

Kempner High School Summer Reading 2025-2026 (AAC, AP)

AAC English I Reading Recommendations

Students may choose any book from this list, or any book of their choice. Adults, please guide your students in selecting a work that is both appropriate, enjoyable and challenging. Please note that this list is simply a suggestion/starting point.

2023 Lone Star Reading List

<http://www.txla.org/groups/lone-star>

English II Summer Reading

It is recommended that rising sophomores read at least one book from the following lists over the course of the summer. Parents may choose another book that is not on the list if they find any of these selections objectionable. The purpose of summer reading is to keep reading comprehension skills sharp and to encourage a lifelong love of reading. Reading frequency makes a huge impact on academic achievement for students.

Title	Author
<i>Life of Pi</i>	Yann Martel
<i>The Orphan Master's Son</i>	Adam Johnson
<i>A Farewell to Manzanar</i>	James Houston
<i>The Secret Life of Bees</i>	Sue Monk Kidd
<i>My Sister's Keeper</i>	Jodi Picoult
<i>Ready Player One</i>	Ernest Cline
<i>Ender's Game</i>	Orson Scott Card
<i>The Hero and the Crown</i>	Robin McKinley
<i>Something Wicked This Way Comes</i>	Ray Bradbury
<i>Salt to the Sea</i>	Ruta Sepetys

OR

TAYSHAS Novels: The goal of the TAYSHAS reading list is to motivate young adults to become lifelong readers and to participate in the community of readers in Texas. Students in grades 9 - 12 are encouraged to read books for pleasure from the list which includes fiction and nonfiction titles.

Title	Author
<i>Abuela, Don't Forget Me</i>	Ogle, Rex
<i>Fadeaway</i>	Vickers, E. B.
<i>Full Flight</i>	Schumacher, Ashley
<i>How Moon Fuentes Fell in Love with the Universe</i>	Gilliland, Raquel

<i>I Must Betray You</i>	Sepetys, Ruta
<i>Letters to a Young Athlete</i>	Bosh, Chris
<i>The Silence That Binds Us</i>	Ho, Joanna
<i>The Weight of Blood</i>	Jackson, Tiffany D.
<i>Tonight We Rule the World</i>	Smedley, Zack
<i>We Can Be Heroes</i>	McCauley, Kyrie

Additional titles recommended by sophomore students:

Title	Author	Genre
<i>The Fear</i>	Natasha Preston	Thriller, mystery
<i>Daisy Jones and the Six</i>	Taylor Jenkins Reid	Historical Fiction
<i>A Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes</i>	Suzanne Collins	Dystopian
<i>Caraval</i>	Stephanie Garber	Fantasy
<i>Gabi: A Girl in Pieces</i>	Isabel Quintero	Realistic Fiction
<i>The Hobbit</i>	J.R.R. Tolkien	Fantasy
<i>Animal Farm</i>	George Orwell	Classic Dystopian
<i>Flowers for Algeron</i>	Daniel Keyes	Classic Science Fiction
<i>The Alchemist</i>	Paulo Coelho	Classic Fantasy
<i>The Book Thief</i>	Marcus Zusak	Historical Fiction
<i>They Both Die at the End</i>	Adam Silvera	Contemporary Fiction
<i>Aristotle & Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe</i>	Benjamin Alire Saenz	Contemporary Fiction
<i>Six of Crows</i>	Leigh Bardugo	Fantasy

AP English III Summer Reading Recommendations and Support

Because the AP English III course focuses on the reading of nonfiction, students are encouraged (but not required) to choose a nonfiction book for their summer reading title, specifically a memoir or biography they find personally meaningful. The KHS library has several recommended titles available for free throughout the summer.

An expanded list of recommended titles appears below. *Reminder: Students do not have to choose a title from the list; they are free to choose other titles they find personally relevant or engaging.*

If students do choose a memoir or biography, they will find these guiding questions useful:

- How do writers use reflection to make sense of prior experiences?
- How do memoirs help us to make meaning of our lives?

Recommended Memoir/Biography List:

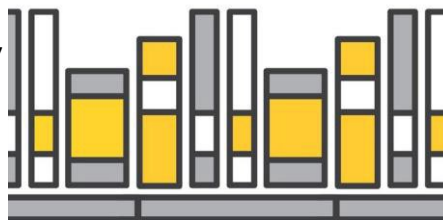
[*indicates title available through the KHS library webpage during the school year and summer](#)

- *A Long Way Gone by Ishmael Beah
- *American Chica: Two Worlds, One Child by Marie Arana
- *Angela's Ashes: A Memoir by Frank McCourt
- *Breaking Night: A Memoir of Forgiveness, Survival, and My Journey from Homeless to Harvard by Liz Murray
- *The Glass Castle: A Memoir by Jeannette Walls
- *Educated: A Memoir by Tara Westover
- *Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country on Earth by Sarah Smarsh
- *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis by J.D. Vance
- *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson
- *The Liar's Club: A Memoir by Mary Karr
- *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books by Azar Nafisi
- *This Boy's Life: A Memoir by Tobias Wolff

Students

FREE

Summer Reading Books in the
KHS Library!



