Aubrey ISD Pre-AP and AP Parent Acknowledgement Form

Please read all information below about required summer readings for all Pre-AP and AP English students. Upon completion of reading please sign below.

Below is an important excerpt from the College Board: English Literature and Composition Course Description-

In an ongoing effort to recognize the widening cultural horizons of literary works written in English, the AP English Literature Development Committee will consider and include diverse authors in the representative reading lists. Issues that might, from specific cultural viewpoint, be considered controversial, including references to ethnicities, nationalities, religions, races, dialects, gender, or class, are often represented artistically in works of literature. The Development Committee is committed to careful review of such potentially controversial material. Still, recognizing the universal value of literary art that probes difficult and harsh life experiences and so deepens understanding, the committee emphasizes that fair representation of issues and peoples may occasionally include controversial material. Since AP students have chosen a program that directly involves them in college-level work, the AP English Literature and Composition Exam depends on a level of maturity consistent with the age of 12th-grade students who have engaged in thoughtful analysis of literary texts. The best response to a controversial detail or idea in a literary work might well be a question about the larger meaning, purpose or overall effect of the detail or idea in context. AP students should have the maturity, the skill and the will to seek the larger meaning through thoughtful research. Such thoughtfulness is both fair and owed to the art and to the author.

Below you will find specific information regarding the specific readings for your student’s course.

Please read the information about the selected readings for your student’s course:

**Pre AP English I:**

*Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

*How to Read Literature like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster
Pre AP English II and OnRamps English:

Directions: Select TWO novels- one from each category
Inspirational & Thought-Provoking Books

*The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch
A lot of professors give talks titled “The Last Lecture.” Professors are asked to consider their demise and to ruminate on what matters most to them. And while they speak, audiences can’t help but mull the same question: What wisdom would we impart to the world if we knew it was our last chance? If we had to vanish tomorrow, what would we want as our legacy? When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon, was asked to give such a lecture, he didn’t have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But the lecture he gave — “Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams” — wasn’t about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of enabling the dreams of others, of seizing every moment (because “time is all you have… and you may find one day that you have less than you think”). It was a summation of everything Randy had come to believe. It was about living.
In this book, Randy Pausch has combined the humor, inspiration and intelligence that made his lecture such a phenomenon and given it an indelible form. It is a book that will be shared for generations to come.

*Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom
Maybe it was a grandparent, or a teacher, or a colleague. Someone older, patient and wise, who understood you when you were young and searching, helped you see the world as a more profound place, gave you sound advice to help you make your way through it. For Mitch Albom, that person was Morrie Schwartz, his college professor from nearly 20 years ago.
Maybe, like Mitch, you lost track of this mentor as you made your way, and the insights faded, and the world seemed colder. Wouldn’t you like to see that person again, ask the bigger questions that still haunt you, receive wisdom for your busy life today the way you once did when you were younger?
Mitch Albom had that second chance. He rediscovered Morrie in the last months of the older man’s life. Knowing he was dying, Morrie visited with Mitch in his study every Tuesday, just as they used to back in college. Their rekindled relationship turned into one final “class”: lessons in how to live.
*Tuesdays with Morrie* is a magical chronicle of their time together, through which Mitch shares Morrie’s lasting gift with the world.
**Being Mortal** by Atul Gawande

In *Being Mortal*, bestselling author Atul Gawande tackles the hardest challenge of his profession: how medicine can not only improve life but also the process of its ending. Medicine has triumphed in modern times, transforming birth, injury, and infectious disease from harrowing to manageable. But in the inevitable condition of aging and death, the goals of medicine seem too frequently to run counter to the interest of the human spirit. Nursing homes, preoccupied with safety, pin patients into railed beds and wheelchairs. Hospitals isolate the dying, checking for vital signs long after the goals of cure have become moot. Doctors, committed to extending life, continue to carry out devastating procedures that in the end extend suffering. Gawande, a practicing surgeon, addresses his profession’s ultimate limitation, arguing that quality of life is the desired goal for patients and families. Gawande offers examples of freer, more socially fulfilling models for assisting the infirm and dependent elderly, and he explores the varieties of hospice care to demonstrate that a person’s last weeks or months may be rich and dignified. Full of eye-opening research and riveting storytelling, *Being Mortal* asserts that medicine can comfort and enhance our experience even to the end, providing not only a good life but also a good end.

