

Welcome to English 12!

This summer, I would love for you to have the opportunity to choose a book to read and have the experience of loving it so much that you don't want to put it down. I put this question out to folks here at Nardin, and they jumped at the chance to welcome you into their literary worlds. Here are their responses. Check it out. See what interests you. Take the list to your local bookstore or library or have it next to you as you read some reviews on line (one of my students loves the website Goodreads for this purpose; Amazon is another great choice). Maybe you would like to open up some dialogue, so e-mail these folks listed below if you want to chat about the book, why they chose it, or if you have any questions. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to connect. The goal here is to read something new. Some of these suggestions have been adapted as films, but there is never a substitute for reading the original. You are seniors now, so stretch yourselves! The flexibility of this list also allows you to change books if you begin reading and either you are not hooked or not enjoying the story for whatever reason. So you don't waste money, maybe the library is a good option.

Task #1: Choose **one** of the following suggestions that interests you and then: curl up on your porch, lay down in a hammock, sit in your bed as the summer breeze comes in and then let the words take you away. . .

Mrs. Szymanski (ASzymanski@nardin.org) loves ***Push Not the River*** by James Conroyd Martin because it is based on the diary of a Polish Countess in the 1700s. It is a great combination of an adventure, a romance, and history. She also loves ***Watership Down*** by Richard Adams. Mrs. Szymanski said, "I love that the characters are all rabbits, and that the author creates a whole culture/world that they live in. Also, it has lots of adventure and drama; it is very suspenseful." Mrs. Szymanski's final recommendation is ***Slaughterhouse-Five*** by Kurt Vonnegut. She said, "I first read this book in high school and was so intrigued by how different it was from anything else I'd ever read. I love the symbolism and meaning in it."

Ms. Westerholt (JWesterholt@nardin.org) is a graduate Nardin (Class of 1995). She is the Event Coordinator; Nardin Today Editor and Advancement Writer. She loves ***What is the What*** by Dave Eggers. She said, "It is an inspirational book about overcoming obstacles and the American Dream."

Mrs. Twichell (JTwichell@nardin.org) loves ***My Sister's Keeper*** by Jodi Piccolt. She said, "Piccolt dissects all sides of the issues in her books. It's a powerful novel."

Mrs. Pappalardo (JPappalardo@nardin.org) loves ***All the Pretty Horses*** by Cormac McCarthy for the beauty of the language.

Dr. Gordon (LGordon@nardin.org) loves ***Foundation*** by Isaac Asimov because it is a great staple of science fiction.

Gabrielle Orie (Class of 2017) loves **The Bell Jar** by Sylvia Plath. She said, “It’s a bittersweet tale of a teenage girl’s rite of passage.”

Mrs. Hannon (KHannon@nardin.org) loves **A Tree Grows in Brooklyn** by Betty Smith because it is poignant and a classic.

Danielle Orie (Class of 2017) loves **The Dinner** by Herman Koch. She said, “We read it during the year for AP English, and it was such a thriller! It kept you on your toes and surprised at so many moments.” Catherine Colpoys, class of 2017, also recommends this book.

Mr. Michals (TMichals@nardin.org) loves **The History of Mathematics** by David E. Smith. He said, “It is a comprehensive work about something most classes do not have time to cover.”

Ms. Kelly (SKelly@nardin.org) loves **Beloved** by Toni Morrison because it is an “eloquent, tragic, joyful, devastating captivating, redemptive story by a woman about women.”

Zara Kazmierczak (Class of 2017) loves **If I Stay** by Gayle Forman. She said, “It shows the typical struggles of a teenager during an unexpected event. It is a book that illustrates the fragility of life.”

Jessica Dmitrova (Class of 2017) loves **Eleanor & Park** by Rainbow Rowell because it is a “fascinating romance between two unlikely high school students. It shows their ups and downs while the reader is continuously intrigued by what will happen next.”

Ms. Doerr (ADoerr@nardin.org) loves **A Man Called Ove** by Fredrik Backman for its “great characters, good writing, good laughs and tears.”

Mrs. Hutton (MHutton@nardin.org) loves **The Circle** by Dave Eggers because “the novel explores the power of the internet and social media. It makes you consider the power of information and technology.”

