Summer reading in the High School is designed to promote pleasure in reading, enabling students both to explore intellectual interests related to their course work and to discover books and subjects they might not otherwise encounter.

To accomplish these goals, each student is asked to read three books from the lists for his or her grade level next year. At least one of these books must be chosen from the English list; the other two books may be chosen from either the general list or the English list. You can learn more about these books from our library catalog at this link: https://tinyurl.com/usn-srl-10

English Department Summer Reading List for Tenth Grade
(The Island and the World: British Literature Through the Ages)

Titles marked with a + are plays or collections of poems—please read two of these selections in lieu of a novel. We strongly urge you to investigate as many of these books as possible through your favorite library, bookstore, or website. Enjoy.

Aaronovitch, Midnight Riot
Ali, Brick Lane
Austen, Pride and Prejudice
Blackman, Naughts and Crosses
Bronte, Wuthering Heights
Carter, The Bloody Chamber
Clarke, Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell
Collins, The Moonstone (mystery)
Defoe, Robinson Crusoe
Dickens, Great Expectations
Duffy, The Bees (poems) +
Eliot (George), Silas Marner
Eliot (T. S.), Murder in the Cathedral
(a poetic drama) +
Fagan, The Panopticon
Forster, A Room with a View
Gaiman, Norse Mythology
Greene, Brighton Rock
Heaney, Field Work (poems) +

Herriot, All Things Bright and Beautiful
Housman, A Shropshire Lad (poems) +
Huxley, Brave New World
James, Devices and Desires (mystery)
James, Unnatural Causes (mystery)
Kelman, Pigeon English
Lewis, The Screwtape Letters
Mirrales, Lud-in-the-Mist
Mitchell, Black Swan Green
Oyeyemi, White Is for Witching
Sayers, Strong Poison (mystery)
Smith, White Teeth
Stopnard, Arcadia (drama) +
Swift, Waterland
Thomas, Under Milk Wood (drama) +
Waugh, Brideshead Revisited
Winterson, Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit
Wodehouse, Carry On, Jeeves (British humor)
General Summer Reading List for Tenth Grade

Several years ago, we broadened USN’s summer reading lists by adding this general list, comprised of suggestions from the entire high school faculty, to the English Department list. In the spring of 2010, a student from the class of 2008 who fondly remembers his experience with summer reading suggested that alumni might also make interesting contributions to the lists. We welcomed this idea. Therefore, in the list below, you will find suggestions for summer reading from both faculty and alumni.

Edward Abbey, Desert Solitaire
A classic and entertaining work by an unusual environmentalist writing about his experiences as a park ranger in Arches National Park. (Steve Robins)

Katherine Boo, Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity
This book takes you halfway across the world, throws you down in the middle of a slum in India, and lets you wander through the homes and disorganized social structure of extreme poverty. This true story, written by a New York Times reporter, lets you witness and experience what it takes to live like most of the people in the world. It is an attack on your senses and all of your emotions. (Hannah Dobie ’11)

Paulo Coelho, The Alchemist
Sara Chazin ’01 writes, “The book is about a boy’s coming of age and the journey that he takes to find himself. It is an example of how life hands you different surprises that you may not expect when starting your journey. It shows how this boy deals with these surprises. In addition, it is beautifully written.” (Sara Chazin ’01)

If you’ve ever wondered why math matters, this is the book for you. Without an equation or formula in sight (but with a good deal of humor), K. C. Cole shows how the patterns revealed by mathematics help us understand the world around us. (Ann Wheeler)

Arturo de Rosa, La Momia Desaparece (ISBN 0-8442-7055-5)
A comic mystery taking place in Mexico, where two detectives search for a mummy missing from the Museum of Anthropology. (In Spanish) (Rhonda Prater)

Marta de Rosa, El Secuestro (ISBN 0-8442-7060-1)
A comic mystery in which two detectives try to get to the bottom of a kidnapping in Colombia. (In Spanish) (Rhonda Prater)

Jane Goodall, In the Shadow of Man
Jane Goodall was a young secretary when the legendary Louis Leakey chose her to undertake a landmark study of chimpanzees in the Gombe Stream Reserve. In the Shadow of Man is an account of her early years at the Reserve, where she was the first person to document that chimpanzees make tools and display many complex behaviors indicative of significant cognitive abilities. (Tamara Berthel)

Jonathan Harr, The Lost Painting
The true story of the “discovery” of a lost Caravaggio masterpiece by graduate art history students—a “joys of research” book. (Zach Gordon ’11)

Tony Hawks, Round Ireland with a Fridge
The true story of the author’s attempt to win a bet that he could hitchhike around Ireland with a mini-fridge in tow. (Matthew Haber)