**The Year of Magical Thinking** by Joan Didion

From one of America’s iconic writers, a stunning book of electric honesty and passion. Joan Didion explores an intensely personal yet universal experience: a portrait of a marriage — and a life, in good times and bad — that will speak to anyone who has ever loved a husband or wife or child. Several days before Christmas 2003, John Gregory Dunne and Joan Didion saw their only daughter, Quintana, fall ill with what seemed at first flu, then pneumonia, then complete septic shock. She was put into an induced coma and placed on life support. Days later — the night before New Year’s Eve — the Dunnes were just sitting down to dinner after visiting the hospital when John Gregory Dunne suffered a massive and fatal coronary. In a second, this close, symbiotic partnership of 40 years was over. Four weeks later, their daughter pulled through. Two months after that, arriving at LAX, she collapsed and underwent six hours of brain surgery at UCLA Medical Center to relieve a massive hematoma. This powerful book is Didion’s attempt to make sense of the “weeks and then months that cut loose any fixed idea I ever had about death, about illness… about marriage and children and memory… about the shallowness of sanity, about life itself.”

**The End of Your Life Book Club** by Will Schwalbe
“What are you reading?”
That’s the question Will Schwalbe asks his mother, Mary Anne, as they sit in the waiting room of
the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. In 2007, Mary Anne returned from a humanitarian
trip to Pakistan and Afghanistan suffering from what her doctors believed was a rare type of
hepatitis. Months later she was diagnosed with a form of advanced pancreatic cancer, which is
almost always fatal, often in six months or less.
This is the inspiring true story of a son and his mother, who start a “book club” that brings them
together as her life comes to a close. Over the next two years, Will and Mary Anne carry on
conversations that are both wide-ranging and deeply personal, prompted by an eclectic array of
books and a shared passion for reading. Their list jumps from classic to popular, from poetry to
mysteries, from fantastic to spiritual. The issues they discuss include questions of faith and
courage as well as everyday topics such as expressing gratitude and learning to listen.
Throughout, they are constantly reminded of the power of books to comfort us, astonish us,
teach us, and tell us what we need to do with our lives and in the world. Reading isn’t the
opposite of doing; it’s the opposite of dying.
Will and Mary Anne share their hopes and concerns with each other — and rediscover their
lives — through their favorite books. When they read, they aren’t a sick person and a well
person, but a mother and a son taking a journey together. The result is a profoundly moving tale
of loss that is also a joyful, and often humorous, celebration of life: Will’s love letter to his
mother, and theirs to the printed page.

*When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi

At the age of 36, on the verge of completing a decade’s worth of training as a neurosurgeon,
Paul Kalanithi was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. One day he was a doctor treating the
dying, and the next he was a patient struggling to live. And just like that, the future he and his
wife had imagined evaporated. *When Breath Becomes Air* chronicles Kalanithi’s transformation
from a naïve medical student “possessed,” as he wrote, “by the question of what, given that all
organisms die, makes a virtuous and meaningful life” into a neurosurgeon at Stanford working in
the brain, the most critical place for human identity, and finally into a patient and new father
confronting his own mortality.
What makes life worth living in the face of death? What do you do when the future, no longer a
ladder toward your goals in life, flattens out into a perpetual present? What does it mean to have
a child, to nurture a new life as another fades away? These are some of the questions Kalanithi
wrestles with in this profoundly moving, exquisitely observed memoir.
Paul Kalanithi died in March 2015, while working on this book, yet his words live on as a guide
and a gift to us all. “I began to realize that coming face to face with my own mortality, in a sense,
had changed nothing and everything,” he wrote. “Seven words from Samuel Beckett began to
repeat in my head: ‘I can’t go on. I’ll go on.’” *When Breath Becomes Air* is an unforgettable,
life-affirming reflection on the challenge of facing death and on the relationship between doctor
and patient, from a brilliant writer who became both.
**The Council of Dads** by Bruce Feiler