Mr. Deane (JDeane@nardin.org) loves **Without You, There is No Us** by Suki Kim because it is, “A real-life **1984**.” This is a chilling memoir. For a review, click on the link: https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/14/books/review/suki-kims-without-you-there-is-no-us.html?_r=0

Mr. Coakley (Dcoakley@nardin.org) loves *It* by Stephen King because it is “a well written horror novel that is used as a vehicle for a deeper analysis of human psychology.” He also recommends, *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco which he says is “an excellent combination of mystery, historical fiction, religion, and the dark underbelly of medieval debauchery.” Lastly, Mr. Coakley recommends a mystery by Agatha Christie called *And Then There Were None*.

Mrs. Herle (EHerle@nardin.org) loves *A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving because it tells the tale of “the power of one small individual.”

Ms. Bebak (MBebak@nardin.org) has several recommendations. They are:

The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams and she describes it as “funny.”

The Crystal Cave by Mary Stuart. Ms. Bebak said, “It is Merlin’s view of the Arthurian Legend. This is the first of 4 books in the series.”

Centennial by James Michener. The focus of this book is on Colorado, geology, and history.

The Mysterious Affair at Styles by Agatha Christie. This is a mystery that takes place in England.

Other recommendations are:

The Martian Chronicles and *The Illustrated Man* both by science fiction author Ray Bradbury.

The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupery best described by the quote, “One sees clearly only with the heart. The essential is invisible to the eye.”

Ms. Bebak also recommends short story collections by Sherlock Holmes.

Ms. Bartels (MBartels@nardin.org) recommends *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant because she loves “the historical perspective and the tribes of Israel and early biblical stories.”

Ateo Ayiy (19aayiy@nardin.org) loves *Mango Shaped Space* by Wendy Mass. Ateo, said, “Mozart is the only other person who has had this gift.”

Mrs. Robertson (CRobertson@nardin.org) loves *Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson. This is historical fiction and takes place during the World’s Fair of 1893. She loves how the author “weaves in the reality with the fiction.”

Ms. Boltri (RBoltri@nardin.org) has recommended *The Seven Storey Mountain* by Thomas Merton. She said, “This autobiography reminds us of the timeless nature of humanity’s quest to find our identity and purpose in life.”

Mrs. Skoog (ISkoog@nardin.org) has recommended *Ordinary Grace* by William Kent Krueger. She said, “It is a setting so well limned that it becomes a character, and the plot is riveting.”

Ms. Casper (ACasper@nardin.org) has recommended **Another Brooklyn** by Jacqueline Woodson. She said that the book is, “A gorgeous and touching novel about growing up poor and black in America; it is about friendship cementing and disintegrating; it is about leaving home and so much more!!!”

Maria Santos-Irizarry (18msantos-irizarry@nardin.org) is a reader! She recommends **Cold Fury** by T.M. Goeglein. Maria said, “I found this at a bargain store. It is set in Chicago, and this thriller traces a 16-year-old girl’s quest to find her family. She also recommends a series called **The Watersong Series** by Amanda Hocking which focuses on fantasy and the paranormal. Maria said, “It is so weird but in a good sense!”

Ms. Tramosch (ATramposch@nardin.org) Ms. Tramosch is Nardin’s Director of Marketing and Communications. She is also a graduate of Nardin Academy (Class of 2005). She told me that she just stared and stared at her bookshelf when trying to decide what book to put on this list! She decided on **The Secret Life of Bees** by Sue Monk Kidd because “This is a book I return to every so often for the moving and inspirational coming-of-age-story about the healing power of community.”

Simran Gill (19sgill@nardin.org) loves **The Accidental Apprentice** by Vikas Swarup because she said, “An extraordinary miracle happens, and the characters learn life lessons to which we can all relate.”

Miss Kazmierczak (MKazmierczak@nardin.org) has three great recommendations. One is **The Girl on the Train** by Paula Hawkins. She says, “It’s a good mystery/thriller book.” She also recommends **Thanks for the Memories** by Cecelia Ahern. Miss Kaz says, “This is the same author as *PS I Love You*. It’s a relationship story with a twist.” Her final recommendation is **Where We Belong** by Emily Griffin. “This is a story about an 18 year-old girl who goes in search of her birth parents. I literally could not put this book down when I read it.”

Madame Shepardson (AShepardson@nardin.org) recommends **The Fault in Our Stars** by John Green because, “It’s a touching novel with some thought-provoking issues.”

