

## Upper School English Summer Reading Guide 2026

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to the Upper School Summer Reading Guide for 2026. Here, you will find information about required summer coursework, expectations for summer reading, and the code to each course's Google Classroom.

**Please acquire required texts on your own** (new or used, borrowed from a friend or your local library). Unless a particular edition or translation is indicated, any will suffice. The links to Boswell Books are for your reference. **Read the instructions carefully so you know what is required.**

**Enroll in the appropriate Google Classroom ASAP.** Once enrolled, carefully read the summer assignment.

Beyond each course's required summer assignment—intended to prime students for the start of the year—*regular and independent* reading is essential for the year-long growth that a college-preparatory education presumes. Because an independent reading habit is an expectation of all students in the Upper School, we offer the following resources to help students *keep reading throughout the year*.

*Hear about a new book and want to know if its story and content are a good fit?*

See if [Common Sense Media](#) has a book review on it! Because classic and contemporary young adult literature spans ages 12-18, we urge parents to take an active role in helping teens find books that are both engaging and appropriate.

Once you have a list, award, genre, publication year, or author you love, check out the [YALSA Teen Book Finder](#) app. It's a treasure trove! Here are some awards and lists to check out:

- [Alex Award](#) (books written for adults but that appeal to young adults)
- [Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Award](#)
- [Printz Award](#) (literary excellence in YA lit)
- [Margaret A. Edwards Award](#) (given to an author who's made a lasting contribution to YA lit)

*Wanting to find some titles many have loved for generations?*

The web has no shortage of lists like [classic books all teenagers and young adults should read](#). By no means is any list comprehensive nor every person's or publisher's must-read list the same, but they are good for jogging our memories and spurring recommendations!

**And don't forget—every Prairie student in the Upper School has a subscription to the *WSJ* and *NYT* ([login info here](#))!**

*Thinking about an ereader or audiobooks for the summer road trip?*

Because [Kobo](#) devices are integrated with Overdrive, students can use their ereaders to borrow books directly. When readers have a [Kindle](#) and an active Audible account, [Whispersync](#) can toggle between reading and listening! Beyond your local library and Amazon, [Libro.fm](#) is another great way to source audiobooks from independent booksellers.

Let the summer of reading begin!

Sincerely,

The US English Department

## 2026 SRC Summer Reading Resources

*Need to find summer reading books?*

### SRC Website

<https://www.prairieschoolsrc.com/>

\*Use this link to access the library catalog and Sora ebooks.

### Destiny Discover Library Catalog (print)



\*\*You must be logged in to request holds on books and view your account information.

#### For Grades 6-12

Username: school email address

Password: 1234

#### Example

agasser@prairieschool.com

1234

\* Passwords can be changed and reset by Mrs. Gasser. Please email Mrs. Gasser at [agasser@prairieschool.com](mailto:agasser@prairieschool.com) to make any password changes.

### WI Schools Digital Library Catalog (WSDLC) + Sora app (ebooks and digital audiobooks)



\*Use your school Google account as login on a phone, iPad, or Chromebook.

You can also link your digital public library catalog with your public library card number and pin to your Sora app.

**Please see local public libraries and independent bookstores for additional title copies.**

# English 9

*“We have not even to risk the adventure alone for the heroes of all time have gone before us.”*

— Joseph Campbell

**Google Classroom code: [jry63mvp](#).** Please join to access the full assignment instructions.

The blessing and bane of being a reader is that there are always more amazing texts to read than hours in a day—or days in a school year, for that matter. Therefore, our summer reading is a curated list of well-known, well-read, and well-loved 9th-grade classics that perfectly complement our in-class work.