Bestselling author Bruce Feiler was a young father when he was diagnosed with cancer. He instantly worried what his daughters’ lives would be like without him. “Would they wonder who I was? Would they wonder what I thought? Would they yearn for my approval, my love, my voice?”

Three days later he came up with a stirring idea of how he might give them that voice. He would reach out to six men from all the passages in his life, and ask them to be present in the passages in his daughters’ lives. And he would call this group “The Council of Dads.”

“I believe my daughters will have plenty of opportunities in their lives,” he wrote to these men. “They’ll have loving families. They’ll have each other. But they may not have me. They may not have their dad. Will you help be their dad?”

*The Council of Dads* is the inspiring story of what happened next. Feiler introduces the men in his Council and captures the life lesson he wants each to convey to his daughters — how to see, how to travel, how to question, how to dream. He mixes these with an intimate, highly personal chronicle of his experience battling cancer while raising young children, along with vivid portraits of his father, his two grandfathers, and various father figures in his life that explore the changing role of fathers in America.

This is the work of a master storyteller confronting the most difficult experience of his life and emerging with wisdom and hope. *The Council of Dads* is a touching, funny, and ultimately deeply moving book on how to live life, how the human spirit can respond to adversity, and how to deepen and cherish the friendships that enrich our lives.

---

**The Glass Castle** by Jeannette Walls

*The Glass Castle* is a remarkable memoir of resilience and redemption, and a revelatory look into a family at once deeply dysfunctional and uniquely vibrant. When sober, Jeannette’s brilliant and charismatic father captured his children’s imagination, teaching them physics, geology, and how to embrace life fearlessly. But when he drank, he was dishonest and destructive. Her mother was a free spirit who abhorred the idea of domesticity and didn’t want the responsibility of raising a family.

The Walls children learned to take care of themselves. They fed, clothed, and protected one another, and eventually found their way to New York. Their parents followed them, choosing to be homeless even as their children prospered.

*The Glass Castle* is truly astonishing — a memoir permeated by the intense love of a peculiar but loyal family.

---

**The Happiness Project** by Gretchen Rubin

Gretchen Rubin had an epiphany one rainy afternoon in the unlikeliest of places: a city bus. “The days are long, but the years are short,” she realized. “Time is passing, and I’m not focusing enough on the things that really matter.” In that moment, she decided to dedicate a year to her happiness project.
In this lively and compelling account — now updated with new material by the author — Rubin chronicles her adventures during the twelve months she spent test-driving the wisdom of the ages, current scientific research, and lessons from popular culture about how to be happier. Among other things, she found that novelty and challenge are powerful sources of happiness; that money can help buy happiness, when spent wisely; that outer order contributes to inner calm; and that the very smallest of changes can make the biggest difference.

**Between the World and Me** by Ta-Nehisi Coates

In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation’s history and current crisis. Americans have built an empire on the idea of “race,” a falsehood that damages us all but falls most heavily on the bodies of black women and men — bodies exploited through slavery and segregation, and today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden?

*Between the World and Me* is Ta-Nehisi Coates’s attempt to answer these questions in a letter to his adolescent son. Coates shares with his son — and readers — the story of his awakening to the truth about his place in the world through a series of revelatory experiences, from Howard University to Civil War battlefields, from the South Side of Chicago to Paris, from his childhood home to the living rooms of mothers whose children’s lives were taken as American plunder.

Beautifully woven from personal narrative, reimagined history, and fresh, emotionally charged reportage, *Between the World and Me* clearly illuminates the past, bracingly confronts our present, and offers a transcendent vision for a way forward.

