

INDEPENDENT Reading

AP Language

AP Language is one of the most rigorous courses on our campus. To keep your brain active and engaged, we would like to suggest some reading.... Included here are the texts we WILL read over the course of the year, as well as some books that will broaden your discussions and perspectives.

At the same time, we invite you to visit the appropriate AP Language web site to review the class policies and some of the other things posted there. Go to the FCHS home page, click on Departments, then Language Arts, then Mary Dietrich or Jason Clarke. As we get close to August 1st, we will post the reading assignments for the first couple of weeks, so you can get an idea of what's ahead. Please email us if you have any questions – eclarke@psdschools.org or mdietric@psdschools.org.

Our primary text for first semester is ReReading America. The cost will be about \$49.00 (fee waived if you are eligible for assistance). You must purchase this text so that you can read it and mark in it as if it were a college class – because this is, after all, a college class.

If you would like a copy of the text prior to the start of school, please email one of us and, if there are enough requests, we will set up a book distribution day in early August.

Mary Dietrich and Jason Clarke

You will read TWO TEXTS outside of class – one fiction and one – non-fiction. Your SUMMARY of NON-Fiction is due on November 1, 2009 (see assignment below).

An assignment based on your FICTION reading will be due on February 18th. We will have assignments based on both texts as the year progresses, so please either keep a copy or be prepared to “re-check” it out of the library as needed. ALTERNATIVES: You may choose a book that is not on these lists if you have it approved. See my web pages for email addresses. Please permit a few days for a reply.

NON FICTION LIST. Choose one from this list and one from the FICTION list.

ASSIGNMENT: Write a clear, concise summary of the text and COMMENT on information you learn and the presentation of the material. In other words, begin a conversation with the writer. The summary should be about one typed double spaced page for every 6-8 pages of text. Your commentary should be about the same. You may choose to comment on style, agree or disagree with ideas, or connect ideas to other things you have read or experienced. Please make sure you MARK your summary and commentary, so it is clear which is which. They may be integrated together or separate. The assignment must be TYPED and submitted to Safe Assignment. RECOMMENDATION: TAKE notes as you read and then WRITE after every chapter or two. Be certain that this is in YOUR OWN WORDS. It will be checked for plagiarism.

Ron Hall. Same Kind of Different As Me: A Modern-Day Slave, an International Art Dealer, and the Unlikely Woman Who Bound Them Together

A dangerous, homeless drifter who grew up picking cotton in virtual slavery. An upscale art dealer accustomed to the world of Armani and Chanel. A gutsy woman with a stubborn dream. A story so incredible no novelist would dare dream it. It begins outside a burning plantation hut in Louisiana . . . and an East Texas honky-tonk . . . and, without a doubt, in the heart of God. It unfolds in a Hollywood hacienda . . . an upscale New York gallery . . . a downtown dumpster . . . a Texas ranch. Gritty with pain and betrayal and brutality, this true story also shines with an unexpected, life-changing love.

James Baldwin. Notes of a Native Son

Originally published in 1955, James Baldwin's first nonfiction book has become a classic. These searing essays on life in Harlem, the protest novel, movies, and Americans abroad remain as powerful today as when they were written.

James Baldwin. Go Tell It on the Mountain.

With lyrical precision, psychological directness, and a rage that is at once unrelenting and compassionate, Baldwin chronicles a fourteen-year-old boy's discovery of the terms of his identity as the stepson of the minister of a storefront Pentecostal church in Harlem one Saturday in March of 1935.

Gary Soto. A Summer Life.

Gary Soto writes that when he was five "what I knew best was at ground level." In this lively collection of short essays, Soto takes his reader to a ground-level perspective, recreating in vivid detail the sights, sounds, smells, and textures he knew growing up in his Fresno, California, neighborhood.

Deborah Tannen. You Just don't Understand

Deborah Tannen's #1 bestseller revolutionized the way men and women talk -- and listen -- to each other -- at home, at work, and wherever the communication gap between the sexes can lead to troublesome misunderstandings. The problem dates back to childhood, when boys and girls learn to use language in distinctly different ways; years later, their adult efforts to talk often place them at cross purposes -- even when both are sincerely trying to communicate.

