

1. Classic Literature Reading List for Middle School Students

By: LuAnn Schindler

Many middle school students enjoy the connection with a young adult novel, but classic literature never goes out of style. Several humanities organizations have established a classic literature reading list that emphasizes the importance of reading timeless books. This list introduces new characters and alien worlds to the middle school set. Several of these books are commonly taught in middle school English classes, so adding them to a summer reading list can give your child an advantage when they come up during the school year.

Title	Author	Level	Points
<i>20,000 Leagues Under the Sea</i>	Jules Verne	10.1	28
<i>A Christmas Carol</i>	Charles Dickens	6.7	5
<i>A Day No Pigs Would Die</i>	Robert Newton Peck	4.4	4
<i>A Stranger Came Ashore</i>	Mollie Hunter	6.2	6
<i>A Tree Grows in Brooklyn</i>	Betty Smith	5.8	23
<i>A Wizard of Earthsea</i>	Ursula K. LeGuin	6.7	9
<i>A Wrinkle in Time</i>	Madeleine L'Engle	4.7	7
<i>Across Five Aprils</i>	Irene Hunt	6.6	10
<i>Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>	Sir Arthur Conan Doyle	7.0	18
<i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i>	Mark Twain	8.1	12
<i>Amos Fortune, Free Man</i>	Elizabeth Yates	6.5	5
<i>The Bridge of San Luis Rey</i>	Thornton Wilder	7.1	5
<i>Call It Courage</i>	Armstrong Sperry	6.2	3
<i>The Call of the Wild</i>	Jack London	8.0	7
<i>The Chocolate War</i>	Robert Cormier	5.4	8
<i>The Count of Monte Cristo</i>	Alexander Dumas	8.8	34
<i>Daddy Long Legs</i>	Jean Webster	6.1	6
<i>Diary of a Young Girl</i>	Anne Frank	6.5	14
<i>Dragonsong</i>	Anne McCaffrey	6.8	9
<i>Dragonwings</i>	Laurence Yep	5.3	10
<i>Enchantress From the Stars</i>	Sylvia Engdahl	7.3	15
<i>The Endless Steppe: Growing up in Siberia</i>	Esther Hautzig	6.3	10
<i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	Ray Bradbury	5.2	7
<i>Frankenstein</i>	Mary Shelley	12.4	17
<i>The Ghost Belonged To Me</i>	Richard Peck	5.8	6
<i>Goodbye, Mr. Chips</i>	James Hilton	6.5	3
<i>The Hobbit</i>	J.R.R. Tolkien	6.6	16
<i>The Horatio Hornblower Series</i>	C.S. Forester	7.2-	7-19

		8.3	
<i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i>	Victor Hugo	11.8	38
<i>Incident at Hawk's Hill</i>	Allan W. Eckert	7.2	9
<i>Ivanhoe</i>	Sir Walter Scott	12.9	40
<i>Island of the Blue Dolphin</i>	Scott O'Dell	5.4	6
<i>Jacob Have I Loved</i>	Katherine Paterson	5.7	8
<i>Johnny Tremain</i>	Esther Forbes	5.9	13
<i>Journey to Topaz</i>	Yoshiko Uchida	6.0	5
<i>Julie of the Wolves</i>	Jean Craighead George	5.8	6
<i>Kim</i>	Rudyard Kipling	7.7	18
<i>The Last Mission</i>	Harry Mazer	4.3	6
<i>The Last of the Mohicans</i>	James Fenimore Cooper	12.0	32
<i>The Legend of Sleepy Hollow</i>	Irving Washington	11.0	3
<i>The Little Prince</i>	Antoine de Saint-Exupery	5.0	2
<i>Little Women</i>	Louisa May Alcott	7.9	33
<i>M.C. Higgins the Great</i>	Virginia Hamilton	4.4	10
<i>The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood</i>	Howard Pyle	8.6	21
<i>My Brother Sam Is Dead</i>	James and Christopher Collier	4.9	7
<i>My Friend Flicka</i>	Mary O'Hara	6.0	15
<i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i>	Frederick Douglass	7.9	7
<i>National Velvet</i>	Enid Bagnold	5.5	11
<i>The Outsiders</i>	S.E. Hinton	4.7	7
<i>The Pigman</i>	Paul Zindel	5.5	6
<i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i>	John Bunyan	10.4	21
<i>The Red Pony</i>	John Steinbeck	6.1	6
<i>Rifles for Watie</i>	Harold Keith	6.1	14
<i>Robinson Crusoe</i>	Daniel Defoe	12.3	27
<i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i>	Mildred D. Taylor	5.7	10
<i>Shane</i>	Jack Schaefer	5.5	7
<i>Story of My Life</i>	Helen Keller	6.8	12
<i>To Be a Slave</i>	Julius Lester	6.9	5
<i>Treasure Island</i>	Robert Louis Stevenson	8.3	12
<i>The Upstairs Room</i>	Johanna Reiss	2.9	6
<i>War of the Worlds</i>	H.G. Wells	9.1	11
<i>Where the Lilies Bloom</i>	Vera Cleaver	5.2	6
<i>Where the Red Fern Grows</i>	Wilson Rawls	4.9	11
<i>The White Mountains</i>	John Christopher	6.2	7
<i>The Yearling</i>	Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings	5.0	19

