

Westminster Summer Reading

In the Westminster humanities department, we want to cultivate a love of great literature. Loving literature requires skill, though. That is why we present you with a challenging curriculum, and it is why you need to keep your mind sharp during the summer. However, we hope that by removing the pressure of a traditional assessment and incorporating an element of choice, your experience of summer reading will be a little more like a genuine pleasure.

We have compiled a list of books that we think you will find enriching and entertaining. Your assignment is simple: read two of them by the first day of classes in the fall and tell us what you thought. That's it.

Rising Middle School (7+8)

- *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* (Curtis)
- *The Hobbit* (Tolkien)
- *A Wrinkle in Time* (L'Engle)
- *The Princess and the Goblin* (MacDonald)
- *True Grit* (Portis)
- *The Lost World* (Doyle)
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee)
- *Little Women* (Alcott)*

Rising Underclassmen (9+10)

- *The Old Man and the Sea* (Hemingway)
- *Of Mice and Men* (Steinbeck)
- *The Outsiders* (Hinton)
- *The Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien)*
- *Great Expectations* (Dickens)
- *A Separate Peace* (Knowles)
- *Peace Like a River* (Enger)
- *Jane Eyre* (Bronte)
- *Huckleberry Finn* (Twain)
- *The Martian Chronicles* (Bradbury)
- *A Study in Scarlet* AND *The Sign of Four* (Doyle)
- *Rebecca* (Maurier)

Rising Upperclassmen (11+12)

- *Jayber Crow* (Berry)
- *Phantastes* (MacDonald)
- *Purgatory* OR *Paradise* (Dante)
- *Anna Karenina* (Tolstoy)*
- *Brothers Karamazov* (Dostoevsky)*
- *A Tale of Two Cities* (Dickens)
- *The Scarlet Letter* (Hawthorne)
- *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen)
- *Wuthering Heights* (Bronte)
- *The Space Trilogy* (Lewis)*
- *Barchester Towers* (Trollope)
- *The Road* (McCarthy)
- *So Brave, Young, and Handsome* (Enger)
- *Gilead* (Robinson)
- *I, Robot* (Asimov)
- *The Book of the Dun Cow* (Wangerin)
- *Les Miserables* (Hugo)*
- *What Maisie Knew* (James)
- *Silas Marner* (Eliot)

** Longer books count as two books.*

Questions

How will we be graded?

At the beginning of the year, you will sign a completion form and write a short response to the reading. The response will be used mostly for informal conversations with teachers and to help us see how students responded to the books we've offered.

Can I get approval to read a book not on the list?

No, but we expect the list will change somewhat from year to year. Suggestions from students would be very helpful.

Can I read a book from another grade's list?

No, stick with your grade.

Can I read a book I have read before?

Absolutely! However, you must read the entire, unabridged book again over the summer.

Any advice on picking a book?

Yes, ask a teacher. The right book will depend on your personality. If we're not available, look for short reviews on the web; there are plenty. In fact, we strongly recommend getting a sense of the book before starting out.

Should I still practice marginalia?

Sure. It's not required, but many adult readers practice it even when reading for pleasure.