**The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace** by Jeff Hobbs


When author Jeff Hobbs arrived at Yale University, he became fast friends with the man who would be his college roommate for four years, Robert Peace. Robert’s life was rough from the beginning in the crime-ridden streets of Newark in the 1980s, with his father in jail and his mother earning less than $15,000 a year. But Robert was a brilliant student, and it was supposed to get easier when he was accepted to Yale, where he studied molecular biochemistry and biophysics. But it didn’t get easier. Robert carried with him the difficult dual nature of his existence, trying to fit in at Yale, and at home on breaks.

A compelling and honest portrait of Robert’s relationships — with his struggling mother, with his incarcerated father, with his teachers and friends — *The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace*
encompasses the most enduring conflicts in America: race, class, drugs, community, imprisonment, education, family, friendship, and love. It’s about the collision of two fiercely insular worlds — the ivy-covered campus of Yale University and the slums of Newark, New Jersey, and the difficulty of going from one to the other and then back again. It’s about trying to live a decent life in America. But most all this “fresh, compelling” (The Washington Post) story is about the tragic life of one singular brilliant young man. His end, a violent one, is heartbreaking and powerful and “a haunting American tragedy for our times” (Entertainment Weekly).

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou

Here is a book as joyous and painful, as mysterious and memorable, as childhood itself. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* captures the longing of lonely children, the brute insult of bigotry, and the wonder of words that can make the world right. Maya Angelou’s debut memoir is a modern American classic beloved worldwide. Sent by their mother to live with their devout, self-sufficient grandmother in a small Southern town, Maya and her brother, Bailey, endure the ache of abandonment and the prejudice of the local “po witet trash.” At eight years old and back at her mother’s side in St. Louis, Maya is attacked by a man many times her age—and has to live with the consequences for a lifetime. Years later, in San Francisco, Maya learns that love for herself, the kindness of others, her own strong spirit, and the ideas of great authors (“I met and fell in love with William Shakespeare”) will allow her to be free instead of imprisoned. Poetic and powerful, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* will touch hearts and change minds for as long as people read.

**Hillbilly Elegy** by J. D. Vance

From a former marine and Yale Law School graduate, a powerful account of growing up in a poor Rust Belt town that offers a broader, probing look at the struggles of America’s white working class. *Hillbilly Elegy* is a passionate and personal analysis of a culture in crisis — that of white working-class Americans. The decline of this group, a demographic of our country that has been slowly disintegrating over 40 years, has been reported on with growing frequency and alarm, but has never before been written about as searingly from the inside. J. D. Vance tells the true story of what a social, regional, and class decline feels like when you were born with it hung around your neck.

The Vance family story begins hopefully in postwar America. J. D.’s grandparents were “dirt poor and in love,” and moved north from Kentucky’s Appalachia region to Ohio in the hopes of escaping the dreadful poverty around them. They raised a middle-class family, and eventually their grandchild (the author) would graduate from Yale Law School, a conventional marker of their success in achieving generational upward mobility.

But as the family saga of *Hillbilly Elegy* plays out, we learn that this is only the short, superficial version. Vance’s grandparents, aunt, uncle, sister, and, most of all, his mother, struggled
profundely with the demands of their new middle-class life, and were never able to fully escape the legacy of abuse, alcoholism, poverty, and trauma so characteristic of their part of America. Vance piercingly shows how he himself still carries around the demons of their chaotic family history.

A deeply moving memoir with its share of humor and vividly colorful figures, *Hillbilly Elegy* is the story of how upward mobility really feels. And it is an urgent and troubling meditation on the loss of the American dream for a large segment of this country.

**Into the Wild** by Jon Krakauer

In April 1992 a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. His name was Christopher Johnson McCandless. He had given $25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet, and invented a new life for himself. Four months later, his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter. How McCandless came to die is the unforgettable story of *Into the Wild*.

