Recommended reading for Honors English II students:
We have selected the following books for our recommended Honors English II summer reading. We have attempted to select texts which will nurture in our students a love of reading. We recommend that students and parents read the descriptions carefully and make an informed decision, selecting titles that are appropriate for their summer reading.

We have included a short summary of our selections. Should a selection be objected to, we have listed an alternate text as well. (All summaries come from Amazon.)

1. How the García Girls Lost Their Accents -- Julia Alvarez
Acclaimed writer Julia Alvarez’s brilliant, buoyant, and beloved first novel gives voice to four sisters recounting their adventures growing up in two cultures. Selected as a Notable Book by both the New York Times and the American Library Association, it won the PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Award for books with a multicultural perspective and was chosen by New York librarians as one of twenty-one classics for the twenty-first century. Ms. Alvarez was recently honored with the 2013 National Medal of Arts for her extraordinary storytelling. Content advisory: crude language, some sexual content.

In this debut novel, the García sisters—Carla, Sandra, Yolanda, and Sofía—and their family must flee their home in the Dominican Republic after their father’s role in an attempt to overthrow a tyrannical dictator is discovered. They arrive in New York City in 1960 to a life far removed from their existence in the Caribbean. In the wild and wondrous and not always welcoming U.S.A., their parents try to hold on to their old ways, but the girls try find new lives: by forgetting their Spanish, by straightening their hair and wearing fringed bell bottoms. For them, it is at once liberating and excruciating to be caught between the old world and the new. How the García Girls Lost Their Accents sets the sisters free to tell their most intimate stories about how they came to be at home—and not at home—in America.

2. City of Thieves -- David Benioff
During the Nazis’ brutal siege of Leningrad, Lev Beniov is arrested for looting and thrown into the same cell as a handsome deserter named Kolya. Instead of being executed, Lev and Kolya are given a shot at saving their own lives by complying with an outrageous directive: secure a dozen eggs for a powerful Soviet colonel to use in his daughter’s wedding cake. In a city cut off from all supplies and suffering unbelievable deprivation, Lev and Kolya embark on a hunt through the dire lawlessness of Leningrad and behind enemy lines to find the impossible.

By turns insightful and funny, thrilling and terrifying, City of Thieves is a gripping, cinematic World War II adventure and an intimate coming-of-age story with an utterly contemporary feel for how boys become men.

3. What Is the What -- Dave Eggers
What Is the What is the epic novel based on the life of Valentino Achak Deng who, along with thousands of other children—the so-called Lost Boys—was forced to leave his village in Sudan at the age of seven and trek hundreds of miles by foot, pursued by militias, government bombers, and wild animals, crossing the deserts of three countries to find freedom. When he finally is resettled in the United States, he finds a life full of promise, but also heartache and myriad new challenges. Moving, suspenseful, and unexpectedly funny, What Is the What is an astonishing novel that illuminates the lives of millions through one extraordinary man.

4. Hiroshima -- John Hersey
On August 6, 1945, Hiroshima was destroyed by the first atom bomb ever dropped on a city. This book, John Hersey's journalistic masterpiece, tells what happened on that day. Told through the memories of survivors, this timeless, powerful and compassionate document has become a classic "that stirs the conscience of humanity" (The New York Times).
5. And the Mountains Echoed -- Khaled Hosseini
Khaled Hosseini, the #1 New York Times–bestselling author of The Kite Runner and A Thousand Splendid Suns, has written a new novel about how we love, how we take care of one another, and how the choices we make resonate through generations. In this tale revolving around not just parents and children but brothers and sisters, cousins and caretakers, Hosseini explores the many ways in which families nurture, wound, betray, honor, and sacrifice for one another; and how often we are surprised by the actions of those closest to us, at the times that matter most. Following its characters and the ramifications of their lives and choices and loves around the globe—from Kabul to Paris to San Francisco to the Greek island of Tinos—the story expands gradually outward, becoming more emotionally complex and powerful with each turning page.

6. A Thousand Splendid Suns -- Khaled Hosseini
Propelled by the same superb instinct for storytelling that made The Kite Runner a beloved classic, A Thousand Splendid Suns is at once an incredible chronicle of thirty years of Afghan history and a deeply moving story of family, friendship, faith, and the salvation to be found in love.

Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate. As they endure the ever escalating dangers around them -- in their home as well as in the streets of Kabul -- they come to form a bond that makes them both sisters and mother-daughter to each other, and that will ultimately alter the course not just of their own lives but of the next generation. With heart-wrenching power and suspense, Hosseini shows how a woman’s love for her family can move her to shocking and heroic acts of self-sacrifice, and that in the end it is love, or even the memory of love, that is often the key to survival.

Content advisory: some violence and sexual content.

7. My Forbidden Face -- Latifa
Latifa was born into an educated middle-class Afghan family in Kabul in 1980. She dreamed of one day becoming a journalist: she was interested in fashion, movies, and friends. Her father was in the import/export business and her mother was a doctor. Then in September 1996, Taliban soldiers seized power in Kabul. From that moment, Latifa, just 16 years old became a prisoner in her own home. Her school was closed. Her mother was banned from working. The simplest and most basic freedoms—walking down the street, looking out a window—were no longer hers. She was now forced to wear a chadri. My Forbidden Face provides a poignant and highly personal account of life under the Taliban regime. With painful honesty and clarity Latifa describes the way she watched her world falling apart, in the name of a fanatical interpretation of a faith that she could not comprehend. Her voice captures a lost innocence, but also echoes her determination to live in freedom and hope. Content advisory: brutality and abuse.

8. Sarah’s Key -- Tatiana de Rosnay
Paris, July 1942: Sarah, a ten year-old girl, is brutally arrested with her family by the French police in the Vel’ d’Hiv’ roundup, but not before she locks her younger brother in a cupboard in the family's apartment, thinking that she will be back within a few hours.

Paris, May 2002: On Vel’ d’Hiv’s 60th anniversary, journalist Julia Jarmond is asked to write an article about this black day in France’s past. Through her contemporary investigation, she stumbles onto a trail of long-hidden family secrets that connect her to Sarah. Julia finds herself compelled to retrace the girl’s ordeal, from that terrible term in the Vel d’Hiv’, to the camps, and beyond. As she probes into Sarah’s past, she begins to question her own place in France, and to reevaluate her marriage and her life.

Tatiana de Rosnay offers us a brilliantly subtle, compelling portrait of France under occupation and reveals the taboos and silence that surround this painful episode.

Alternate: The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind -- William Kamkwamba
William Kamkwamba was born in Malawi, a country where magic ruled and modern science was mystery. It was also a land withered by drought and hunger. But William had read about windmills, and he dreamed of building one that would bring to his small village a set of luxuries that only 2 percent of Malawians could enjoy: electricity and running
water. His neighbors called him misala—crazy—but William refused to let go of his dreams. With a small pile of once-forgotten science textbooks; some scrap metal, tractor parts, and bicycle halves; and an armory of curiosity and determination, he embarked on a daring plan to forge an unlikely contraption and small miracle that would change the lives around him.

_The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind_ is a remarkable true story about human inventiveness and its power to overcome crippling adversity. It will inspire anyone who doubts the power of one individual's ability to change his community and better the lives of those around him.

These reading selections have been reviewed by a district committee consisting of a school level administrator, English Language Arts teachers, a district director, and school media specialists.

_These books may have been challenged by other districts, which is why we have provided a summary of the selections, as well as an alternate text, so that you and your family may make an informed choice._