Hayakawa, S.I. Language in Thought and Action

Hayakawa discusses the role of language in human life, the many functions of language, and how language - sometimes without our knowing - shapes our thinking. The author writes provocatively about the relationship between language and racial and religious prejudice; about the nature and dangers of advertising, from a linguistic point of view; and, in a completely new chapter called "The Empty Eye," about the content, form, and hidden message of television, from situation comedies to news coverage to political advertising.

Jean Kilbourne. Killing Us Softly

Many advertisements these days make us feel as if we have an intimate, even passionate relationship with a product. But as Jean Kilbourne points out in this fascinating and shocking exposé, the dreamlike promise of advertising always leaves us hungry for more. We can never be satisfied, because the products we love cannot love us back.

Thomas Friedman, The World is Flat.

This new edition of *The World Is Flat* is Thomas L. Friedman's account of the great changes taking place in our time, as lightning-swift advances in technology and communications put people all over the globe in touch as never before-creating an explosion of wealth in India and China, and challenging the rest of us to run even faster just to stay in place.

Azar Nafisi. Reading Lolita in Tehran.

"We all have dreams - things we fantasize about doing and generally never get around to. This is the story of Azar Nafisi's dream and of the nightmare that made it come true." "For two years before she left Iran in 1997, Nafisi gathered seven young women at her house every Thursday morning to read and discuss forbidden works of Western literature. They were all former students whom she had taught at university.

Studs Terkel. Coming of Age.

Woven from the voices of 74 very different people ranging in age from 70 to 99, this book provides an extraordinary panorama of American life and work throughout this century and underscores how times have changed. The book, which is in many senses a sequel to Terkel's 1974 best seller *Working*, is a unique portrait of America--from the angry farmer in Nebraska to the resigned banker in New York to the vanguards of the trade unions

John Steinbeck. Once There Was A War

Steinbeck's dispatches filed from the front lines during World War II vividly evoke the human side of the war.

Gertrude Stein. Everybody's Biography

An account of her experiences as a result of writing a bestseller, *Everybody's Autobiography* is as funny and engaging as *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, but it is also a searing meditation on the meaning of success and identity in America. Posing as the representative American, Stein transforms her story into history—responding to the tradition of Thoreau and Henry Adams, she writes: "I used to be fond of saying that America, which was supposed to be a land of success, was a land of failure. Most of the great men in America had a long life of early failure and a long life of later failure." *Everybody's Autobiography* is Stein at her most accessible and her most serious, and may yet prove to be among her most popular books.

Terri Jentz. Strange Piece of Paradise.

Powerful, eloquent, and paced like the most riveting of thrillers, *Strange Piece of Paradise* is the electrifying account of Terri's investigation into the mystery of her near murder. A startling profile of a psychopath, a sweeping reflection on violence and the myth

of American individualism, and a moving record of a brave inner journey from violence to hope, this searing, unforgettable work is certain to be one of the most talked about books of the year.

Maxine Hong Kingston. Woman Warrior.

A Chinese American woman tells of the Chinese myths, family stories and events of her California childhood that have shaped her identity.

Zora Neal Hurston. Dust Tracks on a Road

First published in 1942 at the crest of her popularity, this is Zora Neale Hurston's unrestrained account of her rise from childhood poverty in the rural South to prominence among the leading artists and intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance. Full of wit and wisdom, and audaciously spirited, *Dust Tracks on a Road* offers a rare, poignant glimpse of the life — public and private — of a premier African-American writer, artist, anthropologist and champion of the black heritage.

Charlise Lyles. Do I Dare Disturb the Universe?

When the ashes cooled, her family was one of the first to move into Cleveland's King-Kennedy Homes public housing project in 1969. Through the eyes of childhood and adolescence, Lyles portrays their years there against a backdrop of weekly black militant demonstrations, the rise and fall of Cleveland's first black mayor, and mounting violence and despair. At the same time, she traces her ascent from "the slow class" to an elite suburban prep school, showing how programs from Head Start to A Better Chance could open doors for those with the good fortune to find them and the courage to go through.

Tracy Kidder. Among Schoolchildren

"Among Schoolchildren" illuminates a year in the life of a fifth-grade teacher struggling to make a positive difference in the lives of her students. In Holyoke, Massachusetts, Christine Zajac toils far from the limelight. Her story, and that of her students is heart-warming and inspiring as she helps them to become full-scale human beings. We find that some are brilliant, that others are troubled, and that Ms. Zajac never gives up.

Mary McCarthy. Memories of a Catholic Girlhood.