Immediately after graduating from college in 1991, McCandless had roamed through the West and Southwest on a vision quest like those made by his heroes Jack London and John Muir. In the Mojave Desert he abandoned his car, stripped it of its license plates, and burned all of his cash. He would give himself a new name, Alexander Supertramp, and, unencumbered by money and belongings, he would be free to wallow in the raw, unfiltered experiences that nature presented. Craving a blank spot on the map, McCandless simply threw the maps away. Leaving behind his desperate parents and sister, he vanished into the wild.

Jon Krakauer constructs a clarifying prism through which he reassembles the disquieting facts of McCandless’s short life. Admitting an interest that borders on obsession, he searches for the clues to the dries and desires that propelled McCandless. Digging deeply, he takes an inherently compelling mystery and unravels the larger riddles it holds: the profound pull of the American wilderness on our imagination; the allure of high-risk activities to young men of a certain cast of mind; the complex, charged bond between fathers and sons.

When McCandless’s innocent mistakes turn out to be irreversible and fatal, he becomes the stuff of tabloid headlines and is dismissed for his naiveté, pretensions, and hubris. He is said to have had a death wish, but wanting to die is a very different thing from being compelled to look over the edge. Krakauer brings McCandless’s uncompromising pilgrimage out of the shadows, and the peril, adversity, and renunciation sought by this enigmatic young man are illuminated with a rare understanding — and not an ounce of sentimentality. Mesmerizing, heartbreaking, *Into the Wild is a tour de force*. The power and luminosity of Jon Krakauer’s storytelling blaze through every page.

**The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks** by Rebecca Skloot

Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells — taken without her knowledge in 1951 — became one of the most
important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, and more. Henrietta’s cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet she remains virtually unknown, and her family can’t afford health insurance. This phenomenal New York Times bestseller tells a riveting story of the collision between ethics, race, and medicine; of scientific discovery and faith healing; and of a daughter consumed with questions about the mother she never knew.

The Emperor of All Maladies by Siddhartha Mukherjee

The Emperor of All Maladies is a magnificent, profoundly humane “biography” of cancer — from its first documented appearances thousands of years ago through the epic battles in the 20th century to cure, control, and conquer it to a radical new understanding of its essence. Physician, researcher, and award-winning science writer, Siddhartha Mukherjee examines cancer with a cellular biologist’s precision, a historian’s perspective, and a biographer’s passion. The result is an astonishingly lucid and eloquent chronicle of a disease humans have lived with — and perished from — for more than 5,000 years.
The story of cancer is a story of human ingenuity, resilience, and perseverance, but also of hubris, paternalism, and misperception. Mukherjee recounts centuries of discoveries, setbacks, victories, and deaths, told through the eyes of his predecessors and peers, training their wits against an infinitely resourceful adversary that, just three decades ago, was thought to be easily vanquished in an all-out “war against cancer.”
The book reads like a literary thriller with cancer as the protagonist. From the Persian Queen Atossa, whose Greek slave cut off her malignant breast, to the 19th-century recipients of primitive radiation and chemotherapy to Mukherjee’s own leukemia patient, Carla, The Emperor of All Maladies is about the people who have soldiered through fiercely demanding regimens in order to survive — and to increase our understanding of this iconic disease.
Riveting, urgent, and surprising, The Emperor of All Maladies provides a fascinating glimpse into the future of cancer treatments. It is an illuminating book that provides hope and clarity to those seeking to demystify cancer.

