

Summer Reading List – Grade 10 2010

As a candidate for 10th Grade English next fall, you are expected to read two books from this list over the summer. During the second week of school, you will write an essay in class to show how well you understood the books. The essay will help your new English teacher to see how well you write. Candidates for English 10 Honors must read *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Martin Eden*, plus one other book designated 3 or 4.

The following list contains a brief description of each book and a numbered rating system to indicate the degree of difficulty of each book:

- 1 - a book slightly easier than 10th grade level
- 2 - a book typical of the reading ability of a 10th grader
- 3 - a book geared to slightly older students
- 4 - a difficult book – you should be a good reader with the persistence to finish a lengthy book and/or the desire to wrestle with complexities

1. **Of Mice and Men** – John Steinbeck (1)
Ranch hands George and his retarded friend Lennie long for a place of their own, a place where they can find peace and quiet.
2. **Fallen Angels** – Walter Dean Meyers (1-2)
Seventeen-year-old Harlem native Ritchie Perry enlists in the army and is sent to Vietnam, where he not only faces racism and the horrors of war but also witnesses touching heroism.
3. **Flight** – Sherman Alexi (2)
Half-Native American, Half-Irish, Zits is an orphan who has just been kicked out of his twentieth foster home. By performing the “Ghost Dance,” Zits time-travels, becoming an FBI agent, a political activist, a Native American child at Custer’s last stand, and eventually, his own father.
4. **The Red Tent** – Anita Diamant (2)
Set in the biblical world of Genesis, but told from a distinctly different woman’s perspective, *The Red Tent* tells the story of Jacob’s daughter Dinah and her four mothers.
5. **The Color Purple** – Alice Walker (2-3)
A novel in letters of a black woman’s life in the South and her triumph over abuse and grief.
6. **A Farewell to Arms** – Ernest Hemingway (2-3)
This is the story of Lt. Henry, an American, and Catherine Barkley, a British nurse. The two meet in Italy during WWI in this tale about the tenuous nature of love in time of war.

7. **Last of the Mohicans** – James Fenimore Cooper (3)
As part of the intrigue of this saga of the French-Indian War, Hawkeye and his friends attempt to rescue two women taken captive in the dense New York forest on their way to the English garrison.
8. **The Namesake** – Jhumpa Lahiri (3)
The first child of an Indian family in America, Gogol Ganguli seeks to define himself amidst the Bengali culture of his parents and the American ways of his peers.
9. **Slaughter-House Five** – Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (3)
Billy Pilgrim, a chaplain's assistant in WWII, is captured by the Germans and survives the largest massacre in European history: the fire bombing of Dresden.
10. **What is the What?** – Dave Eggers (3-4)
This fictionalized memoir is based on the stories of Valentino Achak Deng, one of the "Lost Boys" of Sudan. Achak describes years of walking and living in refugee camps. "It is easy for a boy to die in Sudan," he tells us. This novel provides a deeply personal take on a distant conflict, and helps to humanize the experience of war for the reader.
11. **Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close** – Jonathan Safran Foer (3-4)
Nine-year-old Oskar Schell, having suffered the devastating loss of his father on 9/11, sets out on a secret quest through New York's boroughs to solve a mystery: what lock will his father's mysterious key open?
12. **Love Marriage** – V. V. Ganeshananthan (that's right – our own Mr. G's sister!)(3-4)
With an uncle who joined the Tamil Tigers and parents who left Sri Lanka to escape the war, American-born Yalini struggles to establish her own identity. Family, marriage, love, culture, history, and contemporary society all play into the equation.
13. **The Grapes of Wrath** – John Steinbeck (4)
Powerful novel of dispossessed landowners who leave Oklahoma during the Great Depression and head for the "promised land" of California.
14. **Martin Eden** – Jack London (4)
Semiautobiographical novel in which the title character becomes a writer, hoping to acquire the respectability sought by his society-girl sweetheart. The story tells of the ascent to the top of the ladder and the problems that accompany that climb.