2. Older Classics for Children

The following titles commonly appear on lists of classic children's literature. Most have been issued in several different editions, offering a range of illustration styles from which to choose.

2.

Author	Title and date	Level	Points
Alcott, Louisa May	Little Women. c1868	7.9	33
Barrie, J.M.	Peter Pan. c1904	7.2	8
Baum, L. Frank	The Wizard of Oz. c1902	7.4	7
Bond, Michael	A Bear Called Paddington. c1958	4.7	4
Brink, Carol Ryrie	Caddie Woodlawn. c1935	6.0	8
Burnett, Frances Hodgson	The Secret Garden. c1911	6.3	13
Carroll, Lewis	Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. c1866	7.4	5
Collodi, Carlo	Adventures of Pinocchio. c1833	5.3	6
Defoe, Daniel	Robinson Crusoe. c1836	12.3	27
Dickens, Charles	A Christmas Carol. c1844	6.7	5
Farley, Walter	The Black Stallion. c1941	5.2	7
Forbes, Esther	Johnny Tremain. c1943	5.9	13
Frank, Anne	The Diary of a Young Girl. c1952	6.5	14
Gannett, Ruth Stiles	My Father's Dragon. c1948	5.6	1
Gipson, Fred	Old Yeller. c1956	5.0	5
Golding, William	Lord of the Flies. c1954	5.0	9
Grahame, Kenneth	The Wind in the Willows. 1907	8.2	11
Kipling, Rudyard	The Jungle Book. 1894	7.4	20
Knight, Eric	Lassie Come-Home. c1940	5.4	9
Lewis, C.S.	The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. c1950	5.7	6
Lindgren, Astrid	Pippi Longstocking. c1945	5.2	4
Milne, A. A.	Winnie-the-Pooh. c1926	4.6	3
Montgomery, L. M.	Anne of Green Gables. c1908	7.3	17
Norton, Mary	The Borrowers. c1953	5.3	5
Pearce, Philippa	Tom's Midnight Garden. c1958	6.1	9
Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan	The Yearling. c1938	5.0	19
Sewell, Anna	Black Beauty. 1877	7.7	11
Speare, Elizabeth G.	The Witch of Blackbird Pond. c1958	5.7	9
Spyri, Johanna	Heidi. c1884	8.2	16
Stevenson, Robert Louis	Treasure Island. c1884	8.3	12

Tolkien, J.R.R.	The Hobbit	6.6	16
Travers, P. L.	Mary Poppins. c1934	6.1	6
Twain, Mark	The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. c1876	8.1	12
Verne, Jules	Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea. c1873	10.1	28
White, E. B.	Charlotte's Web. c1952	4.4	5
Wilder, Laura Ingalls	Little House in the Big Woods. c1932	4.9	8

3. Contemporary Classics

The following books are highly regarded by children's literature specialists, as well as being popular with children - two qualities that make them likely to stand the test of time.

