



MS/HS Independent Reading Program

Overview

The Aurora Christian School English department requires independent reading in grades 6-12 to accomplish the following four objectives:

1. To encourage the enjoyment of reading
2. To improve students' reading comprehension—and writing—skills
3. To allow students to develop and exercise their ability to discern what is true and Godly in what they read
4. To prepare students for the expectations of the colleges they will attend.

Because the reading habits of young people have changed over the years, the goals of our Independent Reading requirements have also evolved. As a result, to encourage an increase in reading we now place more emphasis on the pleasure of reading.

Although it is not mandatory, students may begin their Independent Reading on the first day of summer vacation and may read ahead of the deadlines.

Students may select any books—that they have not already read—from the reading list. MS students must include 1 biography among their selections. Each book must be pre-approved by the student's parent in order to earn credit.

The completion of each segment of the Independent Reading will account for a test grade.

The College Board suggests books of intellectual and educational merit, books that are part of the Western literary canon or esteemed by academics and scholars as essential reading for the college-bound student. (We have also included other classic and faith-based books of merit on the reading options lists.) Because some of the books on the list do not represent a Christian worldview and may contain language, sexual content, or philosophy contrary to the beliefs and values of your family, it is very important that your parents consent to your selection.

Please **pre-approve** the novels that your child reads on the Google Form (see Process step #2). Students should not begin reading until the form is completed.

Process

- Student selects a book.
- Parent indicates approval with signature/date on this pre-approval form **prior** to student beginning to read.

Q1 Google form due by August 25, 2025

Q2 Google form is due by October 27, 2025

Q3 Google form is due by January 12, 2026

Q4 Google form is due by March 9, 2026

- [Click HERE](#) or scan the QR code below to access the form.



- Student/parent obtains book(s).
- Student completes the assessment for their grade level by the appropriate deadline.

****TAKE NOTE****

Individual teachers will explain grade-level assessments during the first week of school.

Students who do not read the novel or who turn in work that is not their original work (AI generated, or plagiarized) will receive no credit for this assignment.

Students may not use books they have read in another class.

Assessment Due Dates

Book #1: October 9, 2025

Book #2: December 11, 2025

Book #3: February 26, 2026

Book #4: May 14, 2026 (seniors exempt)

*** Assessments vary by grade level and will be explained in English classes during the first week of school in the fall.**

Reading Lists

NOTE: Middle school students may read books from the high school lists, but high school students may not read books from the middle school lists.

Middle School Lists

Author: Title (Fiction)

Adams, Richard: *Watership Down*
Alcott, Louisa May: *Little Men*
Alcott, Louisa May: *Little Women*
Burnett, Francis Hodgson: *A Little Princess*
Burnett, Francis Hodgson: *The Secret Garden*
Chow, Karen S.: *Miracle*
Davis, Bryan: *Dragons in our Midst*
Draper, Sharon: *Copper Sun*
Farley, Walter: *The Black Stallion*
Forbes, Esther: *Johnny Tremain*
George, Jean Craighead: *My Side of the Mountain*
Gipson, Fred: *Old Yeller*
Glaser, Karina Yan: *A Duet for Home*
Goldman, William: *The Princess Bride*
Hollingsworth, Alyssa: *The Eleventh Trade*
Kelly, Lynne: *Song for a Whale*
Lewis, C.S.: *The Chronicles of Narnia* (choose - except *The Silver Chair*, which is taught in class)
Lofting, Hugh: (*Dr. Dolittle* series - choose)
Lowry, Lois: *The Giver*
Montgomery, L.M.: *Anne of Green Gables*
Palacio, R.J.: *Wonder*
Paterson, Katherine: *Bridge to Terabithia*
Peretti, Frank: *The Cooper Kids*
Pyle, Howard: *Men of Iron*
Raum, Elizabeth: *Crossroads Among the Gentiles*
Rawls, Wilson: *Where the Red Fern Grows*
Rue, Nancy: (*The Christian Heritage* series - choose)
Shirer, Priscilla: *The Prince Warriors*
Stevenson, Robert Louis: *The Black Arrow*
Stevenson, Robert Louis: *Treasure Island*
Tolkien, J.R.R.: *The Hobbit*
Tolkien, J.R.R.: *Lord of the Rings*
Verne, Jules: *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*
Wyss, Johann: *The Swiss Family Robinson*

Author: Title (Non-Fiction)

Downey, Paul W.: *The Man You Could Be*
Durso, Natalie: *I.D. Who Am I in Christ?*
George, Elizabeth: *A Young Woman After God's Own Heart*
Grover, Michelle: *No Matter What: You Can Rejoice*
Lucado, Max & Jenna Lucado Bishom: *You Were Made to Make a Difference*
Lucado, Max: *Just Like Jesus*
Schmidt, Cary: *Different By Design*
Schmidt, Cary: *Music Matters*
Sophia, Anne & Elizabeth Botkin: *So Much More*
Tagliapietra, Ron: *The Seven Wonders of the World*
Thomas, Nathan: *What's Stopping You*
Wallace, J. Warner & Susie Wallace: *Cold-Case Christianity for Kids*