Mary McCarthy enjoyed an indulgent, idyllic childhood until 1918, when the terrible national influenza epidemic led to the death of her parents. Hoping to keep the children out of Protestant hands, her Catholic grandparents in Minneapolis sent Mary and her three brothers to live with relatives, cruel and repressive Dickensian figures who beat them. Eventually Mary was sent to convent school in Seattle, where she struggled with issues of faith and morality, and then Episcopalian seminary, where she discovered the Latin classics and began her transition from girlhood to adolescence. In telling this extraordinary tale, McCarthy drew on her skill as a novelist to relate a unique early life with irony, humor, and devastating honesty.

Dave Eggers. A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius

When Eggers was a senior in college, his parents both died of cancer, only five weeks apart, and he found that he had inherited his eight-year-old brother. He and young Toph (short for Christopher) leave Chicago for Berkeley, California, to live near older siblings, but Eggers is the one who serves as chief surrogate parent. Combines amusing stories and social commentary.

Coyotes: A Journey Through the Secret World of America's Illegal Aliens, Ted Conover

Conover posed as an immigrant, crossing the border twice and learning first-hand about "coyotes" — those who sneak Mexicans and other Latin Americans across the border, often under murderous conditions.

Silent Spring, Rachel Carson

First published in 1962, *Silent Spring* launched the modern environmental movement and landed Carson on the *100 Most Influential People of the Century* list. A critical look at pesticides and other environmental issues.

Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness, Edward Abbey

Abbey captures his life during three seasons as a park ranger in southeastern Utah. This book combines Abbey's experience with nature (a la Thoreau) with social commentary about the exploitation of the wilderness by oil and mining interests, as well as by the tourist industry.

Dispatches, Michael Herr

American correspondent Herr's documentary recalls the heavy combat he witnessed in Vietnam as well as the obscene speech, private fears and nightmares of the soldiers. "Herr captures the almost hallucinatory madness of the war," said Publishers Weekly. "This is a compelling, truth-telling book with a visceral impact, its images stuck in the mind like shards from a pineapple bomb."

Hiroshima, John Hersey

The story of the first atomic bomb and its impact, as told to Hersey by six survivors. Later editions of the book include a “final chapter” that details the lives of the six survivors, nearly 40 years after the bomb, that Hersey initially met with. Often considered the “most important WW2 book.”

Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez, Richard Rodriguez

The story of a Mexican-American Richard Rodriguez, who begins his schooling in Sacramento, California, knowing just 50 words of English and concludes his university studies in the stately quiet of the reading room of the British Museum. Commentary on bilingual education and affirmative action; social assimilation.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou

The first volume of an autobiographical series. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* was nominated for the National Book Award in 1970 and remains an immensely popular book among people worldwide to this day for its honest and hopeful portrait of a woman finding the strength to overcome any adversity, of a caged bird who found the means to fly.

In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and its Consequences, Truman Capote

On November 15, 1959, in the small town of Holcomb, Kansas, four members of the Clutter family were savagely murdered by blasts from a shotgun held a few inches from their faces. There was no apparent motive for the crime, and there were almost no clues. *In Cold Blood* is the story of the lives and deaths of those involved with this crime from the family members, to the shooters, to the detectives investigating the crime. It has already been hailed as a masterpiece.

The Executioner's Song, Norman Mailer

Pulitzer Prize-winning story of the crimes and punishment of a 20th-century murderer and thief, is what the author calls a "true-life novel." It is a horrifying, sad, scrupulously detailed look at the events leading up to the moment Gary Gilmore was killed by a firing squad in Utah State Prison on January 17, 1977.

Nickled & Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America, Barbara Ehrenreich

To understand life beyond boom-time America, Ehrenreich spent months laboring as a cleaning woman; as a waitress; and as a Wal-Mart sales clerk. Her revelations about these hard, supposedly "unskilled" jobs and the difficulty of making ends meet in the U.S. gives this book a powerful, personal edge.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Malcolm X as told to Alex Haley

The absorbing personal story of the man who rose from a life of poverty and disadvantage to become the most dynamic leader of the Black Revolution, only to have his life cut short by an assassin's bullets.