Author	Title and date	Level	Points
Adams, Richard	Watership Down. c1972	6.2	25
Alexander, Lloyd	The Book of Three. c1964	5.3	7
Babbitt, Natalie	Tuck Everlasting. c1975	5.0	4
Blume, Judy	Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing. c1972	3.3	3
Burnford, Sheila	The Incredible Journey. c1961	7.6	5
Cleary, Beverly	Ramona the Pest. c1968	5.1	4
Cormier, Robert	The Chocolate War. c1974	5.4	8
Creech, Sharon	Walk Two Moons. c1994	4.9	9
Curtis, Christopher Paul	The Watsons Go to Birmingham: 1963. c1995	5.0	8
Dahl, Roald	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. c1964	4.8	5
DiCamillo, Kate	Because of Winn-Dixie. c2000	3.9	3
Farmer, Nancy	A Girl Named Disaster. c1996	5.1	14
Fitzhugh, Louise	Harriet the Spy. c1964	4.5	8
Gantos, Jack	Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key. c1998	4.9	5
Hamilton, Virginia	M.C. Higgins, the Great. c1974	4.4	10
Jacques, Brian	Redwall. c1986	5.6	16
Juster, Norton	The Phantom Tollbooth. c1961	6.7	7
Konigsburg, E. L.	From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler. 1967	4.7	5
LeGuin, Ursula	The Wizard of Earthsea. c1968	6.7	9
L'Engle, Madeline	A Wrinkle in Time. c1962	4.7	7
Lowry, Lois	The Giver. c1982	5.7	7
Lowry, Lois	Number the Stars. c1989	4.5	4

MacLachlin, Patricia	Sarah, Plain and Tall. c1985	3.4	1
Myers, Walter Dean	Scorpions. c1988	3.7	6
North, Sterling	Rascal. c1963	7.1	7
Paterson, Katherine	Bridge to Terabithia. c1977	4.6	5
Paulsen, Gary	Hatchet. c1987	5.7	7
Pierce, Tamora	Alanna: The First Adventure. c1983	4.5	7
Rasking, Ellen	The Westing Game. c1978	5.3	8
Rawls, Wilson	Where the Red Fern Grows. c1961	4.9	11
Rockwell, Thomas	How to Eat Fried Worms. c1973	3.5	2
Rowling, J.K.	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. c1998	5.5	12
Sachar, Louis	Holes. c1998	4.6	7
Soto, Gary	Baseball in April, and Other Stories. c1990	5.1	4
Staples, Suzanne Fisher	Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind. c1989	5.9	9
Taylor, Mildred D.	Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. c1976	5.7	10
Uchida, Yoshiko	Journey to Topaz. c1971	6.0	5
Watkins, Yoko Kawashima	So Far From the Bamboo Grove. c1986	4.7	6
Yep, Laurence	Dragonwings. c1975	5.3	10

4. Classic Reading—Recommended Books

Author	Title	Level	Points
Louisa May Alcott	Little Women	7.9	33
William Armstrong	Souder	5.3	3
Jane Austin	Pride and Prejudice	12.0	27
Lynne Reid Banks	The Indian in the Cupboard	4.6	6
Frank Baum	The Wizard of Oz	7.4	7
Ray Bradbury	Fahrenheit 451	5.2	7
Charlotte Brontë	Jane Eyre	7.9	33
Emily Brontë	Wuthering Heights	11.3	23
Frances Hodgson Burnett	The Secret Garden	6.3	13
Willa Cather	My Ántonia	6.9	9
Geoffrey Chaucer	The Canterbury Tales	8.1	26
Agatha Christy	Murder on the Orient Express	6.2	9
Joseph Conrad	Heart of Darkness	9.0	10
Stephen Crane	The Red Badge of Courage	8.0	8
Daniel Defoe	Robinson Crusoe	12.3	27
Charles Dickens	A Christmas Carol	6.7	5