Author: Title (Biographies)

Abbott, Jacob: *Alfred the Great*
Abbott, Jacob: *Christopher Columbus*
Abbott, Jacob: *Elizabeth I*
Abbott, Jacob: *Madame Roland*
Abbott, Jacob: *William the Conqueror*
Geoffreys, Clayton: (sports biographies - pick an athlete)
Tagliapietra, Ron: *Great Adventurers of the Twentieth Century*
Thayer, William: *Benjamin Franklin*
Thayer, William: *Booker T. Washington*
Thayer, William: *George Washington*
Thayer, William: *James A. Garfield: The Preacher President*

*Others by teacher approval (confirm with teacher prior to beginning reading)

Author: Title (Christian Biographies)

Brother Andrew: *God's Smuggler*

Davis, Katie: *Kisses from Katie*

Elliot, Elisabeth: *Through Gates of Splendor*

Fahs, Sophia L.: *Alexander Mackay: God's Engineer*

Hull, J. Mervin: *Adoniram Judson: God's Pioneer*

Mathews, Basil: *David Livingstone*

Miller, Basil: *George Muller: Man of Faith and Miracles*

Moore, Henry Charles: *Through Flood and Flame*

Olson, Bruce: *Bruchko*

Repp, Gloria: *Nothing Daunted: The Story of Isobel Kuh*

Swift, Catherine: *C.S. Lewis (Heroes of the Cross S.)*

Swift, Catherine: *Elizabeth Fry (Heroes of the Cross)*

Swift, Catherine: *Gladys Aylward*

Ten Boom, Corrie: *The Hiding Place*

Vins, Natasha: *Children of the Storm*

Woychuk, N.A.: Edward VI: The British Josiah

*Others by teacher approval (confirm with teacher prior to beginning reading)

High School Lists

Author: Title (Traditional College-Bound Reading List)

Achebe, Chinua: *Things Fall Apart*
Adams, Douglas: *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*
Album, Mitch: *Tuesday's with Morrie*
Angelou, Maya: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*
Austen, Jane: *Emma*
Austen, Jane: *Lady Susan*
Austen, Jane: *Persuasion*
Austen, Jane: *Pride and Prejudice*
Austen, Jane: *Sense and Sensibility*
Bernanos, George: *Diary of a Country Priest*
Bronte, Emily: *Jane Eyre*
Bronte, Emily: *Wuthering Heights*
Buck, Pearl: *The Good Earth*
Buechner, Frederick: *Brendan*
Buechner, Frederick: *Godric*
Buechner, Frederick: *The Son of Laughter*
Bunyan, John: *Pilgrim's Progress*
Butler, Samuel: *The Way of All Flesh*
Campbell, Will: *Brother to a Dragonfly*
Card, Orson: *Ender's Game*
Carter, Asa Earl: *The Education of Little Tree*
Cather, Willa: *Death Comes for the Archbishop*
Cather, Willa: *My Antonia*
Cather, Willa: *O Pioneers!*
Chekhov, Anton: *The Cherry Orchard*
Chevalier, Tracy: *Girl with a Pearl Earring*
Christie, Agatha: *And Then There Were None*
Conrad, Joseph: *Heart of Darkness*
Conrad, Joseph: *Lord Jim*
Cooper, James Fenimore: *Last of the Mohicans*
Cooper, James Fenimore: *Deer Slayer*
Defoe, Daniel: *Robinson Crusoe*
Dickens, Charles: *A Tale of Two Cities*
Dickens, Charles: *David Copperfield*
Dickens, Charles: *Great Expectations*
Dickens, Charles: *Pickwick Papers*
Dillard, Annie: *American Childhood*
Dillard, Annie: *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*
Dostoyevsky, Fyodor: *The Brothers Karamazov*
Dostoyevsky, Fyodor: *The Idiot*
Draper, Sharon M.: *Out of My Mind*
Dumas, Alexander: *The Three Musketeers*
Dumas, Alexandre: *The Count of Monte Cristo*

