



Leander ISD 8th Grade Pre-AP Language Arts Novel List and Summer Assignment 2017

Welcome readers and writers to 8th grade Pre-AP Language Arts! We look forward to working with you during the next school year. As part of this course, students will read and annotate a novel during the summer.

The Pre-AP, AP, or IB English summer reading assignment is an established convention at most schools offering these courses, and the rationale for it seems simple enough: Reading over the summer helps keep the students' minds "in the game," and it adds to the number of major literary works the students will have read by the time they take their AP exams. Also, students in a given class arrive to school in August having had a common literary experience, providing them and their teacher immediate instructional opportunities.

STEPS TO SUCCESS:

STEP 1

Please select **one** of the following novels to read over the summer. This list reflects a variety of genres and selections from both contemporary and classic novels. Additionally, these books were chosen for their literary merit and to help students become widely read in preparation for the Advanced Placement Exams they will take later in high school.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Some of the titles below deal with mature and/or controversial subject matter. Parents and students will want to preview their potential book choice prior to reading and discuss if the book is the "right fit" for the student. One quick way to preview the subject matter is to read reviews from online sites like Barnes & Noble, Amazon, or Goodreads.com.

- Counting by 7s by Holly Goldberg Sloan (770 Lexile, Realistic Fiction) Willow Chance is a twelve-year-old genius, obsessed with nature and diagnosing medical conditions, who finds it comforting to count by 7s. This extraordinarily odd, but extraordinarily endearing, girl manages to push through her grief of losing her parents. Her journey to find a fascinatingly diverse and fully believable surrogate family is a joy and a revelation to read
- Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card (780 Lexile, Science Fiction) In order to develop a secure defense against a hostile alien race's next attack, government agencies breed child geniuses and train them as soldiers. A brilliant young boy, Andrew "Ender" Wiggin, lives with his kind but distant parents and his equally unusual brother and sister. Within the three Wiggin children lie the abilities to remake a world. If the world survives, that is.
- Life as We Knew It by Susan Beth Pfeffer (770 Lexile, Science Fiction) High school sophomore Miranda's disbelief turns to fear when an asteroid knocks the moon closer to Earth, like "one marble hits another." The result is catastrophic. How can her family prepare for the future when worldwide tsunamis are wiping out the coasts, earthquakes are rocking the continents, and volcanic ash is blocking out the sun? Told in a year's worth of journal entries, this heart-pounding story chronicles Miranda's struggle to hold on to the most important resource of all—hope.
- The Call of the Wild by Jack London (1170 Lexile, Adventure Fiction) Buck, a dog, is stolen from his home and thrust into the merciless life of the Arctic north where he must endure hardship, bitter cold, and the savage lawlessness of man and beast. *****Be sure you do not read the abridged or children's versions of this novel, as they are very, very different.**
- The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien (1000 Lexile, Fantasy) Bilbo Baggins, a respectable, well-to-do hobbit, lives comfortably in his hobbit-hole until the day the wandering wizard Gandalf chooses him to take part in an adventure from which he may never return.

(book selections continued on next page)



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- [The Lottery Rose](#) by Irene Hunt (1070 Lexile, Realistic Fiction) Abused by his mother and her boyfriend, Georgie Burgess learns to live with hurt. When Georgie wins a small rosebush in a grocery store lottery he gives it all the love and caring he's never had. Georgie's life begins to open up for him when the courts send him to a home for boys where he will be safe. Slowly, and not without pain, Georgie learns to give—and to receive—love...
- [The Secret Life of Bees](#) by Sue Monk Kidd (840 Lexile, Historical Fiction) Fourteen-year-old Lily and her companion, Rosaleen, an African-American woman who has cared for Lily since her mother's death ten years earlier, flee their home after Rosaleen is victimized by racist police officers. They find a safe haven in Tiburon, South Carolina at the home of three beekeeping sisters, May, June, and August.

*book summaries adapted from Amazon.com

Where might I find these books?

If possible, students should purchase their own copies of their chosen novel. It is an advantage to be able to take notes in the margins and underline or highlight notable passages. You may buy these books cheaply online and find copies at our local bookstores.

You may also check out your chosen works from the public library or check out digital copies of your books from the LISD OverDrive Digital Library (see information below). However, you would not be able to take notes in the text itself.

If these options are not viable, we do have a limited number of some titles available at school, but these may not be annotated or marked in any way. These books will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Those interested may contact one of the teachers listed below before leaving school for the summer.