There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America, Alex Kotlowitz

This is the moving account of two remarkable boys struggling to survive in Chicago's Henry Horner Homes, a public housing complex disfigured by crime and neglect. Alex Kotlowitz establishes that the tender underside of our embattled inner cities is the children, urban America's greatest casualty and its only hope. With this searing and important work, he continues the stories of 12-year-old Lafayette Rivers and his younger brother Pharoah as they confront tragedy on a daily basis.

Summaries: from BarnesandNoble.com

Fiction – American only, please, with a few exceptions

AP Language Units

Language and its power

Swift, Jonathan. *Gullivers Travels* (satire) (British)

Martel, Yan. *Life of Pi*

Meet Pi Patel, a young man on the cusp of adulthood when fate steps in and hastens his lessons in maturity. En route with his family from their home in India to Canada, their cargo ship sinks, and Pi finds himself adrift in a lifeboat -- alone, save for a few surviving animals, some of the very same animals Pi's zookeeper father warned him would tear him to pieces if they got a chance. But Pi's seafaring journey is about much more than a struggle for survival. It becomes a test of everything he's learned -- about both man and beast, their creator, and the nature of truth itself.

[Code Talker: A Novel About The Navajo Marines of World War Two](#)

Joseph Bruchac,

After being taught in a boarding school run by whites that Navajo is a useless language, Ned Begay and other Navajo men are recruited by the Marines to become Code Talkers, sending messages during World War II in their native tongue

Babel-17

by **Samuel R. Delany**

Babel-17 is all about the power of language. Humanity, which has spread throughout the universe, is involved in a war with the Invaders, who have been covertly assassinating officials and sabotaging spaceships. The only clues humanity has to go on are strange alien messages that have been intercepted in space. Poet and linguist Rydra Wong is determined to understand the language and stop the alien threat.

***If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* by Italo Calvino**

In this playful experimental work, Italo Calvino sets adrift the Reader on a winding search which explores the act of reading, the ways and whys we read, and the writing process. There's nothing didactic about these interconnected stories: Various theories of literary criticism have never been presented with such humor and enthralling precision as Calvino has done here.

The Model Family

Bellow, Saul. *Seize the Day*

Lewis, Sinclair. *Main Street*.

McCullers, Carson. *The Member of the Wedding*.

Dorris, Michael

A Yellow Raft in Blue Water

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

Kingsolver, Barbara. [The Bean Trees](#). Taylor Greer leaves Kentucky and heads west to find a new life. When a baby is abandoned in her car, she learns that responsibilities and independence are not mutually exclusive in this story of family and community.

Cisneros, Sandra. [Caramelo](#). New York: Knopf, 2002. LaLa learns the stories of her Awful Grandmother and weaves them into a colorful family history. The "caramelo," a striped shawl begun by her Great-Grandmother, symbolizes their traditions.

***Everything is Illuminated* by Jonathan Safran Foer**

A young man, also named Jonathan Safran Foer, travels to the Ukraine to discover his family history by finding the woman he believes saved his grandfather from the Nazis. This heartbreaking meditation on love, friendship, memory, and death is, structurally, also a novel about a novel: Passages from a book that JSF-the-protagonist is currently writing (and we're reading) explore his grandfather's past and, in a series of hilarious-and poignant-letters, the Ukrainian "translator" Alex critiques these passages and illuminates his own life in present-day Ukraine.

Education and Empowerment

Sapphire. [Push](#). New York: Knopf, 1996. Precious Jones is a survivor. She had her father's baby at 12 and now, at 16, she is pregnant by him again. But an alternative school, a dedicated teacher, and classmates who understand help her fight back.

Bronte, Charlotte, *The Professor*. (hard to find)

Individual Opportunity – Class and Money

***White Noise* by Don DeLillo**

Don DeLillo's prescient masterpiece inhabits a world eerily similar to our own-one in which technology, artificiality, consumerism, and "white noise" block the fear of death from our consciousness. If for no other reason, read *White Noise* for its description of new college freshmen pulling up to campus in station wagons laden with mini-fridges and stereo equipment. Then, as you pull up to campus for your first semester laden with small appliances, think back to Don DeLillo's dead-on rendering. If you're laughing at yourself, you'll survive college just fine.

Heller, Joseph. *Catch 22*

Kesey, Ken. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

Steinbeck, John

The Grapes of Wrath

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

Stockett, Kathryn.