Each of these works explores a journey: toward adulthood, toward the unknown, toward destiny. Therefore, as you prepare for your journey into Upper School, reading two (2) of these important works will be time well spent. While you are required to read *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, you may choose the second text from the list of options below. Please read the synopses and links from Boswell Books for more information:

## ■ **OUR REQUIRED TEXT**

- ***The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho:** Combining magic, mysticism, wisdom, and wonder into an inspiring tale of self-discovery, Coelho's masterpiece tells the mystical story of Santiago, a shepherd boy who yearns to travel in search of a worldly treasure. His quest will lead him to riches far different—and far more satisfying—than he ever imagined. Santiago's journey teaches us about the essential wisdom of listening to our hearts, of recognizing opportunity and learning to read the omens strewn along life's path, and, most importantly, to follow our dreams.

## ■ **YOUR CHOICE (CHOOSE ONE)**

- ***Big Fish: A Novel of Mythic Proportions* by Daniel Wallace:** In his prime, Edward Bloom was an extraordinary man. He could outrun anybody, never missed a day of school, and saved lives and tamed giants. Animals loved him, people loved him, women loved him. At least that's what he told his son, William. But now Edward Bloom is dying, and William wants to know the truth about his elusive father—this indefatigable teller of tall tales—before it's too late. So, using the few facts he knows, William re-creates Edward's life in a series of legends and myths, through which he begins to understand his father's great feats—and failings.
- ***Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury:** Guy Montag is a fireman. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden. Montag never questions the destruction and ruin his actions produce, returning each day to his bland life and wife, Mildred, who spends all day with her television "family." But when he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people didn't live in fear and to a present where one sees the world through the ideas in books instead of the mindless chatter of television, Montag begins to question everything he has ever known.
- ***Spinning Silver* by Naomi Novik:** Miryem is the daughter and granddaughter of moneylenders, but her father's inability to collect his debts has left his family on the edge of poverty—until Miryem takes matters into her own hands. Hardening her heart, the young woman sets out to claim what is owed and soon gains a reputation for being able to turn silver into gold. When an ill-advised boast draws the attention of the king of the Stryk—grim fey creatures who seem more ice than flesh—Miryem's fate, and that of two kingdoms, will be forever altered. She will face an impossible challenge and, along with two unlikely allies, uncover a secret that threatens to consume the lands of humans and Stryk alike.

**Your summer assignment is due on Monday, August 17, 2026, by 10:00 PM.**

**Directions and details can be found on Google Classroom.**

# English 10

*“The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.”*

— Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

**Join the summer Google Classroom with the class code [6ry6a5nr](#)** to see the full instructions for summer reading, including the slideshow introducing the required and choice texts and how to be prepared for your assessments when we begin class after Manitowish.

**Please read the following PLAY:**

[“Master Harold”...and the Boys](#) (Athol Fugard) - **Drama** (this is the version you want)

**In addition, please choose ONE MORE book to read:**

- [The Drowned Cities](#) (Paolo Bacigalupi) - **Fiction**
- [Purple Hibiscus: A Novel](#) (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie) - **Fiction**
- [Finding Nouf](#) (Zoe Ferraris) - **Fiction**
- [Babel](#) (R. F. Kuang) - **Fiction**
- [Outcasts United: An American Town, a Refugee Team, and One Woman’s Quest to Make a Difference](#) (YA version [here](#)) (Warren St. John) - **Nonfiction**
- [The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope](#) (William Kamkwamba) - **Nonfiction**
- [Everything Is Tuberculosis: The History and Persistence of Our Deadliest Infection](#) (John Green) - **Nonfiction**
- [Canyon Dreams: A Basketball Season on the Navajo Nation](#) (Michael Powell) - **Nonfiction**

# English 11

## Celebrating Your American Minutes

*"It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us."  
— Abraham Lincoln, 1863*

Join the **ENG11** summer Google Classroom with the class code [vt7eh5bm](#).

This summer, English 11 has one major assignment:

You will select, research, compose, and deliver an "**AMERICAN MINUTES**" presentation – a 2–3-minute talk that celebrates some aspect of our country's history or culture. This assignment honors the nation's 250th birthday, but more importantly, it helps you to think about your place in our big story. This summer, you must find and share your **AMERICAN MINUTES**!