DuMaurier, Daphne: *Rebecca*
Eliot, George: *Adam Bede*
Eliot, George: *Middlemarch*
Eliot, George: *Romola*
Eliot, George: *Silas Marner*
Eliot, George: *The Mill on the Floss*
Eliot, T.S.: *Murder in the Cathedral*
Ellison, Ralph: *Invisible Man*
Endo, Shusaku: *Silence*
Endo, Shusaku: *The Samurai*
Endo, Shusaku: *Volcano*
Euripides: *Medea*
Faulkner, William: *Absalom, Absalom!*
Faulkner, William: *As I Lay Dying*
Faulkner, William: *Intruder in the Dust*
Faulkner, William: *Light in August*
Faulkner, William: *Sound and the Fury*
Fitzgerald, F. Scott: *This Side of Paradise*
Forester, C.S.: *Captain from Connecticut*
Forester, C.S.: *Hornblower and the Atropos*
Forester, C.S.: *Hornblower and the Hotspur*
Forster, E.M.: *A Passage to India*
Frazer, James George: *The Golden Bough*
Frazier, Charles: *Cold Mountain*
Gardner, John: *Grendel*
Goldsmith, Oliver: *Vicar of Wakefield*
Greenberg, Joanne: *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*
Greene, Graham: *The Power and the Glory*
Hardy, Thomas: *Far from the Madding Crowd*
Hardy, Thomas: *Jude the Obscure*
Hardy, Thomas: *Mayor of Casterbridge*
Hardy, Thomas: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*
Hardy, Thomas: *The Return of the Native*
Hawthorne, Nathaniel: *Blithedale Romance*
Hawthorne, Nathaniel: *House of Seven Gables*
Hemingway, Ernest: *For Whom the Bell Tolls*
Hemingway, Ernest: *The Sun Also Rises*
Herriot, James: *All Creatures Great and Small*
Hilton, James: *Goodbye Mr. Chips*
Homer: *The Iliad*
Homer: *The Odyssey*
Hosseini, Khaled: *A Thousand Splendid Suns*
Hosseini, Khaled: *The Kite Runner*
Hugo, Victor: *Les Misérables*
Hurst, Zora Neale: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
Ibsen, Henrik: *Hedda Gabler*
James, Henry: *Daisy Miller*

James, Henry: *The Portrait of a Lady*
 James, Henry: *The Turn of the Screw*
 Keller, Helen: *The Story of My Life*
 Kipling, Rudyard: *Kim*
 Kipling, Rudyard: *Phantom Rickshaw*
 Kipling, Rudyard: *Seven Seas*
 Kipling, Rudyard: *The Light that Failed*
 Lewis, C.S.: *Out of the Silent Planet*
 Lewis, C.S.: *That Hideous Strength*
 Lewis, C.S.: *The Screwtape Letters*
 Lewis, C.S.: *Till We Have Faces*
 Malamud, Bernard: *The Assistant*
 Malamud, Bernard: *The Fixer*
 Malamud, Bernard: *The Natural*
 Melville, Herman: *Billy Budd*
 Melville, Herman: *Moby Dick*
 Miller, Arthur: *Death of a Salesman*
 Miller, Walter: *A Canticle for Leibowitz*
 Milton, John: *Samson Agonistes*
 Mitchel, Margaret: *Gone With the Wind*
 Morrison, Toni: *Beloved*
 Nordoff and Hall: *Mutiny on the Bounty*
 O'Connor, Flannery: *Wise Blood*
 Orczy, Baroness: *The Scarlet Pimpernel*
 Orwell, George: *1984*
 Paton, Alan: *Cry, the Beloved Country*
 Plath, Sylvia: *The Bell Jar*
 Rand, Ayn: *Anthem*
 Rawlings, Marjorie: *The Yearling*
 Richter, Conrad: *The Fields*
 Richter, Conrad: *The Light in the Forest*
 Richter, Conrad: *The Trees*
 Salinger, J.D.: *The Catcher in the Rye*
 Scanlan and Clark: *America's Best Newspaper Writing*
 Scott, Sir Walter: *Ivanhoe*
 Shakespeare, William: *Othello*
 Shakespeare, William: *The Merchant of Venice*
 Shakespeare, William: *The Tempest*
 Shelly, Mary: *Frankenstein*
 Shute, Nevil: *On the Beach*
 Solzhenitsyn, Alexander: *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*
 Sophocles: *Oedipus Rex*
 Steinbeck, John: *Cannery Row*
 Steinbeck, John: *East of Eden*
 Steinbeck, John: *Grapes of Wrath*
 Steinbeck, John: *Of Mice and Men*
 Steinbeck, John: *The Red Pony*
 Stevenson, R.L.: *The Black Arrow*