Robert Hicks, The Widow of the South
The Widow of the South tells the story of Carrie McGavock and her servant Creole of Carnton Plantation in Franklin, Tennessee. Overwhelmed by life and unable to cope with her personal tragedies, Carrie had withdrawn into herself. Then a disaster of tremendous magnitude knocked on her door and forced her to rejoin the world. The deaths of so many during the Battle of Franklin gave Carrie a purpose in life. (Penny Phillips)
**Russell Hoban, Riddley Walker**
Set in what is left of England ten centuries after a nuclear war destroys much of the modern world, this post-apocalyptic science fiction novel imagines humanity’s fall into conditions not unlike those of our prehistoric ancestors—life is nasty and brutish as ignorance, superstition, and myth come to replace technology and science as its governing principles. Narrated by Riddley, an inhabitant of this society, the novel also looks at the role of language and how it helps us to understand and shape the world. (Dean Masullo)

**A. J. Jacobs, The Year of Living Biblically: One Man’s Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible**
The often funny, always heartfelt story of *Esquire* writer A. J. Jacobs’ attempt to spend a year of his life following the rules of the Bible as closely as possible. (Matthew Haber)

**Steve Jones, Darwin’s Ghost**
This book is a wonderful, updated version of *The Origin of Species*, using Darwin’s exact table of contents and many of his original words but replacing 1800s examples with modern ones that support *Origin’s* arguments concerning natural selection. (Tamara Berthel)

**Suki Kim, Without You, There Is No Us: My Time With the Sons of North Korea’s Elite**
Isolated politically, economically, and culturally, North Korea is the enigma of an increasingly globalized world. Suki Kim’s account of her time as an English teacher in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang is set in 2011, when the government shut down all its universities and sent the students to work in labor camps—all its universities, that is, except the all-male Pyongyang University of Science and Technology, where Kim taught the sons of the most powerful families in the country. There, amid the backdrop of the death of Kim Jong-il and the ascendancy of Kim Jong-un, Kim was witness to the workings of the totalitarian regime—the indoctrination, the surveillance, the obedience, and the fear—and its effect on the young men that she had come to the country to teach. (Dean Masullo)

**Ross King, Brunelleschi’s Dome**
A highly readable and interesting history of the events surrounding the construction of the Duomo in Florence in the 15th century. (Matthew Haber)

**Barbara Kingsolver, The Poisonwood Bible**
A novel about the lives of women in an American missionary family and their interactions with the people, nature and politics in the Belgian Congo in the latter half of the 20th century. (Freya Sachs)

**John McWhorter, Our Magnificent Bastard Tongue: The Untold Story of English**
This is an absolutely wonderful history of English that tries to answer questions about why English has some of the weird stuff it has, like the completely useless “do” at the beginning of a question. The author takes aim at some of the conventional thought about early English history and gives a thoroughly engaging history of the influences wrought upon English over the centuries. (Will Mason ’85)

**James Michener, Space**
This book explores the time between V-E Day in 1945 and the heyday of the United States Space Program in the 1970s through the lives of 5 families. It provides an interesting look at how culture changed in those years and also explains how the technology we take for granted today came to be. (Penny Phillips)

**Larry Niven, Ringworld**
A science fiction classic in the tradition of Asimov, *Ringworld* mixes hard science with an exciting and outlandish plot of galactic exploration. According to Nathan Schine ’09, “This book is insanely fun to read. Niven presents the reader with a surprise every few pages. He relates his poetic conceptual creativity in straightforward and engaging prose that allows you to become lost in his world.” (Nathan Schine ’09)
Jenny Nordberg, *The Underground Girls of Kabul: In Search of a Hidden Resistance in Afghanistan*

Afghanistan is a country torn by war and dominated by an extreme patriarchy: Men are privileged in all quarters of society; women are seen as inconsequential and inconvenient. In this award-winning book, Nordberg, a *New York Times* reporter, traces the remarkable stories of young girls and women who, in search of the opportunities available only to their male counterparts, make their way in Afghani society disguised as boys and men. These *bacha posh*—in Afghan Persian, the term means “dressed as boys”—risk their lives every day for the rights and privileges that most people take for granted: education, work, and basic human rights. (Dean Masullo)

Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*

Chris Cowperthwaite ’95 describes this book as “a close look at the same small group of scientists who have been on the wrong side of every major health and environmental debate of the last fifty to sixty years. *Merchants of Doubt* … explains how they’ve managed to keep ‘debates’ going despite overwhelming scientific evidence that smoking is bad, acid rain and the ozone hole are real, and climate change is a serious threat. … Despite the fact that it is science-based, extremely well-researched, and meticulously documented, it reads easily enough for laypeople to understand. Anyone who is remotely concerned with energy policy should read this.” (Chris Cowperthwaite ’95)