Introducing OverDrive Digital Library

Leander ISD Libraries expanded their services to include audiobooks and eBooks, which are available for students and teachers to download and enjoy for up to two weeks. Using this new service, LISD library card holders can check out and download digital media anytime, anywhere by visiting <http://digitallibrary.leanderisd.org>.

Users may browse the library's website, check out with a valid library card, and download to PC, Mac®, and many mobile devices. To use the service, students will need to install free software — OverDrive® Media Console™ will be required for audiobooks and Adobe® Digital Editions will be required for eBooks. Titles can be enjoyed immediately or transferred to a variety of devices, including iPod®, Sony® Reader™, and many others. Some audio titles can also be burned to CD to listen on-the-go. Titles will automatically expire at the end of the two-week lending period and there are no late fees or loss of materials.

This new service, powered by OverDrive, is free for students and teachers. Patrons can login by using their district username and password credentials.

To get started downloading audiobooks, eBooks, and more, visit <http://digitallibrary.leanderisd.org>. For additional OverDrive tips and FAQ's, visit <http://ldl.leanderisd.libguides.com/OverdriveHelpTips>.



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STEP 2

While reading, students are **expected** to annotate their chosen novel to assist in their comprehension. If a student is unable to mark up and make notes in their chosen book, they may use sticky notes. If a student is reading a digital copy of their chosen novel, most digital devices have annotation tools for marking up texts.

How do I annotate?

- Underline or **highlight** the major points.
- Circle keywords or phrases that are confusing or unknown to you.
- Write *notes in the margins* restating the author's ideas.

What kinds of things should I annotate?

- words and phrases that wowed you or confused you
- important scenes or key sections of dialogue
- character descriptions, key decisions, motivations, and flaws
- questions and inferences that pop into your head as you are reading
- connections you make to other texts, films, t.v. shows, or to your personal life
- figurative language (allusions, alliteration, metaphors, similes, etc.) used effectively

STEP 3

As you are reading and annotating, think about these questions. **Be prepared to discuss questions like these during the first week(s) of class.** If you are able to answer these types of questions, you will likely be well-prepared for any task(s) your teacher assigns.

- What confused you or surprised you in this text?
- As you read this text, describe how you felt. For example, were you bored, caught up, thinking about characters, thinking about how you might react if in the same situation, enjoying the author's writing style, or enjoying the humor or suspense?
- Which events in the text are most connected to the setting?
- Which character or characters did you think learned the hardest or most important lessons in this text? Why did you choose that character?
- Which character changed the most in the text? How did that character change? What did you learn about that character in watching that change? What did you learn about yourself?
- Which passage in the text would you consider most significant or most important? Why? Did that passage help shape what you considered to be the message of this text?
- The plot (the series of events in the text) and the theme (the lesson or message you take away from text) are not the same. Think of the text you just read. What is the plot? What is the theme? How does the plot relate to or affect the theme?
- Why did the author chose the narrator he or she did to tell this story?

STEP 4

Students can **expect** an assignment or multiple assignments over their summer reading during the first week(s) of class. Therefore, students must come to the first day of class having read their selected novel, completed their annotations, and prepared to discuss their novel.

Helpful Hint: Don't wait until the week before school begins to try and read your selected novel and complete the annotations. Unexpected events may pop up that could get in the way of you completing your reading on time. Make a plan for the number of pages or chapters you are going to read per week and stick to it.



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If you have any questions or concerns, please contact one of the teachers below. Have a good summer!

Cedar Park MS:	Nancy Espinosa – nancy.espinosa@leanderisd.org
Canyon Ridge MS:	Lara Fletcher – lara.fletcher@leanderisd.org
Four Points MS:	Francie Washington – francie.washington@leanderisd.org
Florence Stiles MS:	Tiffany Blackmon – tiffany.blackmon@leanderisd.org
Henry MS:	Linsey Cernero – linsey.cernero@leanderisd.org
Leander MS:	Joe Tacquard – joe.tacquard@leanderisd.org
Running Brushy MS:	Michael Hauenstein – michael.hauenstein@leanderisd.org
Wiley MS:	Charleen Starr – charleen.starr@leanderisd.org
LISD Contact:	Jennifer Abramson- jennifer.abramson@leanderisd.org

Are you stuck? Don't know what to do?

Visit the Summer Reading online forum for help, to ask questions, etc.... Teachers will be logging in regularly to help answer your questions.

Visit the online forum at <http://goo.gl/i3pji>.