Here are the basic steps:

### DISCOVER OUR AMERICAN STORY:

To write about American history, you must first learn a bit about it. To help, you must read the following book:

***This Land Is Your Land: A Road Trip Through U.S. History*, by Beverly Gage (2026).**

This new book explores history through a personal lens, following an award-winning Yale historian as she does something she loves – visiting historic sites across the country. You will learn about all the different ways Americans commemorate, celebrate, recreate, and even fight about the story of the United States.

[Boswell Books link](#). An audiobook is also available, read by the author. But reading is better.

### FIND YOUR AMERICAN STORY:

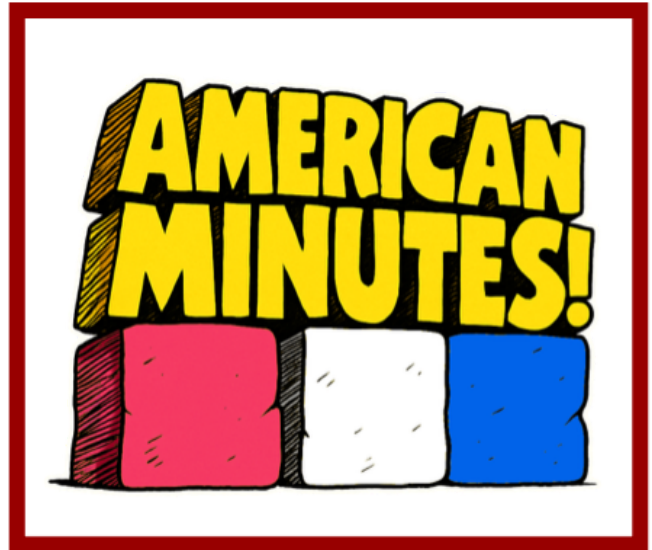
Inspired by the reading, you will now select and research any aspect of American history or culture that you find important or to which you feel personally connected:

- **Pick a topic**, big or small, local or national. (I will provide a topic guide via Google Classroom).
- **Make it personal**. Allow it to matter to you, your family, or your interests.
- **Learn about it**. Find at least four quality sources to gather details and stories.
- **Write about it**. Compose a complete script for your **AMERICAN MINUTES** presentation.

### PRESENT YOUR AMERICAN MINUTES:

Finally, you will deliver and record your presentation, supplemented by a visually helpful slideshow. Use all your best public-speaking techniques. Share **YOUR AMERICAN MINUTES**! (A basic slideshow template and guide to the structure of this presentation will also be provided in our Google Classroom.)

***Have a Happy Semiquincentennial!***



## English 12

*“The point of essays is the point of writing anything. It’s not to tell people what they already think or to give them more of what they already believe; it’s to challenge people, and it’s to suggest alternate ways of thinking about things.”*

— Meghan Daum

**The Google Classroom code is [er33z7tm](#).** Please join the Google Classroom to see the full instructions for the college essay, summer reading, and the WSJ and NYT.

Summer expectations:

1. Read widely, per the letter at the top of this document.
2. Regularly use your digital access to the [WSJ and NYT](#).
3. Write your college essay according to [these](#) instructions (also available in our Google Classroom). Click Submit in Google Classroom **by 10 PM Monday, 8/17**.
4. Read [The Things They Carried](#) by Tim O’Brien. Expect a comprehension assessment within the first couple days of class. I will highlight in Google Classroom which are the most important stories to remember.

## AP English 12

*“Reading is the sole means by which we slip, involuntarily, often helplessly, often helplessly, into another’s skin, another’s voice, another’s soul.”*

Joyce Carol Oates

**All instructions and assignment information can be found in Google Classroom (code:[rmpacf5l](#)).**

**Everyone should read the required book and one choice book:**

- [Crime and Punishment](#): must get this translation! (Fyodor Dostoevsky)
- Choice Book for AP Portfolio (see instructions and requirements in Google Classroom: **code [rmpacf5l](#)**)

**NOTE:** These directions can also be found on the US 2026 AP Work document. Ms. Davis will give you separate instructions, activities, and due dates via Google Classroom before school’s end.