

## Summer Reading for 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

The Following list of books is a resource for you to explore over the summer. It is optional but encouraged for those who want to get ahead. The first list is comprised of books we will be reading next year. The second list is comprised of books that are similar in scope and genre and will better help students to understand themes and subject matter.

### **LIST 1: BOOKS WE WILL READ NEXT YEAR**

#### *Fight Club* – Chuck Palahniuk

In his debut novel, Chuck Palahniuk showed himself to be his generation's most visionary satirist. *Fight Club's* estranged narrator leaves his lackluster job when he comes under the thrall of Tyler Durden, an enigmatic young man who holds secret boxing matches in the basement of bars. There two men fight "as long as they have to." A gloriously original work that exposes what is at the core of our modern world.

#### *The Crucible* – Arthur Miller

One of the true masterpieces of twentieth-century American theater, *The Crucible* brilliantly explores the threshold between individual guilt and mass hysteria, personal spite and collective evil. When witchcraft is found in Salem, Massachusetts, trials and arguing lead to the deaths of many townspeople. This play follows the true origins of the Salem Witch Trials and explores the depths of darkness inherent in the human soul. It is a play that is not only relentlessly suspenseful and vastly moving, but that compels readers to fathom their hearts and consciences in ways that only the greatest theatre can.

#### *The Great Gatsby* – F. Scott Fitzgerald

*The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's third book, stands as the supreme achievement of his career. First published in 1925, this quintessential novel of the Jazz Age has been acclaimed by generations of readers. The story of the mysteriously wealthy Jay Gatsby and his love for the beautiful Daisy Buchanan, of lavish parties on Long Island at a time when *The New York Times* noted "gin was the national drink," it is an exquisitely crafted tale of America in the 1920s, and details the loss, love, and, ultimately, the ability of one man to hope above all things.

#### *How Do You Kill 11 Million People* – Andy Andrews

Andy Andrews believes that good answers come only from asking the right questions. Through the powerful, provocative question, "How do you kill eleven million people?"—the number of people killed by the Nazi German regime between 1933 and 1945—he explores a number of other questions relevant to our lives today: Does it matter that millions of ordinary citizens have checked out of participating in the decisions that shape the future of our country? Which is more dangerous: politicians with ill intent, or the too-trusting population that allows such people to lead them? How are we supposed to tell the difference between the "good guys" and the "bad guys"? How does the answer to this question affect not only our country but our families, our faith, and our values? What happens to a society in which truth is absent? Andrews issues a wake-up call: become informed, passionate citizens who demand honesty and integrity from our leaders, or suffer the consequences of our own ignorance and apathy. Furthermore, we can no longer measure a leader's worth by the yardsticks provided by the left or the right. Instead, we must use an unchanging standard: the pure, unvarnished truth.

#### *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* – Stephen Chbosky

The critically acclaimed debut novel from Stephen Chbosky, *Perks* follows observant "wallflower" Charlie as he charts a course through the strange world between adolescence and adulthood. First dates, family drama, and new friends. Devastating loss, young love, and life on the fringes. Caught between trying to live his life and trying to run from it, Charlie must learn to navigate those wild and poignant roller-coaster days known as growing up. A #1 *New York Times* best seller for more than a year, an American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults (2000) and Best Book for Reluctant Readers (2000), and with millions of copies in print, this novel for teen readers (or "wallflowers" of more-advanced age) will make you laugh, cry, and perhaps feel nostalgic for those moments when you, too, tiptoed onto the dance floor of life.

#### *Unwind* – Neal Shusterman

The first twisted and futuristic novel in the perennially popular *New York Times* bestselling *Unwind* dystology by Neal Shusterman. In America after the Second Civil War, the Pro-Choice and Pro-Life armies came to an agreement: The Bill of Life states that human life may not be touched from the moment of conception until a child reaches the age of thirteen.