John Ratey, *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*

This is an easy-to-read, compelling account of the ways that exercise affects our brains, increasing mental focus and reasoning, boosting our moods, and improving our memory. Dr. Ratey describes recent research involving children and adults. It is a great read for anyone wanting to jumpstart or to deepen their commitment to regular exercise. Readers will find themselves thinking about ways to spur on their brain health, mental sharpness, and good mood through physical activity. (Debbie Van Slyke)

Matt Ridley, *Genome: The Autobiography of a Species in 23 Chapters*

The book devotes one chapter to each of the human chromosomes and an unnumbered chapter to the sex chromosomes. It describes the gene, its discovery, and a snippet of its function. Omer Ikizler ’07 writes, “I have peers here at Swarthmore who cite this book as their inspiration to become biologists. It’s informative yet entertaining, and it is written in an approachable, imaginative style.” (Omer Ikizler ’07)

Cokie Roberts, *Founding Mothers*

An in-depth, meticulously researched look at the lives of the wives of the founding fathers. The responsibilities they bore and the influence they exerted during the birth of our nation are eye-opening. These are not the demure, uninformed, un-empowered New England housewives of myth and legend. These women are the real thing! (Penny Phillips)

Luis J. Rodriguez, *Always Running: La Vida Loca*

The attraction and the dangers of the “crazy life” as a gang member in Los Angeles. (Steve Robins)

Patrick Rothfuss, *The Name of the Wind*

According to Amazon.com, “This is the riveting first-person narrative of Kvothe, a young man who grows to be one of the most notorious magicians his world has ever seen. From his childhood in a troupe of traveling players to years spent as a near-feral orphan in a crime-riddled city, to his daringly brazen yet successful bid to enter a legendary school of magic, *The Name of the Wind* takes the reader on a journey through an extraordinary life that is nonetheless touched by the same joys and heartaches that we know so well.” Caroline Clark ’09 writes that this book “has been compared to Harry Potter, if only for the wizards-at-school aspect, but the scope of this novel (the first in a trilogy) is so much broader. This is, of course, another giant fantasy novel, but this is one that you should read despite that, if not because of it.” (Caroline Clark ’09)

Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*

Sacks was a neurologist who wrote several books about patients with brain injuries or disorders, who exhibited all manner of bizarre symptoms. This book is perhaps his best known and most fascinating. (Matthew Haber)


An American exchange student’s adventures in Costa Rica. (In Spanish) (Rhonda Prater)
Dodie Smith, *I Capture the Castle*
Any book that begins, “I write this sitting in the kitchen sink…” is sure to be entertaining. An aspiring writer, 17-year-old Cassandra lives with her peculiar family in an old English castle, and this book chronicles six months in her life complete with struggles, frustrations, and first love. (Ann Wheeler)

Garth Stein, *The Art of Racing in the Rain*
Hitesh Dayal ’01 calls this book “a story of hope and inspiration,” as well as a “very creative and fun story… that’s told from a unique perspective (from the dog!).” (Hitesh Dayal ’01)

Anthony Trollope, *Barchester Towers*
A satire with a light touch, this novel—part of Trollope’s *Barchester Chronicles* series—entwines the religious conflicts between evangelicals and high church with social classes, small-town politics and eccentrics in nineteenth-century England. Tom Bailey ’85 writes, “I read this when I was laid up with a cold. It made me want to stay ill so that I could read it through again.” (Tom Bailey ’85)

Karen Thompson Walker, *The Age of Miracles*
This novel tells the story of a young girl coming of age as the earth’s rotation begins to slow down. (Matthew Haber)

Edward O. Wilson, *Naturalist*
Today, Edward O. Wilson is a renowned scientist who has written widely about biology and evolutionary theory—but in the 1930s he was a little Alabama boy with a fascination for ants. His autobiography, *Naturalist*, tells the story of his discovering his own interests as a boy, and, as an adult, eventually pursuing those scientific interests in places such as the South Pacific and the Florida Keys. (Ann Wheeler)

Simon Winchester, *The Map That Changed the World*
A humble and observant canal engineer in England draws the world’s first geological map, puts the Earth sciences at the forefront of academia, initiates the Industrial Revolution, then has his ideas ignored and stolen, which puts him in debt and jail. A classic hero’s journey mixing science, art, logical observation, determination and redemption. (Steve Smail)

Carl Zimmer, *Parasite Rex: Inside the Bizarre World of Nature’s Most Dangerous Creatures*
A thorough and cool look at the world of parasites. (Tamara Berthel)