

Summer Reading

Required:

[*In the Time of the Butterflies*](#), Julia Alvarez - It is November 25, 1960, and three beautiful sisters have been found near their wrecked Jeep at the bottom of a 150-foot cliff on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. The official state newspaper reports their deaths as accidental. It does not mention that a fourth sister lives. Nor does it explain that the sisters were among the leading opponents of Gen. Rafael Leonidas Trujillo's dictatorship. It doesn't have to. Everybody knows of Las Mariposas—"The Butterflies." In this extraordinary novel, the voices of all four sisters—Minerva, Patria, María Teresa, and the survivor, Dedé—speak across the decades to tell their own stories, from hair ribbons and secret crushes to gunrunning and prison torture, and to describe the everyday horrors of life under Trujillo's rule. Through the art and magic of Julia Alvarez's imagination, the martyred Butterflies live again in this novel of courage and love, and the human cost of political oppression.

Choose ONE of the following:

[*Annie John*](#), Jamaica Kincaid - *Annie John* is a haunting and provocative story of a young girl growing up on the island of Antigua. A classic coming-of-age story in the tradition of *The Catcher in the Rye* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Kincaid's novel focuses on a universal, tragic, and often comic theme: the loss of childhood. Annie's voice—urgent, demanding to be heard—is one that will not soon be forgotten by readers. An adored only child, Annie has until recently lived an idyllic life. She is inseparable from her beautiful mother, a powerful presence, who is the very center of the little girl's existence. Loved and cherished, Annie grows and thrives within her mother's benign shadow. Looking back on her childhood, she reflects, "It was in such a paradise that I lived." When she turns twelve, however, Annie's life changes, in ways that are often mysterious to her. She begins to question the cultural assumptions of her island world; at school she instinctively rebels against authority; and most frighteningly, her mother, seeing Annie as a "young lady," ceases to be the source of unconditional adoration and takes on the new and unfamiliar guise of adversary. At the end of her school years, Annie decides to leave Antigua and her family, but not without a measure of sorrow, especially for the mother she once knew and never ceases to mourn. "For I could not be sure," she reflects, "whether for the rest of my life I would be able to tell when it was really my mother and when it was really her shadow standing between me and the rest of the world." ([Google Books](#))

[*A River Runs Through It*](#), Norman Maclean - "Just as Norman Maclean writes at the end of "A River Runs through It" that he is "haunted by waters," so have readers been haunted by his novella. A retired English professor who began writing fiction at the age of 70, Maclean produced what is now recognized as one of the classic American stories of the twentieth century. Originally published in 1976, *A River Runs through It and Other Stories* now celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary, marked by this new edition that includes a foreword by Annie Proulx. Maclean grew up in the western Rocky Mountains in the first decades of the twentieth century. As a young man he worked many summers in logging camps and for the United States Forest Service. The two novellas and short story in this collection are based on his own

experiences—the experiences of a young man who found that life was only a step from art in its structures and beauty. The beauty he found was in reality, and so he leaves a careful record of what it was like to work in the woods when it was still a world of horse and hand and foot, without power saws, "cats," or four-wheel drives. Populated with drunks, loggers, card sharks, and whores, and set in the small towns and surrounding trout streams and mountains of western Montana, the stories concern themselves with the complexities of fly fishing, logging, fighting forest fires, playing cribbage, and being a husband, a son, and a father.” ([Library of Congress](#))

[*Atonement*](#), Ian McEwan - Ian McEwan's symphonic novel of love and war, childhood and class, guilt and forgiveness provides all the satisfaction of a brilliant narrative and the provocation we have come to expect from this master of English prose. On a hot summer day in 1935, thirteen-year-old Briony Tallis witnesses a moment's flirtation between her older sister, Cecilia, and Robbie Turner, the son of a servant and Cecilia's childhood friend. But Briony's incomplete grasp of adult motives together with her precocious literary gifts brings about a crime that will change all their lives. As it follows that crime's repercussions through the chaos and carnage of World War II and into the close of the twentieth century, *Atonement* engages the reader on every conceivable level, with an ease and authority that mark it as a genuine masterpiece.” ([Random House](#))

[*A Complicated Kindness*](#), Miriam Toews - “In this stunning coming-of-age novel, award-winner Miriam Toews balances grief and hope in the voice of a witty, beleaguered teenager whose family is shattered by fundamentalist Christianity. "Half of our family, the better-looking half, is missing," Nomi Nickel tells us at the beginning of *A Complicated Kindness*. Left alone with her sad, peculiar father, her days are spent piecing together why her mother and sister have disappeared and contemplating her inevitable career at Happy Family Farms, a chicken slaughterhouse on the outskirts of East Village. Not the East Village in New York City where Nomi would prefer to live, but an oppressive town founded by Mennonites on the cold, flat plains of Manitoba, Canada. This darkly funny novel is the world according to the unforgettable Nomi, a bewildered and wry sixteen-year-old trapped in a town governed by fundamentalist religion and in the shattered remains of a family it destroyed. In Nomi's droll, refreshing voice, we're told the story of an eccentric, loving family that falls apart as each member lands on a collision course with the only community any of them have ever known. A work of fierce humor and tragedy by a writer who has taken the American market by storm, this searing, tender, comic testament to family love will break your heart.” ([Google Books](#))