Additional recommended titles available in KHS library, not available through the website during the summer:

Becoming, by Michelle Obama
Crying in H Mart, by Michelle Zauner
The Sunset Route, by Carrot Quinn
Born a Crime, by Trevor Noah
Paula, by Isabel Allende
Endurance: A Year in Space, by Scott Kelly
H is for Hawk, by Helen Macdonald
The Yellow House, by Sarah M. Broom
Sigh, Gone: A Misfit's Memoir of Great Books, Punk Rock, and the Fight to Fit In, by Phuc Tran
Lab Girl, by Hope Jahren
Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End, by Atul Gawande
On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft, by Stephen King
American Childhood, by Annie Dillard
Just Kids, by Patti Smith
Shrill: Notes from a Loud Woman, by Lindy West
A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail, by Bill Bryson
First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers, by Loung Ung
Boy Kings of Texas: A Memoir, by Domingo Martinez
Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster, by Jon Krakauer
The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother, by James McBride
Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience and Redemption, by Laura Hillenbrand

Additional recommended titles, not in KHS Library:

All Over But The Shoutin', Rick Brag
Animal, Vegetable, Miracle, Barbara Kingsolver
A River Runs Through It, Norman Maclean
A Stolen Life, Jaycee Dugard
Autobiography of a Face, Lucy Grealy
Band of Brothers, Stephen Ambrose
Black Boy, Richard Wright
Borderlands/La Frontera, Gloria Anzaldua
Cherry, Mary Karr
Destiny of the Republic, Candice Millard
The Diving Bell and the Butterfly, Jean-Dominique Bauby
Don't Let's Go To The Dogs Tonight, Alexandra Fuller
Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun, Geoffrey Canada
Half-broke Horses, Jeanette Walls
The Happiness Project, Gretchen Rubin
Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius, Dave Eggers
I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou
The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Rebecca Skloot
Just Like Someone Without Mental Illness, Only More So, Mark Vonnegut
Killing Pablo, Mark Bowden
Kitchen Confidential, Anthony Bourdain
Lit, Mary Karr
Me Talk Pretty One Day, David Sedaris
Mennonite in a Little Black Dress, Rhonda Janzen
Running With Scissors, Augusten Burroughs
Travels, Michael Crichton
Three Cups of Tea, Greg Mortenson
The Woman Warrior, Maxine Hong Kingston
The Year of Living Biblically, A.J. Jacobs
The Year of Magical Thinking, Joan Didion
Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson
Promised Land by Barack Obama
Crying in the Bathroom possibly
Death be Not Proud by John Gunther
Kaffir Boy by Mark Mathabane
Sing for Your Life by Daniel Bergner
Hunting El Chapo by Andrew Hogan
The Night of the Gun by David Carr
On Call in Hell by Richard Jadick
Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen by Jose Antonio Vargas
Lucky by Alice Sebold
The Far Away Brothers: Two Teenage Immigrants
Making a Life in America by Lauren Markham
Appel is Forever: A Child's Memoir by Suzanne Mehler Whiteley
Dear America by Jose Antonio Vargas
Confessions of a Cartel Hitman by Martin Corona
On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous by Ocean Vuong
Assuming Names: A Con Artist's Masquerade by Tanyua Thompson
Bird by Bird by Anne Lamott

Wild by Cheryl Strayed
Hunger by Roxane Gay
When Breath Become Air by Paul Kalanithi
Burro Genius by Victor Villasenor
The Autobiography of Malcolm X by Alex Haley
Into the Planet by Jill Heinerth

12th grade AP English IV - AP English Literature and Composition

Students entering AP English IV are encouraged to read a fiction novel or play of their choice. Here are some suggestions. These works have recently occurred on the AP English Literature and Composition Exam.

A Raisin in the Sun - Lorraine Hansberry
A Streetcar Named Desire - Tennessee Williams
All the Light We Cannot See - Anthony Doerr
All the Pretty Horses - Cormac McCarthy
Beloved - Toni Morrison
East of Eden - John Steinbeck
Fahrenheit 451 - Ray Bradbury
Fences - August Wilson
Invisible Man - Ralph Ellison
Jane Eyre - Charlotte Bronte
Madame Bovary - Gustave Flaubert
Native Son - Richard Wright
Never Let Me Go - Kazuo Ishiguro
On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous - Ocean Vuong
Parable of the Sower - Octavia Butler
Passing - Nella Larsen
Purple Hibiscus - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
The Bluest Eye - Toni Morrison
The Glass Menagerie - Tennessee Williams
The Haunting of Hill House - Shirley Jackson
The Kite Runner - Khaled Hosseini
The Nickel Boys - Colson Whitehead
The Scarlet Letter - Nathaniel Hawthorne
Where the Crawdads Sing - Delia Owens