

Keene High School Summer Recommended Reading List

Starting in elementary school, students should read a minimum of 20-30 minutes per day. Students who don't read on their own end up lagging behind their peers. Students who do read on their own have a stronger vocabulary and tend to do better in school and in the workplace.

At Keene High School, we believe reading should not end in June but continue throughout the summer. Some students may read high interest modern fiction while others might choose to get a few more classics under their belts. Our belief is that what is read is less important than the need to keep reading.

Below is a list of some recommended titles to help guide summer reading decisions. As always, students and parents should determine whether a title is appropriate or will hold the reader's interest.

Classic Reads:

The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe

This is book about adventure and survival on a deserted island 300 years ago.

Cat's Cradle by Kurt Vonnegut

Vonnegut's satire about the horrors of war.

Catch-22 by Joseph Heller

Heller's famous satire about the absurdity of war.

The Count of Monte Cristo by Alexander Dumas (also wrote The Three Musketeers)

A man is sentenced to life imprisonment for a crime that he did not commit.

Dracula by Bram Stoker

This is a classic tale of evil.

The Fountainhead by Ayn Rand

Rand's ideas regarding objectivism are explained through the story of an architect.

The Good Earth by Pearl S. Buck

This is a view of China during the reign of the last emperor and social upheaval.

Les Miserables by Victor Hugo

The trials of a peasant and his wrongful imprisonment are riveting in this challenging work.

Sense and Sensibility by Jane Austen

This classic Austen romance gives insight into women's lives in the Victorian era.

Shogun by James Clavell

This story tells of the exploration of the Orient during the 16th century and its effect on Japan.

Siddhartha by Herman Hesse

This is the story of a man who follows Buddha to find enlightenment.

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens

This tale tells of London and Paris during the French Revolution.

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neal Hurston

This is a Harlem Renaissance novel about a unique African American woman in rural Florida.

Franny and Zooey by J.D. Salinger

Salinger's interrelated stories show a brother trying to heal his sister's breakdown by pointing out her hypocrisy.

The Moonstone by Wilkie Collins

An exciting mystery full of intrigue and suspense; one of the original detective stories

The March by E.L. Doctorow

The story of Sherman's destructive march through the South near the end of the Civil War, told in novel style

Nonfiction:

The Burn Journals by Brent Renyon

A teen tries to kill himself by burning himself alive but lives to tell the tale.

Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser

One in four Americans eats fast food every day. Eaters beware!

Hole in My Life by Jack Gantos

Gantos writes of his final year of high school, drug smuggling, and time in prison.

It's Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life by Lance Armstrong

Armstrong, a world-class athlete nearly struck down by cancer, wins the Tour de France.

The Long Walk: A True Story of a Trek to Freedom by V. Rawicz

A group of escapees from a Soviet labor camp must battle the environment to survive.

Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer by Tracy Kidder

This is the story of an American doctor who works to stop infectious disease of the poor in developing nations.

On The Road by Jack Kerouac

This is the story of a young beatnik in the 1960's.

Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books by Azar Nafisi

A group of post-revolutionary Iranian women meet secretly to read forbidden works.

Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia by M. Hornbacher

This compelling and somewhat shocking autobiography tells of the author's fight to survive.

When I Was Puerto Rican by Esmeralda Santiago

A rural Puerto Rican tells of her teenage years in New York City.

The Wild Trees: A Story of Passion and Daring by Richard Preston

Several people love and study the California Redwoods and have links to these majestic trees.

Within Reach: My Everest Story by Mark Pfitzer

An avid teen mountain climber hopes to scale Mt. Everest.

Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace: One School at a Time by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin

The story of one man's effort to address poverty, educate girls, and overcome cultural divides between the US and rural Pakistan and Afghanistan.

An Ordinary Man by Paul Rusesabagina

An ordinary man helps over 1000 survive the Rwandan genocide.

Dispatches by Michael Herr

A journalist's account of a year in Vietnam, told in anecdotal style.

We Were Soldiers Once, and Young by Harold G. Moore, Joseph Galloway

A detailed account of the Battle of Ia Drang, the first major encounter in Vietnam involving U.S. troops.

Modern Fiction:

Angels and Demons or The DaVinci Code by Dan Brown

These gripping mysteries have Robert Langdon researching religious mysteries.

The Beekeeper's Apprentice by Laurie King

Sherlock Holmes takes on a young female apprentice.

Everything is Illuminated by Jonathan Safran-Foer

This offbeat novel is about a young man who sets out to find a woman who helped his grandfather survive the Nazis.

The Kitchen God's Wife by Amy Tan

A Chinese mother tries to explain her past to her American born daughter.

Plain Truth by Jodi Picoult

When a newborn is found dead in an Amish village, an investigation begins.

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan by Lisa See

Friends bond as they face isolation, arranged marriages, loss, and motherhood in nineteenth-century China.

The River King by Alice Hoffman

Uses magical realism, the intertwining stories of several friends at a private school revolve around the death of one.

The Gurnsey Literary Potato Peel Pie Society by M. Barrows & A. Shaffer

Letters tell the story of a group of people that survived WWII occupation through companionship.

Cage of Stars by Jacquelyn Mitchard

An isolated Mormon teen deals with anger and grief when her younger siblings are murdered.

The Cider House Rules by John Irving

Homer, an orphan, grows to take over the directorship of the orphanage where he grew up.

Three Weeks With My Brother by Nicolas Sparks

A memoir describing a journey to exotic places. Woven in is the journey of his personal life.

The Lucky One by Nicholas Sparks

The story about the surprising paths lives take and the power of fate to guide us to love.

Digital Fortress by Dan Brown

A female cryptographer discovers a dubious code and betrayal as she fights to restore the security of US Intelligence

Deception Point by Dan Brown

A combination of a love story and a political thriller.

Young Adult:

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie

Junior Spirit attends an all-white school where he struggles with identity

America: A Novel by E.R. Frank

A boy in a treatment facility faces his abusive past.

Catalyst by Laurie Halse Anderson

An over achiever learns through tragedy that there are other important things.

Elsewhere by G. Zevin

In this unique fantasy novel, a teen dies and goes to a place where everyone ages backwards and is reborn.

Fault Line by Janet Tashjian

An eighteen-year-old stand up comic ends up in an abusive relationship.

The Gospel According to Larry by Janet Tashjian

An anonymous Larry starts a web site on which questions our cultural values

Mr. Was by Pete Hautman

A teen travels back in time to save his mother from being killed by his father.

Sloppy Firsts (series) by Megan McCafferty

A teen tells of her love life and loss of her best friend through humor in this popular series.

Son of the Mob by Gordon Korman

A funny teen tells of the woes of life with a father who is the head of the mob.

Tears of a Tiger by Sharon Draper

A teen deals with depression after his drunk driving kills his best friend.

Twilight (series) by Stephanie Meyer

This popular series of books is about a mortal in love with a vampire.

Tree Girl by Ben Mikaelson

This powerful tale tells the true story of a Guatemalan refugee who watches as her family is slaughtered.

In Search of Mockingbird by Lorretta Ellsworth

Teen girl tries to connect with dead mom. Travels with diary and copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird* to find Harper Lee.