Charles Dickens	Great Expectations	9.2	35
Charles Dickens	A Tale of Two Cities	9.7	27
George Eliot	Silas Marner	9.7	14
Ralph Ellison	Invisible Man	7.2	30
F. Scott Fitzgerald	The Great Gatsby	7.3	8
Esther Forbes	Johnny Tremain	5.9	13
Anne Frank	The Diary of a Young Girl	6.5	14
William Gibson	The Miracle Worker	5.2	4
Fred Gipson	Old Yeller	5.0	5
William Golding	Lord of the Flies	5.0	9
Kenneth Grahame	The Wind in the Willows	8.2	11
Bette Greene	Summer of My German Soldier	5.2	9
John Gunther	Death Be Not Proud	8.0	8
Alex Haley	Roots	7.4	48
Thomas Hardy	Tess of the D'Urbervilles	9.5	23
Nathaniel Hawthorne	The Scarlet Letter	11.7	14
Ernest Hemingway	A Farewell to Arms	6.0	13
Ernest Hemingway	For Whom the Bell Tolls	5.8	28
Ernest Hemingway	The Old Man and the Sea	5.9	4
S. E. Hinton	The Outsiders	4.7	7
Irene Hunt	Across Five Aprils	6.6	10
Aldous Huxley	Brave New World	7.5	11
Daniel Keyes	Flowers for Algernon	5.8	13
Rudyard Kipling	The Jungle Book (Books I and I)	7.4	20
John Knowles	A Separate Peace	6.9	10
Harper Lee	To Kill a Mockingbird	5.6	15
Madeleine L'Engle	A Wrinkle in Time	4.7	7
C. S. Lewis	The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	5.7	6
Jack London	The Call of the Wild	8.0	7
Lois Lowry	The Giver	5.7	7
Patricia MacLachlan	Sarah, Plain and Tall	3.4	1
Herman Melville	Moby-Dick	10.0	42
Arthur Miller	The Crucible	4.9	5
Arthur Miller	Death of a Salesman	6.2	5
Margaret Mitchell	Gone With the Wind	7.1	71
L. M. Montgomery	Anne of Green Gables	7.3	17
Scott O'Dell	Island of the Blue Dolphins	5.4	6
George Orwell	1984	8.9	17
George Orwell	Animal Farm	7.3	5
Alan Paton	Cry, The Beloved Country	6.2	14
Robert Newton Peck	A Day No Pigs Would Die	4.4	4
Wilson Rawls	Where the Red Fern Grows	4.9	11

Erich Maria Remarque	All Quiet on the Western Front	6.0	10
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry	The Little Prince	5.0	2
J. D. Salinger	The Catcher in the Rye	4.7	11
Jack Schaefer	Shane	5.5	7
William Shakespeare	Romeo and Juliet	8.6	5
George Bernard Shaw	Pygmalion	7.0	6
Mary Shelley	Frankenstein	12.4	17
Sophocles	Antigone	5.2	2
Armstrong Sperry	Call It Courage	6.2	3
John Steinbeck	The Grapes of Wrath	4.9	25
John Steinbeck	Of Mice and Men	4.5	4
John Steinbeck	The Pearl	4.5	4
John Steinbeck	The Red Pony	6.1	6
Robert Lewis Stevenson	Kidnapped	7.6	14
Robert Lewis Stevenson	Treasure Island	8.3	12
Jonathan Swift	Gulliver's Travels	13.5	25
J. R. R. Tolkien	The Hobbit	6.6	16
Mark Twain	The Adventures of Tom Sawyer	8.1	12
Mark Twain	The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	6.6	18
Jules Verne	20,000 Leagues Under the Sea	10.0	28
Alice Walker	The Color Purple	4.0	9
Edith Wharton	Ethan Frome	7.6	6
E. B. White	Charlotte's Web	4.4	5
Laura Ingalls Wilder	Little House on the Prairie	4.9	8
Thornton Wilder	Our Town	3.9	3
Richard Wright	Black Boy	7.4	22
Richard Wright	Native Son	6.1	24
Johann David Wyss	The Swiss Family Robinson	9.7	23
Paul Zindel	The Pigman	5.5	6

5. College Bound Reading List--suggested for Honors students

Compiled by [Arrowhead Library System](#)

American Literature

Agee, James

A Death in the Family

6.1 16

Story of loss and heartbreak felt when a young father dies.

Baldwin, James

Go Tell It On the Mountain

6.5 13

Semi-autobiographical novel about a 14-year-old black youth's religious conversion.

Bellow, Saul

Seize the Day

5.6 7

A son grapples with his love and hate for an unworthy father.

Bradbury, Ray

Fahrenheit 451

5.2 7

Reading is a crime and firemen burn books in this futuristic society.

Cather, Willa

My Antonia

6.9 9

Immigrant pioneers strive to adapt to the Nebraska prairies.

Chopin, Kate

The Awakening

8.5 12

The story of a New Orleans woman who abandons her husband and children to search for love and self-understanding.