[*Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian*](#), Sherman Alexi - “Arnold Spirit Jr. is the geekiest Indian on the Spokane Reservation. He wears chunky, lopsided glasses. His head and body look like Sputnik on a toothpick. When he doesn't stutter, he lisps. Arnold is a 14-year-old high school freshman. When he goes outside he gets teased and beaten, so he spends a lot of time in his room drawing cartoons. “I think the world is a series of broken dams and floods,” he says, “and my cartoons are tiny little lifeboats.” If that line has an unexpected poetry to it, that's because it was written by a poet. Arnold's creator, Sherman Alexie, grew up on the Spokane Reservation in tiny Wellpinit, Wash., and made his name as a poet before expanding into short stories, novels, screenplays, film directing and stand-up comedy. “The Absolutely True Diary of

a Part-Time Indian” is Alexie’s first foray into the young adult genre, and it took him only one book to master the form. Recently nominated for a National Book Award, this is a gem of a book. I keep flipping back to re-read the best scenes and linger over Ellen Forney’s cartoons.” ([New York Times Book Review](#))

[1984](#), George Orwell - “Published in 1949 as a warning about the menaces of totalitarianism, the novel is set in an imaginary future world that is dominated by three perpetually warring totalitarian police states. The book's hero, Winston Smith, is a minor party functionary in one of these states. His longing for truth and decency leads him to secretly rebel against the government. Smith has a love affair with a like-minded woman, but they are both arrested by the Thought Police. The ensuing imprisonment, torture, and reeducation of Smith are intended not merely to break him physically or make him submit but to root out his independent mental existence and his spiritual dignity.” ([Google Books](#))

[My Antonia](#), Willa Cather - *My Antonia* is a classic tale of pioneer life in the American Midwest. The novel details daily life in the newly settled plains of Nebraska through the eyes of Jim Burden, who recounts memories of a childhood shared with a girl named Antonia Shimerda, the daughter of a family who have emigrated from Bohemia. As adults, Jim leaves the prairie for college and a career in the east, while Antonia devotes herself to her large family and productive farm. When he returns Jim sees that although Antonia is careworn, she remains "a rich mine of life, like the founders of early races,". Full of stirring descriptions of the prairie's beautiful yet terrifying landscape, and the rich ethnic mix of immigrants and native-born Americans who chose to restart their lives there, *My Antonia* mythologized a period of American history that was lost before its value could be understood.

[Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?](#), Phillip K. Dick - “THE INSPIRATION FOR *BLADERUNNER*. . . *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* was published in 1968. Grim and foreboding, even today it is a masterpiece ahead of its time. By 2021, the World War had killed millions, driving entire species into extinction and sending mankind off-planet. Those who remained coveted any living creature, and for people who couldn't afford one, companies built incredibly realistic simulacrae: horses, birds, cats, sheep. . . They even built humans. Emigrées to Mars received androids so sophisticated it was impossible to tell them from true men or women. Fearful of the havoc these artificial humans could wreak, the government banned them from Earth. But when androids didn't want to be identified, they just blended in. Rick Deckard was an officially sanctioned bounty hunter whose job was to find rogue androids, and to retire them. But cornered, androids tended to fight back, with deadly results.” ([Google Books](#))

Required Assignment for *In the Time of the Butterflies*:

Please answer **two out of the three following questions** in the form of a 2-3 paragraph response. For these, you should organize your ideas and make sure you are answering all parts of the questions. This does NOT need to be in 5-paragraph form, but you should have some kind of organization. You will be presenting your opinion about something and should use a thesis statement at the beginning to clarify your views. Supporting reasons should be backed by references to the text (direct quotations properly cited). These questions also have personal components and please feel free to explore your opinions or experiences.

1. Which character do you identify with and why (using specifics from the text as well as anecdotes from your own life)? Which character do you least identify with and why? How does the fractured voice of the text affect the feeling of the narrative?

Or

2. Much of the emphasis of this book is on family ties, a force which was very strong in the past – in what ways does family influence (y)our day-to-day decisions in 2018? Examining one of the protagonists, in what ways was she loyal or disloyal to her family?

Or

3. As you've seen with the #MeToo movement and Black Lives Matter, revolution can begin with a single person and spread rapidly – who would you argue was the greatest freedom fighter in this book and why? While Minerva Mirabal may be considered more outwardly brave, how is each sister courageous in her own way? What are some other real world examples of small steps making a big impact?

Assignment for additional book:

To be graded. Please proofread and hand in your best work.

In a typed document with your name and date, please include the following:

1. In **200 words**, write a brief summary of the plot, including the beginning, middle and end. In your opening sentence, include title (italicized) author, and genre (realistic fiction, dystopian, fantasy, nonfiction, historical fiction, etc.).

2. In a **paragraph**, write about the significance of title. Authors rarely choose a random title. Dig for symbolic meaning. The title may be a metaphor or it may relate to one specific incident in the book. In any case, consider carefully the significance of the title and explain your thinking.

3. Write a **brief description in 3-4 sentences** for two of the main characters. For each one include at least two adjectives and cite (that is, quote word for word using quotation marks and include the page number) two text examples that support your impressions for each.

4. Write **3-4 sentences** about a certain passage from the book that you think is important or worth rereading (please include page number for reference). Maybe it explains something about the character, or it describes a very special event, or perhaps, it holds a certain resonance or connection with you, the reader. You must explain why you chose this passage. Dig deep for a connection.

5. To highlight the significance of this book, write a **1-2 paragraph response** to each of the following:

- What life lessons have you learned or have been reinforced from reading this book?

- What did you like and dislike the most from this book? Explain using details and examples from the book.