The Gratitude Diaries by Janice Kaplan

On New Year’s Eve, journalist and former Parade editor-in-chief Janice Kaplan makes a promise to be grateful and look on the bright side of whatever happens. She realizes that how she feels over the next months will have less to do with the events that occur than her own attitude and perspective. Getting advice at every turn from psychologists, academics, doctors, and philosophers she brings readers on a smart and witty journey to discover the value of appreciating what you have.
Relying on both amusing personal experiences and extensive research, Kaplan explores how gratitude can transform every aspect of life including marriage and friendship, money and ambition, and health and fitness. She learns how appreciating your spouse changes the
neurons of your brain and why saying thanks helps CEOs succeed. Through extensive interviews with experts and lively conversations with real people including celebrities like Matt Damon, Daniel Craig, and Jerry Seinfeld, Kaplan discovers the role of gratitude in everything from our sense of fulfillment to our children’s happiness. With warmth, humor, and appealing insight, Janice’s journey will empower readers to think positively and start living their own best year ever.

2nd Category-

**Historical Nonfiction Books**

**The Boys in the Boat by** Daniel James Brown

For readers of *Unbroken*, out of the depths of the Depression comes an irresistible story about beating the odds and finding hope in the most desperate of times — the improbable, intimate account of how nine working-class boys from the American West showed the world at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin what true grit really meant. It was an unlikely quest from the start. With a team composed of the sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the University of Washington’s eight-oar crew team was never expected to defeat the elite teams of the East Coast and Great Britain, yet they did, going on to shock the world by defeating the German team rowing for Adolf Hitler. The emotional heart of the tale lies with Joe Rantz, a teenager without family or prospects, who rows not only to regain his shattered self-regard but also to find a real place for himself in the world. Drawing on the boys’ own journals and vivid memories of a once-in-a-lifetime shared dream, Brown has created an unforgettable portrait of an era, a celebration of a remarkable achievement, and a chronicle of one extraordinary young man’s personal quest.

**Unbroken by** Laura Hillenbrand

In boyhood, Louis Zamperini was an incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when World War II began, the athlete became an airman, embarking on a journey that led to a doomed flight on a May afternoon in 1943. When his Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean, against all odds, Zamperini survived, adrift on a foundering life raft. Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would be suspended on the fraying wire of his will.

*Unbroken* is an unforgettable testament to the resilience of the human mind, body, and spirit, brought vividly to life by *Seabiscuit* author Laura Hillenbrand.

**The Zookeeper’s Wife by** Diane Ackerman

After their zoo was bombed, Polish zookeepers Jan and Antonina Żabiński managed to save over 300 people from the Nazis by hiding refugees in the empty animal cages. With animal
names for these “guests,” and human names for the animals, it’s no wonder that the zoo’s code name became “The House Under a Crazy Star.” Bestselling naturalist and acclaimed storyteller Diane Ackerman combines extensive research and an exuberant writing style to recreate this fascinating, true-life story — sharing Antonina’s life as “the zookeeper’s wife,” while examining the disturbing obsessions at the core of Nazism.

**Dead Wake** by Erik Larson

On May 1, 1915, with WWI entering its 10th month, a luxury ocean liner as richly appointed as an English country house sailed out of New York, bound for Liverpool, carrying a record number of children and infants. The passengers were surprisingly at ease, even though Germany had declared the seas around Britain to be a war zone. For months, German U-boats had brought terror to the North Atlantic. But the *Lusitania* was one of the era’s great transatlantic “Greyhounds” — the fastest liner then in service — and her captain, William Thomas Turner, placed tremendous faith in the gentlemanly strictures of warfare that for a century had kept civilian ships safe from attack.

Germany, however, was determined to change the rules of the game, and Walther Schwieger, the captain of *Unterseeboot-20*, was happy to oblige. Meanwhile, an ultra-secret British intelligence unit tracked Schwieger’s U-boat, but told no one. As U-20 and the *Lusitania* made their way toward Liverpool, an array of forces both grand and achingly small — hubris, a chance fog, a closely guarded secret, and more — all converged to produce one of the great disasters of history.

It is a story that many of us think we know but don’t, and Erik Larson tells it thrillingly, switching between hunter and hunted while painting a larger portrait of America at the height of the Progressive Era. Full of glamour and suspense, *Dead Wake* brings to life a cast of evocative characters, from famed Boston bookseller Charles Lauriat to pioneering female architect Theodate Pope to President Woodrow Wilson, a man lost to grief, dreading the widening war but also captivated by the prospect of new love.