Clark, Walter Van Tilburg

The Ox-Bow Incident 5.4 12

When a group of citizens discovers one of their members has been murdered by cattle rustlers, they form an illegal posse, pursue the murderers, and lynch them.

Cormier, Robert

The Chocolate War 5.4 8

Jerry Renault challenges the power structure of his school when he refuses to sell chocolates for the annual fundraiser.

Crane, Stephen

The Red Badge of Courage 8.0 8

During the Civil War, Henry Fleming joins the army full of romantic visions of battle which are shattered by combat.

Dorris, Michael

A Yellow Raft in Blue Water 5.8 21

Three generations of Native American women recount their searches for identity and love.

Ellison, Ralph

Invisible Man 7.2 30

A black man's search for himself as an individual and as a member of his race and his society.

Faulkner, William

As I Lay Dying 5.4 9

The Bundren family takes the ripening corpse of Addie, wife and mother, on a gruesomely comic journey.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott

The Great Gatsby 7.3 8

A young man corrupts himself and the American Dream to regain a lost love.

Gaines, Ernest

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman 4.6 13

In her 100 years, Miss Jane Pittman experiences it all, from slavery to the civil rights movement.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel

The Scarlet Letter 11.7 14

An adulterous Puritan woman keeps secret the identity of the father of her illegitimate child.

Heller, Joseph

Catch-22 7.1 30

A broad comedy about a WWII bombardier based in Italy and his efforts to avoid bombing missions.

Hemingway, Ernest

A Farewell to Arms

6.0 13

During World War I, an American lieutenant runs away with the woman who nurses him back to health.

Hurston, Zora Neale

Their Eyes Were Watching God

5.6 10

Janie repudiates many roles in her quest for self-fulfillment.

Kesey, Ken

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

6.2 18

A novel about a power struggle between the head nurse and one of the male patients in a mental institution.

Lee, Harper

To Kill a Mockingbird

5.6 15

At great peril to himself and his children, lawyer Atticus Finch defends an African-American man accused of raping a white woman in a small Alabama town.

Lewis, Sinclair

Main Street

8.6 30

A young doctor's wife tries to change the ugliness, dullness and ignorance which prevail in Gopher Prairie, Minn.

London, Jack

Call of the Wild

8.0 7

Buck is a loyal pet dog until cruel men make him a pawn in their search for Klondike gold.

McCullers, Carson

The Member of the Wedding

6.3 9

A young southern girl is determined to be the third party on a honeymoon, despite all the advice against it from friends and family.

Melville, Herman

Moby-Dick

10.3 42

A complex novel about a mad sea captain's pursuit of the White Whale.

Morrison, Toni

Sula

6.4 8

The lifelong friendship of two women becomes strained when one causes the other's husband to abandon her.

Poe, Edgar Allan

Great Tales and Poems

11.8 29

Poe is considered the father of detective stories and a master of supernatural tales.

Potok, Chaim

The Chosen

6.6 15

Friendship between two Jewish boys, one Hasidic and the other Orthodox, begins at a baseball game and flourishes despite their different backgrounds and beliefs.

Salinger, J.D.

The Catcher in the Rye 4.7 11

A prep school dropout rejects the "phoniness" he sees all about him.

Sinclair, Upton

The Jungle 8.0 22

The deplorable conditions of the Chicago stockyards are exposed in this turn-of-the-century novel.

Steinbeck, John

The Grapes of Wrath 4.0 25

The desperate flight of tenant farmers from Oklahoma during the Depression.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher

Uncle Tom's Cabin 9.3 32

The classic tale that awakened a nation about the slave system.

Tan, Amy

The Joy Luck Club 5.7 14

After her mother's death, a young Chinese-American woman learns of her mother's tragic early life in China.

Twain, Mark

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

6.6 18

Huck and Jim, a runaway slave, travel down the Mississippi in search of freedom.

Vonnegut, Kurt

Slaughterhouse-Five

6.0 8

Billy Pilgrim, an optometrist from Ilium, New York, shuttles between World War II Dresden and a luxurious zoo on the planet Tralfamadore.

Walker, Alice

The Color Purple

4.0 9

A young woman sees herself as property until another woman teaches her to value herself.

Wolfe, Thomas

Look Homeward, Angel

7.7 38

A novel depicting the coming of age of Eugene Gant and his passion to experience life.