The Help

Optimistic, uplifting debut novel (set during the nascent civil rights movement in Jackson, Miss., where black women were trusted to raise white children but not to polish the household silver. Eugenia Skeeter Phelan is just home from college in 1962, and, anxious to become a writer, is advised to hone her chops by writing about what disturbs you. The budding social activist begins to collect the stories of the black women on whom the country club sets relies and mistrusts enlisting the help of Aibileen, a maid who's raised 17 children, and Aibileen's best friend Minny, who's found herself unemployed more than a few times after mouthing off to her white employers. The book Skeeter puts together based on their stories is scathing and shocking, bringing pride and hope to the black community, while giving Skeeter the courage to break down her personal boundaries and pursue her dreams. Assured and layered, full of heart and history, this one has bestseller written all over it.

Gender

Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*.

In this multi-award-winning, bestselling novel, Margaret Atwood has created a stunning Orwellian vision of the near future. This is the story of Offred, one of the unfortunate "Handmaids" under the new social order who have only one purpose: to breed. In Gilead, where women are prohibited from holding jobs, reading, and forming friendships, Offred's persistent memories of life in the "time before" and her will to survive are acts of rebellion. Provocative, startling, prophetic, and with Margaret Atwood's devastating irony, wit, and acute perceptive powers in full force, *The Handmaid's Tale* is at once a mordant satire and a dire warning.

Tolstoy, Leo

Anna Karenina

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

Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*.

When it first appeared in 1899, **Kate Chopin's** *The Awakening* was greeted with cries of outrage. The novel's frank portrayal of a woman's emotional, intellectual, and sexual awakening shocked the sensibilities of the time and destroyed the author's reputation and career. Many years passed before this short, pioneering work was recognized as a major achievement in American literature.

Set in and around New Orleans, *The Awakening* tells the story of Edna Pontellier, a young wife and mother. While on vacation, Edna meets the son of a Louisiana resort owner, with whom she gradually falls in love. As she pulls away from her husband, Edna begins to develop a sense of herself as a whole person, with unique wants, interests, and desires. Determined to control her own life, she flouts convention by moving out of her husband's house, having an adulterous affair, and becoming an artist.

Morrison, Toni

Sula

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

Plath, Sylvia

The Bell Jar

The heartbreaking story of a talented young woman's descent into madness.

Flaubert, Gustave

Madame Bovary

In her extramarital affairs, a bored young wife seeks unsuccessfully to find the emotional experiences she craves.

Ibsen, Henrik

A Doll's House

A woman leaves her family to pursue personal freedom.

Chambers, Aidan. [Postcards from No Man's Land](#). New York: Dutton, 2002. Seventeen is an age of self-discovery, and Jacob has gone to Amsterdam to explore his life. His quest strangely parallels discoveries about his grandfather's life there during World War II.

The Melting Pot – race and equality

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

Ellison's classic follows a nameless African American man's journey for truth and self-discovery through a society where he's considered invisible. Throughout the novel, the narrator moves through layers of deception, slowly transforming himself, and ultimately growing closer to the realities about identity, race, and the world.

Aside from being a powerful description of the black experience in 1950s America (and, unfortunately, today), *Invisible Man* is a chilling, impassioned portrayal of the human struggle for knowledge and the elusive nature of truth.

The Color Purple

by Alice Walker

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Maya Angelou

A New World Order
Clark, Walter Van Tilburg. The Ox-Bow Incident

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

Huxley, Aldous
Brave New World
A bitter satire of the future, in which the world is controlled by advances in science and social changes.

Cervantes, Miguel de
Don Quixote
An eccentric old gentleman sets out as a knight "tilting at windmills" to right the wrongs of the world.

Abelove, Joan. Go and come back. New York: Puffin, 2002. In a story of mutual culture shock, Alicia, a young Isabo girl in a remote area of Peru, is just as fascinated by the American anthropologists, Joanna and Margarita, as they are with the ways of her people.

Satrapi, Marjane. Persepolis. New York: Pantheon, 2002. Growing up in Iran wasn't all that bad, or all that different, except that Marjane wanted to be a prophet when she grew up. Dramatic black-and-white illustrations tell her story.

The Kite Runner.

Life and Fate

Vasilii Semenovich Grossman

New York: Harper & Row, 1986, ©1985

This is the greatest Russian novel of the 20th century and one of the six or seven greatest works of fiction of the century in the Western canon. In my humble opinion, this work is the single best exposition of the problem of totalitarianism and I think that the most important idea of the century is man as an individual and the role of the state.