Gripping and important, *Dead Wake* captures the sheer drama and emotional power of a disaster whose intimate details and true meaning have long been obscured by history.

**The Nazi Officer’s Wife** by Edith Hahn Beer and Susan Dworkin

Edith Hahn was an outspoken young woman in Vienna when the Gestapo forced her into a ghetto and then into a labor camp. When she returned home months later, she knew she would become a hunted woman and went underground. With the help of a Christian friend, she emerged in Munich as Grete Denner. There she met Werner Vetter, a Nazi Party member who fell in love with her. Despite Edith’s protests and even her eventual confession that she was Jewish, he married her and kept her identity a secret.

In wrenching detail, Edith recalls a life of constant, almost paralyzing fear. She tells of German officials who casually questioned the lineage of her parents; of how, when giving birth to her daughter, she refused all painkillers, afraid that in an altered state of mind she might reveal
something of her past; and of how, after her husband was captured by the Soviet army, she was bombed out of her house and had to hide while drunken Russian soldiers raped women on the street.

Yet despite the risk it posed to her life, Edith created a remarkable record of survival. She saved every document and set of papers issued to her, as well as photographs she managed to take inside labor camps. Now part of the permanent collection at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., these hundreds of documents, several of which are included in this volume, form the fabric of a gripping new chapter in the history of the Holocaust — complex, troubling, and ultimately triumphant.

**Hidden Figures** by Margot Lee Shetterly

The phenomenal true story of the black female mathematicians at NASA whose calculations helped fuel some of America’s greatest achievements in space.

Before John Glenn orbited the earth, or Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, a group of dedicated female mathematicians known as human computers used pencils, slide rules and adding machines to calculate the numbers that would launch rockets, and astronauts, into space. Among these problem-solvers were a group of exceptionally talented African American women, some of the brightest minds of their generation. Originally relegated to teaching math in the Souths segregated public schools, they were called into service during the labor shortages of World War II, when America’s aeronautics industry was in dire need of anyone who had the right stuff. Suddenly, these overlooked math whizzes had a shot at jobs worthy of their skills, and they answered Uncle Sam’s call, moving to Hampton, Virginia and the fascinating, high-energy world of the Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory. Even as Virginia’s Jim Crow laws required them to be segregated from their white counterparts, the women of Langley’s all-black West Computing group helped America achieve one of the things it desired most: a decisive victory over the Soviet Union in the Cold War, and complete domination of the heavens. Starting in World War II and moving through to the Cold War, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Space Race, *Hidden Figures* follows the interwoven accounts of Dorothy Vaughan, Mary Jackson, Katherine Johnson and Christine Darden, four African American women who participated in some of NASAs greatest successes. It chronicles their careers over nearly three decades they faced challenges, forged alliances and used their intellect to change their own lives, and their country’s future.

**Irena’s Children** by Tilar J. Mazzeo

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Widow Clicquot* comes an extraordinary and gripping account of Irena Sendler — the “female Oskar Schindler” — who took staggering risks to save 2,500 children from death and deportation in Nazi-occupied Poland during World War II.

In 1942, one young social worker, Irena Sendler, was granted access to the Warsaw ghetto as a public health specialist. While there, she reached out to the trapped Jewish families, going from
door to door and asking the parents to trust her with their young children. She started smuggling them out of the walled district, convincing her friends and neighbors to hide them. Driven to extreme measures and with the help of a network of local tradesmen, ghetto residents, and her star-crossed lover in the Jewish resistance, Irena ultimately smuggled thousands of children past the Nazis. She made dangerous trips through the city’s sewers, hid children in coffins, snuck them under overcoats at checkpoints, and slipped them through secret passages in abandoned buildings.