Between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, however, a parent may choose to retroactively get rid of a child through a process called "unwinding." Unwinding ensures that the child's life doesn't "technically" end by transplanting all the organs in the child's body to various recipients. Now a common and accepted practice in society, troublesome or unwanted teens are able to easily be unwound. With breathtaking suspense, this book follows three teens who all become runaway Unwinds: Connor, a rebel whose parents have ordered his unwinding; Risa, a ward of the state who is to be unwound due to cost-cutting; and Lev, his parents' tenth child whose unwinding has been planned since birth as a religious tithing. As their paths intersect and lives hang in the balance, Shusterman examines complex moral issues that will keep readers turning the pages until the very end.

## **LIST 2: BOOKS THAT ARE SIMILAR AND WILL HELP WITH THEME AND CONTENT**

### *The Scarlet Letter* – Nathaniel Hawthorne

Like all of Hawthorne's novels, "The Scarlet Letter" has but a slender plot and but few characters with an influence on the development of the story. Its great dramatic force depends entirely on the mental states of the actors and their relations to one another, —relations of conscience, — relations between wronged and wrongers. Its great burden is the weight of unacknowledged sin as seen in the remorse and cowardice and suffering of the Rev. Arthur Dimmesdale. Contrasted with his concealed agony is the constant confession, conveyed by the letter, which is forced upon Hester, and has a double effect, — a healthful one, working beneficently, and making her helpful and benevolent, tolerant and thoughtful ; and an unhealthful one, which by the great emphasis placed on her transgression, the keeping her forever under its ban and isolating her from her fellows, prepares her to break away from the long repression and lapse again into sin when she plans her flight.

*Anatomy of a Misfit* – Andrea Portes Outside, Anika Dragomir is all lip gloss and blond hair—the third most popular girl in school. Inside, she's a freak: a mix of dark thoughts, diabolical plots, and, if local chatter is to be believed, vampire DNA (after all, her father is Romanian). But she keeps it under wraps to maintain her social position. One step out of line and Becky Vilhauer, first most popular girl in school, will make her life hell. So when former loner Logan McDonough shows up one September hotter, smarter, and more mysterious than ever, Anika knows she can't get involved. It would be insane to throw away her social safety for a nerd. So what if that nerd is now a black-leather-jacket-wearing dreamboat, and his loner status is clearly the result of his troubled home life? Who cares if the right girl could help him with all that, maybe even save him from it? Who needs him when Jared Kline, the bad boy every girl dreams of, is asking her on dates? Who?

### *The Beautiful and the Damned* – F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Beautiful and Damned, first published by Scribner's in 1922, is F. Scott Fitzgerald's second novel. It portrays the Eastern elite during the Jazz Age, exploring New York café society. As in Fitzgerald's other novels, the characters are complex, especially with respect to marriage and intimacy. The book is believed to be largely based on Fitzgerald's relationship with Zelda Fitzgerald. The Beautiful and Damned tells the story of Anthony Patch, a 1910s socialite and presumptive heir to a tycoon's fortune, his relationship with his wife, Gloria, his service in the army, and his alcoholism.

### *The Catcher in the Rye* – J.D. Salinger

The hero-narrator of THE CATCHER IN THE RYE is an ancient child of sixteen, a native New Yorker named Holden Caulfield. Through circumstances that tend to preclude adult, secondhand description, he leaves his prep school in Pennsylvania and goes underground in New York City for three days. The boy himself is at once too simple and too complex for us to make any final comment about him or his story. Perhaps the safest thing we can say about Holden is that he was born in the world not just strongly attracted to beauty but, almost, hopelessly impaled on it. There are many voices in this novel: children's voices, adult voices, underground voices--but Holden's voice is the most eloquent of all. Transcending his own vernacular, yet remaining marvelously faithful to it, he issues a perfectly articulated cry of mixed pain and pleasure. However, like most lovers and clowns and poets of the higher orders, he keeps most of the pain to, and for, himself. The pleasure he gives away, or sets aside, with all his heart. It is there for the reader who can handle it to keep.