canvas of nineteenth-century Russia, the novel's seven major characters create a dynamic imbalance, playing out the contrasts of city and country life and all the variations on love and family happiness.

Washington, Booker T. - *Up From Slavery*

NP

Born in a Virginia slave hut, Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) rose to become the most influential spokesman for African-Americans of his day. In this eloquently written book, he describes events in a remarkable life that began in bondage and culminated in worldwide recognition for his many accomplishments. In simply written yet stirring passages, he tells of his impoverished childhood and youth, the unrelenting struggle for an education, early teaching assignments, his selection in 1881 to head Tuskegee Institute, and more.

A firm believer in the value of education as the best route to advancement, Washington disapproved of civil-rights agitation and in so doing earned the opposition of many black intellectuals. Yet, he is today regarded as a major figure in the struggle for equal rights, one who founded a number of organizations to further the cause and who worked tirelessly to educate and unite African-Americans.