Wright, Richard

Native Son

6.1 24

Bigger Thomas, a young man from the Chicago slums, lashes out against a hostile society by committing two murders.

World Literature

Achebe, Chinua

Things Fall Apart

6.2 8

Okonkwo, a proud village leader, is driven to murder and suicide by European changes to his traditional Ibo society.

Allende, Isabel

House of the Spirits 8.4 32

The story of the Trueba family in Chile, from the turn of the century to the violent days of the overthrow of the Salvador Allende government in 1973.

Austen, Jane

Pride and Prejudice 12.0 27

Love and marriage among the English country gentry of Austen's day.

Balzac, Honore de

Pere Goriot 7.2 15

A father is reduced to poverty after giving money to his daughters.

Bronte, Charlotte

Jane Eyre 7.9 33

An intelligent and passionate governess falls in love with a strange, moody man tormented by dark secrets.

Bronte, Emily

Wuthering Heights 11.3 23

One of the masterpieces of English romanticism, this is a novel of Heathcliff and Catherine, love and revenge.

Carroll, Lewis

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland 7.4 5

A fantasy in which Alice follows the White Rabbit to a dream world.

Cervantes, Miguel de

Don Quixote 13.2 91

An eccentric old gentleman sets out as a knight "tilting at windmills" to right the wrongs of the world.

Conrad, Joseph

Heart of Darkness 9.0 10

The novel's narrator journeys into the Congo where he discovers the extent to which greed can corrupt a good man.

Defoe, Daniel

Robinson Crusoe 12.3 27

The adventures of a man who spends 24 years on an isolated island.

Dickens, Charles

Great Expectations 9.2 35

The moving story of the rise, fall, and rise again of a humbly-born young orphan.

Dostoevski, Feodor

Crime and Punishment 8.7 40

A psychological novel about a poor student who murders an old woman pawnbroker and her sister.

Eliot, George

The Mill on the Floss 9.9 41

Maggie is miserable because her brother disapproves of her choices of romances.

Esquivel, Laura

Like Water for Chocolate 7.2 9

As the youngest of three daughters in a turn-of-the-century Mexican family, Tita may not marry but must remain at home to care for her mother.

Forster, E.M.

A Passage to India 7.7 18

A young English woman in British-ruled India accuses an Indian doctor of sexual assault.

Garcia Marquez, Gabriel

One Hundred Years of Solitude 8.7 27

A technique called magical realism is used in this portrait of seven generations in the lives of the Buendia family.

Golding, William

Lord of the Flies

5.0 9

English schoolboys marooned on an uninhabited island test the values of civilization when they attempt to set up a society of their own.

Hardy, Thomas

Tess of the D'Urbervilles

9.5 23

The happiness of Tess and her husband is destroyed when she confesses that she bore a child as the result of a forced sexual relationship with her employer's son.

Hesse, Hermann

Siddhartha

7.1 6

Emerging from a kaleidoscope of experiences and pleasures, a young Brahmin ascends to a state of peace and mystic holiness.

Huxley, Aldous

Brave New World

7.5 11

A bitter satire of the future, in which the world is controlled by advances in science and social changes.

Joyce, James

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

8.7 16

A novel about a young man growing up in Ireland and rebelling against family, country, and religion.

Orwell, George

Animal Farm

7.3 5

Animals turn the tables on their masters.

Pasternak, Boris

Doctor Zhivago

8.2 36

An epic novel of Russia before and after the Bolshevik revolution.

Paton, Alan

Cry, the Beloved Country

6.2 14

A country Zulu pastor searches for his sick sister in Johannesburg, and discovers that she has become a prostitute and his son a murderer.

Remarque, Erich Maria

All Quiet on the Western Front

6.0 10

A young German soldier in World War I experiences pounding shellfire, hunger, sickness, and death.

Scott, Sir Walter

Ivanhoe

12.9 40

Tale of Ivanhoe, the disinherited knight, Lady Rowena, Richard the Lion-Hearted, and Robin Hood at the time of the Crusades.

Shelley, Mary W.

Frankenstein 12.4 17

A gothic tale of terror in which Franken-stein creates a monster from corpses.

Solzhenitsyn, Aleksander

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich 5.5 8

Ivan Denisovich Shukhov endures one more day in a Siberian prison camp and finds joy in survival.