Stevenson, R.L.: *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*
 Stevenson, R.L.: *Treasure Island*
 Strunk and White: *The Elements of Style*
 Swift, Jonathan: *Gulliver's Travels*
 Tan, Amy: *The Joy Luck Club*
 Thackeray, William: *Vanity Fair*
 Thoreau, Henry: *David Walden*
 Tolkien, J.R.R.: *The Silmarillion*
 Tolkien, J.R.R.: *The Lord of the Rings trilogy (choose one of the three)*
 Twain, Mark: *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*
 Twain, Mark: *Huckleberry Finn*
 Twain, Mark: *Life on the Mississippi*
 Twain, Mark: *The Prince and The Pauper*
 Tyler, Anne: *The Accidental Tourist*
 Verne, Jules: *Around the World in 80 Days*
 Verne, Jules: *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*
 Virgil: *The Aeneid*
 Vonnegut, Kurt: *Slaughterhouse-Five*
 Wells, H.G.: *The Island of Dr. Moreau*
 Wells, H.G.: *War of the Worlds*
 Wilde, Oscar: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*
 Wilder, Thornton: *Our Town*
 Wright, Richard: *Native Son*

Social Studies Focus (High School):

Adams, Henry: *The Education Of Henry Adams*
 Beecher Stowe, Harriet: *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
 Boorstin, Daniel: *The Image*
 Bradley, James: *Flag of Our Fathers*
 Catton, Bruce: *A Stillness at Appomattox*
 Douglass, Frederick: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
 Griffin, John Howard: *Black Like Me*
 Haley, Alex: *Roots*
 Lewis Allen, Frederick: *Only Yesterday*
 Lewis, Sinclair: *Babbitt*
 MacDonald, George: *Lilith*
 MacDonald, George: *Phantastes*
 MacDonald, George: *The Portent*
 Malcolm X and Alex Haley: *The Autobiography Of Malcolm X*
 Michener, James: *The Bridges at Toko-ri*
 O'Brien, Tim: *The Things They Carried*
 Philbrick, Nathaniel: *Bunker Hill*

Reynolds, Quentin: *They Fought for the Sky*
Rolvaa, Ole: *Giants in the Earth*
Sinclair, Upton: *The Jungle*
Steffins, Lincoln: *The Shame of the Cities*
Tuchmann, Barbara: *The Guns of August*
Washington, Booker T: *Up From Slavery*
Westheimer, David Van: *Ryan's Express*

Art Focus (High School):

Picasso, Marina: *Picasso my Grandfather*
Pollitzer, Anita: *A Woman on Paper: Georgia O'Keeffe*
Potok, Chaim: *My Name is Asher Lev*
Rookmaaker, HR: *Modern Art and the Death of Culture*
Stone, Irving: *Depths of Glory; a biographical novel of Camille Pissaro*
Stone, Irving: *The Agony and the Ecstasy; a novel of Michelangelo*
Van Loon, Hendrik Willem: *R.V.R ; the life of Rembrandt van Rijn*

Bible/Faith Focus (High School):

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich *The Cost of Discipleship*
Chesterton, G.K. *Orthodoxy*
Colson, Charles *How Should We Now Live*
Colson, Charles W. & Harold Pickett: *The Faith: What Christians Believe & Why They Believe It*
Crowe, Jacqueline: *This Changes Everything*
Fee, Gordon *How to Read the Bible for All it's Worth*
James, William *The Varieties Of Religious Experience*
Keller, Timothy *King's Cross*
Keller, Timothy *Prodigal God*
Lewis, C.S.: *Mere Christianity*
Lewis, C.S.: *The Great Divorce*
Lewis, C.S.: *The Pilgrim's Regress*
Ludy, Eric and Leslie: *When God Writes Your Love Story*
McKnight, Scot: *One Life*
Michener, James: *The Source*
Miller, Donald: *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years*
Ortberg, John: *Everybody's Normal Until You Get to Know Them*
Ortberg, John: *The Me I Want to Be*
Packer, J.I.: *Knowing God*
Piper, John: *Don't Waste Your Life*
Postman, Neil: *Amusing Ourselves to Death*
Sire, James: *The Universe Next Door*

St. Augustine: *Confessions*
Stanley, Charles: *How To Listen To God*
Strobel, Lee: *The Case for Christ*
Strobel, Lee: *The Case for Faith*
Wallace, J. Warner: *Cold Case Christianity*
Willard, Dallas: *The Divine Conspiracy*
Yancey, Philip: *What's So Amazing About Grace*
Zacharias, Rav: *Jesus Among the Other gods*

Math and Science Focus (High School):

Behe, Michael: *Darwin's Black Box*
Conway, John H. & Richard K. Guy: *The Book of Numbers*
Devlin and Lorden: *The Math Behind Numbers*
Stewart, Ian: *Flatterland*
Strobel, Lee: *The Case for a Creator*
Strogatz, Steven: *The Joy of X*

Music Focus (High School):

Broach, Elise: *Duet*
Copeland, Aaron: *What to Look for in Music*
Kavanaugh, Peter: *Spiritual Lives of Great Composers*
Schmidt, Cary: *Music Matters: Understanding and Applying the Amazing Power of Godly Music*
Williams, Zach: *Rescue Story: Faith, Freedom, and Finding My Way Home*