But Irena did something even more astonishing at immense personal risk: she kept secret lists buried in bottles under an old apple tree in a friend’s back garden. On them were the names and true identities of those Jewish children, recorded with the hope that their relatives could find them after the war. She could not have known that more than ninety percent of their families would perish.

In *Irena’s Children*, Tilar Mazzeo tells the incredible story of this courageous and brave woman who risked her life to save innocent children from the Holocaust — a truly heroic tale of survival, resilience, and redemption.

*Rise of the Rocket Girls* by Nathalia Holt

The riveting true story of the women who launched America into space.

In the 1940s and 50s, when the newly minted Jet Propulsion Laboratory needed quick-thinking mathematicians to calculate velocities and plot trajectories, they didn’t turn to male graduates. Rather, they recruited an elite group of young women who, with only pencil, paper, and mathematical prowess, transformed rocket design, helped bring about the first American satellites, and made the exploration of the solar system possible.

For the first time, *Rise of the Rocket Girls* tells the stories of these women — known as “human computers” — who broke the boundaries of both gender and science. Based on extensive research and interviews with all the living members of the team, *Rise of the Rocket Girls* offers a unique perspective on the role of women in science: both where we’ve been, and the far reaches of space to which we’re heading.

*The Pianist* by Wladyslaw Szpilman

On September 23, 1939, Wladyslaw Szpilman played Chopin’s Nocturne in C-sharp minor live on the radio as shells exploded outside — so loudly that he couldn’t hear his piano. It was the last live music broadcast from Warsaw: That day, a German bomb hit the station, and Polish Radio went off the air.

Though he lost his entire family, Szpilman survived in hiding. In the end, his life was saved by a German officer who heard him play the same Chopin Nocturne on a piano found among the rubble. Written immediately after the war and suppressed for decades, *The Pianist* is a stunning testament to human endurance and the redemptive power of fellow feeling.

*The Girls of the Atomic City* by Denise Kiernan
The Tennessee town of Oak Ridge was created from scratch in 1942. One of the Manhattan Project’s secret cities, it didn’t appear on any maps until 1949, and yet at the height of World War II it was using more electricity than New York City and was home to more than 75,000 people, many of them young women recruited from small towns across the South. Their jobs were shrouded in mystery, but they were buoyed by a sense of shared purpose, close friendships — and a surplus of handsome scientists and Army men!

But against this vibrant wartime backdrop, a darker story was unfolding. The penalty for talking about their work — even the most innocuous details — was job loss and eviction. One woman was recruited to spy on her coworkers. They all knew something big was happening at Oak Ridge, but few could piece together the true nature of their work until the bomb “Little Boy” was dropped over Hiroshima, Japan, and the secret was out. The shocking revelation: the residents of Oak Ridge were enriching uranium for the atomic bomb. Though the young women originally believed they would leave Oak Ridge after the war, many met husbands there, made lifelong friends, and still call the 70-year-old town home. The reverberations from their work there — work they didn’t fully understand at the time — are still being felt today. In The Girls of Atomic City, Denise Kiernan traces the astonishing story of these unsung WWII workers through interviews with dozens of surviving women and other Oak Ridge residents. Like The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, this is history and science made fresh and vibrant — a beautifully told, deeply researched story that unfolds in a suspenseful and exciting way.

AP Literature

Select ONE of following sets of novels:

*B*Brave New World by Aldous Huxley  
*Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe

*B*Beowulf* translation by Burton Raffel  
*Grendel* by John Gardner

*The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison  
*The Awakening* by Kate Chopin

*I have many copies in the bookroom, just ask!*
Check the below boxes acknowledging the corresponding statement and sign below and return to your English Teacher:

☐ I understand that my student is required to complete the above readings during the summer before the start of school and complete accompanied assignments.

☐ I have reviewed the information regarding the specific readings of my student’s course and acknowledge the content that may be covered in the assigned readings.

Parent Signature: ______________________________ Date: ________________

Student Signature: ______________________________ Date: ________________