Swift, Jonathan

Gulliver's Travels 13.5 25

Gulliver encounters dwarfs and giants and has other strange adventures when his ship is wrecked in distant lands.

Tolstoy, Leo

Anna Karenina 9.6 69

Anna forsakes her husband for the dashing Count Vronsky and brief happiness.

Weisel, Elie

Night 4.8 4

A searing account of the Holocaust as experienced by a 15-year-old boy.

Wells, H.G.

The Time Machine 7.4 6

A scientist invents a machine that transports him into the future.

Biography/History

Angelou, Maya

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

6.7 13

An African-American writer traces her coming of age.

Ashe, Arthur and Arnold Rampersad.

Days of Grace

9.0 23

Biography of a highly respected tennis star and citizen of the world who dies of AIDS.

Baker, Russell

Growing Up

6.9 15

A columnist with a sense of humor takes a gentle look at his childhood in Baltimore during the Depression.

Brown, Dee

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee

7.9 27

A narrative of the white man's conquest of the American land as the Indian victims experienced it.

Delany, Sara and A. Elizabeth with Amy Hill Hearth

Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years

5.9 9

Two daughters of former slaves tell their stories of fighting racial and gender prejudice during the 20th century.

Frank, Anne

The Diary of a Young Girl

6.5 14

The story of a Jewish family forced by encroaching Nazis to live in hiding.

Franklin, Benjamin

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

n/a n/a

Considered one of the most interesting autobiographies in English.

Haley, Alex

Roots

7.4 48

Traces Haley's search for the history of his family, from Africa through the era of slavery to the 20th century.

Hersey, John

Hiroshima

8.4 9

Six Hiroshima survivors reflect on the aftermath of the first atomic bomb.

Keller, Helen

The Story of My Life

6.8 12

The story of Helen Keller, who was both blind and deaf, and her relationship with her devoted teacher Anne Sullivan.

Kennedy, John F.

Profiles in Courage

11.4 13

A series of profiles of Americans who took courageous stands in public life.

Mathabane, Mark

Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa

7.1 24

A tennis player breaks down racial barriers and escape to a better life in America.

Thoreau, Henry David

Walden

8.7 21

In the mid-19th century, Thoreau spends 26 months alone in the woods to "front the essential facts of life."

Tocqueville, Alexis de

Democracy in America, Vol. 1

13.4 52

This classic in political literature examines American society from the viewpoint of a leading French magistrate who visited the U.S. in 1831.

Science

Carson, Rachel

Silent Spring

11.5 19

Carson's original clarion call to environmental action sets the stage for saving our planet.

Hawking, Stephen

A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes 10.1 8

Cosmology becomes understandable as the author discusses the origin, evolution, and fate of our universe.

Social Science

Hamilton, Edith

Mythology 8.2 20

Gods and heroes, their clashes and adventures, come alive in this splendid retelling of the Greek, Roman and Norse myths.

Kotlowitz, Alex

There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in Urban America

6.7 16

Lafayette and Pharoah Rivers and their family struggle to survive in one of Chicago's worst housing projects.

Drama

Beckett, Samuel

Waiting for Godot 5.4 2

Powerful, symbolic portrayal of the human condition.

Ibsen, Henrik

A Doll's House 5.9 4

A woman leaves her family to pursue personal freedom.

Miller, Arthur

Death of a Salesman

6.2 5

The tragedy of a typical American who, at age 63, is faced with what he cannot face: defeat and disillusionment.

Shakespeare, William

Romeo and Juliet

8.6 5

Hamlet

10.5 7

Macbeth

10.9 4

Twelfth Night, others.

8.6 4

Shaw, Bernard

Saint Joan

7.3 6

Pygmalion, others.

7.0 6

Wilde, Oscar

The Importance of Being Earnest

6.9 9

Comedy exposing quirks and foibles of Victorian society.

Wilder, Thornton

Our Town

3.9 3

The dead of a New Hampshire village of the early 1900s appreciate life more than the living.

Williams, Tennessee

A Streetcar Named Desire

5.7 4

Blanche Dubois' fantasies of refinement and grandeur are brutally destroyed by her brother-in-law.

Wilson, August

The Piano Lesson

3.6 4

Drama set in 1936 Pittsburgh chronicles black experience in America.