Mrs. Lorence (trish191@msn.com) Mrs. Lorence has five recommendations. The first is **Caleb’s Crossing** by Geraldine Brooks. Mrs. Lorence said, “Worth slogging through the first 30 pages to get to this captivating tale of a young Native American girl who just wants to learn; instead, she has to watch as her unkind and lazy brother goes to Harvard. Her second recommendation is **Still Alice** by Lisa Genova because she “can’t put it down!” Her third recommendation is **The Other Boelyn Girl** by Philippa Gregory. Mrs. Lorence said, “It has 800 pages, but I wish it had 8,000.” She also recommends **The Good Girl** by Mary Kubica, and Mrs. Lorence describes it as, “*Gone Girl* on steroids!” Lastly, Mrs. Lorence recommends a short and powerful book of poetry called **Milk and Honey** by Rupi Karr.

Ms. Faller (LFaller@nardin.org) recommends three books by author David Bell. They are: ***The Hiding Place***, ***Cemetery Girl***, ***The Forgotten Girl***, and ***Somebody I Used to Know***. Ms. Faller loves these books because “They are psychological thrillers; there are lots of twists and turns. They are not a series and are all individual novels, and they are all really good!”

Mrs. McDermott (MMcdermott@nardin.org), like Mrs. Mathias, recommends ***All the Light We Cannot See*** by Anthony Doerr. She said, “It is one of the most captivating books I have read in recent years; it is a literary collage.”

Kylie Katalinas (19kkatalinas@nardin.org) recommends ***A Child Called It*** by Dave Pelzer because it is a “gripping, heart-wrenching true story.”

Ms. Batt (JBatt@nardin.org) has several recommendations. They are:

The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton

Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky

A Room With a View by E.M. Forster (Ms. Batt LOVES this book)

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury

Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller

1984 by George Orwell

The Sun Also Rises by Ernest Hemingway

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

Like Ms. Hannon, she loves ***A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*** by Betty Smith

Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche. Ms. Batt said, “I truly, truly love this book. Parts of it are mature, but it is SO GOOD AND WONDERFUL and has so much wisdom to share with young women.”

Mrs. Mansour (KMansour@nardin.org) loves ***Unaccustomed Earth*** by Jhumpa Lahiri. “I love all the works by this author, and I was captivated when listening to her speak at UB several years ago. I first got hooked when I read her Pulitzer Prize winning collection of short stories called *Interpreter of Maladies*, but it was the short stories in *Unaccustomed Earth* that left me utterly speechless.

Ms. Podd (KPodd@nardin.org) recommends two books. One is ***To Kill a Mockingbird*** by Harper Lee because it “addresses respect for all.” She also recommends a biography called ***Einstein*** by Walter Isaacson. Ms. Podd said, “It is fascinating. Einstein did most of his work in his head. He thought creatively, and that led to his theories. The book is about science, faith, music, and all the things that cause harmony in life.”

Task #2

Write a 1-2 page personal response on the book you read. You should write in the first person (I think, I liked, I disliked...), and you may write about any aspect of the novel that interests you (a character, a specific incident, surprises, contradictions, etc.).

Make sure your response focuses on the novel itself and is supported by very specific details from the book. Have this response ready for the first day of class, but don't worry about printing it. I will give you instructions on sharing it with me when I see you.

Task #3 Please purchase and read *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot. The following review from will inspire you:

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

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.

https://www.amazon.com/Immortal-Life-Henrietta-Lacks/dp/1400052181/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1495209216&sr=1-1&keywords=the+immortal+life+of+henrietta+lacks

Task #4 Our first paper will based on this book, so please annotate the book using the following close reading strategies. You do not have to do every page, obviously, but when something strikes you, note it. All work can be completed in the margins. At the beginning of the year, I will ask to see your annotations.

1. **Circle** vocabulary words you do not know. Look up the definitions and write the meaning of the words in the margin. Make sure it makes sense in context.
2. **Underline** any language that attracts your attention for any reason. Why do you find it interesting?
3. **Predictions.** What might happen next and why?
4. **Connections.** Does the text remind you about your own experiences? Books? Films?
5. **Questions/Themes.** What don't you understand? Write it down. As you read Think about/jot down themes that are pulled throughout the book.

