

El Camino Real High School Summer Reading List

Students should select one work on the list that matches their expected class for the following year. Accompanying each selection is a recommendation for how to approach the text. Within the first few weeks of school, students will write an essay about the work they have chosen.

9R:

1. *Buried Onions*; Soto
Consider how the motif (repeated idea or image) of buried onions contributes to Soto's thematic message.
2. *Life As We Knew It*; Pfeffer
Consider how Pfeffer uses the science fiction set-up of the moon being knocked from orbit to focus on the importance of family and survival.
3. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*; Chbosky
Consider how Chbosky uses the epistolary form (writing letters) and allusions to convey Charlie's development.

9AE/Hum/AVID:

1. *Reservation Blues*; Alexie
Look up the legendary guitar player Robert Johnson. Also, consider how Alexie uses his story to explore issues of gender and identity as his characters attempt to find their place in society.
2. *The Chosen*; Potok
Consider how Potok explores issues of friendship and truth (spiritual and personal) in a changing world.

9H:

1. *The Joy Luck Club*; Tan
Consider elements of identity, especially as the younger girls are trying to figure out how to be Chinese/American/Chinese-American. Also consider issues of self-acceptance.
2. *Treasure Island*; Stevenson
Consider how Stevenson demonstrates Jim's maturity through his encounters with other characters in the novel. While the story itself is entertaining, there is a deeper message about growing up and becoming a proper man.

10R:

1. *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*; Smith
Consider how Smith uses the metaphor of the Tree of Heaven to convey her message.
2. *Fahrenheit 451*; Bradbury
Consider how Bradbury utilizes his characters and plot to criticize the America of his time.
3. *St. Iggy*; Going
Explore the way Going uses metaphors to explore Iggy's desire to develop as a young man.

10AE/Hum/AVID:

1. *The Time Machine*; Wells
Consider how Wells uses plot and technology to criticize the politics and social beliefs of society.
2. *In the Woods*; French
Consider the nature and importance of friendship as well as the relativity of truth in French's novel and how it contributes to theme.
3. *White Oleander*; Fitch
Consider how Fitch utilizes imagery (including colors and flowers) to demonstrate Astrid's growth into a strong young woman.

10H:

1. *The Handmaid's Tale*; Atwood
Consider Atwood's use of color, names, and gender roles/identity to convey a message about the dystopian world of the novel.
2. *The Jungle*; Sinclair
Consider how Sinclair injects his socialist beliefs into the novel through plot and character.
3. *The Things They Carried*; O'Brien
Consider O'Brien's interweaving of fact and fiction in his storytelling as well as his questioning the importance of truth.

11R:

1. *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*; Diaz
Consider the way Diaz explores how tradition, family and society affect people's perception of identity.
2. *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*; Alvarez
Consider how Alvarez uses the motifs of memory, naming, and fear to illustrate the issues of identity and assimilation and how the Garcia family deals with these issues.
3. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*; Angelou
Consider how Angelou utilizes race relations, family relations, and community relations to comment on the situation of African Americans after the Civil Rights Movement.

11AE/Hum/AVID:

1. *The Bell Jar*; Plath
Consider how Plath explores issues of identity, transformation, and family as she portrays Esther's attempt to find her place in a complacent society focused on sex and materialism.
2. *The Namesake*; Lahiri
Consider how names and location affect identity, particularly with respect to the Ganguli family.
3. *Go Tell it on the Mountain*; Baldwin
Consider how issues of sexuality, family, and community shape identity.

11H:

1. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*; Hurston
Consider how Hurston utilizes language, community, and responsibility (to self, to community) to illustrate Janie's discovery of her identity.
2. *Breakfast of Champions*; Vonnegut
Consider how Vonnegut uses post-modern techniques, along with plot, to question the nature of free will versus fate and how the individual fits into this debate.
3. *Native Son*; Wright
Consider how Wright utilizes Naturalism to explore the power of fate/destiny/social expectations and the extent, if any, to which free will impacts life.

12R:

1. *The Alchemist*; Coelho
Consider how Coelho uses allegory (where the surface story represents another meaning) to explore how the journey towards a goal may be more important than the goal itself.
2. *She's Come Undone*; Lamb
Consider how Lamb utilizes the motifs (recurring images or ideas) of water and television in his portrayal of Dolores and her search for love (from others and herself).
3. *Like Water for Chocolate*; Esquivel
Consider how Esquivel utilizes structure and the role of food to convey Tita's struggles both to gain independence and to find her identity.

12AE/Hum/AVID:

1. *City of God*; Doctorow
Consider how Doctorow blends a variety of styles and religious concerns into his mystery and what this blending says about his protagonist and the theme.
2. *The Poisonwood Bible*; Kingsolver
Consider how Kingsolver utilizes a contrast of beliefs, traditions, and perspectives to explore the nature of truth, justice, and identity.
3. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*; Hosseini
Consider how Hosseini utilizes structure, narrative style (shifting from past to present tense), and the primary characters (Laila and Mariam) to convey the theme.

12H:

1. *Grendel*; Gardner
Consider what Gardner's purpose was in retelling the Beowulf myth from the monster's perspective. How does the shift in point of view change the thematic thrust of the story?
2. *Remains of the Day*; Ishiguro
Consider how Ishiguro utilizes the concepts of loss (literal and figurative), loyalty, and social expectations to convey Stevens' understanding of himself.
3. *Dubliners*; Joyce
Consider how Joyce utilizes the 14 stories in this work to explore issues of faith, life and death, and family. Overall, what is Joyce saying about humanity?