



The mission of Branford High School is to prepare students to be independent and collaborative learners who are responsible, informed, and contributing members of society. In partnership with the community, we strive to provide a learning environment that supports all student in embracing diversity, acting with integrity, and achieving their personal and academic potential.

Branford High School Summer Reading English 11 (American Literature)

The books on this list have been chosen to complement the novels, themes, and essential questions that you may cover in *American Literature*. The following questions will be discussed throughout the year. Consider them as you read this summer.

- *How does literature teach us about rebellion and individual responsibility in a free society?*
- *In what ways are humans connected or not to the natural world?*
- *How does a work of literature function as a social commentary?*
- *What does the literature studied in this course suggest about what it means to be American? What is the "American Dream?"*

NOTE TO PARENTS: Before selecting a book, please review it with your child to determine if it is appropriate. Several websites, including commonsensemedia.org and Amazon.com, offer reviews of literature to help parents and students make the right selection for them.

Gym Candy by Carl Deuker

Groomed by his father to be a star player, football is the only thing that has ever really mattered to Mick Johnson, who works hard for a spot on the varsity team his freshman year, then tries to hold onto his edge by using steroids, despite the consequences to his health and social life. Fiction.

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Before I Fall by Lauren Oliver

After she dies in a car crash, teenaged Samantha relives the day of her death over and over again until, on the seventh day, she finally discovers a way to save herself. Fiction.

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Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

The Grapes of Wrath is a landmark of American literature. A portrait of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, of one man's fierce reaction to injustice, and of one woman's stoical strength, the novel captures the horrors of the Great Depression and probes into the very nature of equality and justice in America. A must-read on many high school and college reading lists. Fiction.

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Going Bovine by Libba Bray

Cameron Smith, a disaffected sixteen year-old who, after being diagnosed with Creutzfeldt Jakob's (aka mad cow) disease, sets off on a road trip with a death-obsessed video gaming dwarf he meets in the hospital in an attempt to find a cure. Fiction.

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Being Henry David by Carl Armistead

Seventeen-year-old "Hank" has found himself at Penn Station in New York City with no memory of anything --who he is, where he came from, why he's running away. His only possession is a worn copy of Walden, by Henry David Thoreau. And so he becomes Henry David-or "Hank" and takes first to the streets, and then to the only destination he can think of--Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts. Fiction.

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American Uprising: the untold story of America's largest slave revolt by Daniel Rasmussen

A gripping and deeply revealing history of an infamous 1811 slave rebellion that nearly toppled New Orleans and changed the course of American history. Non fiction.

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The Devil in the White City by Erik Larson

An intertwined true tale of the 1893 World's Fair and a cunning serial killer who used the fair to lure his victims to their death. Combining meticulous research with nail-biting storytelling, Erik Larson has crafted a narrative with all the wonder of newly discovered history and the thrills of the best fiction. Non fiction.

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Chasing Lincoln's Killer by James L. Swanson

Drawn from Swanson's 2007 adult work, *Manhunt*, this adaptation offers younger audiences a chronological, sometimes graphic play-by-play of Lincoln's assassination and the pursuit of his murderer and his cohorts. Non fiction.

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Redeployment by Phil Klay

Winner of the 2014 National Book Award for Fiction. Phil Klay's *Redeployment* takes readers to the frontlines of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, asking us to understand what happened there, and what happened to the soldiers who returned. Interwoven with themes of brutality and faith, guilt and fear, helplessness and survival, the characters in these stories struggle to make meaning out of chaos. Fiction.

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Our America by LeAlan Jones

Through two award-winning National Public Radio documentaries, and now this powerful book, LeAlan Jones and Lloyd Newman have made it their mission to be loud voices from one of this country's darkest places, Chicago's Ida B. Wells housing project. Set against the stunning photographs of a talented young photographer from the projects, *Our America* evokes the unforgiving world of these two amazing young men, and their struggle to survive unrelenting tragedy. Non fiction.

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We Were Liars by E. Lockhart

A modern, sophisticated suspense novel from *New York Times* bestselling author, National Book Award finalist, and Printz Award honoree E. Lockhart. Each summer the wealthy, seemingly perfect, members of the Sinclair family gather on their private island. *We Were Liars* is the story of those annual reunions; in particular what happened during a summer that protagonist Cadence is unable to remember. Fiction.

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Most Dangerous: Daniel Ellsberg and the secret history of the Vietnam War by Steve Sheinkin

From Steve Sheinkin, the award-winning author of *The Port Chicago 50* and Newbery Honor Book *Bomb* comes a tense, narrative nonfiction account of what the Times deemed "the greatest story of the century": how whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg transformed from obscure government analyst into "the most dangerous man in America," and risked everything to expose years of government lies during the Nixon / Cold War era. Non-fiction.

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All the Bright Places by Jennifer Niven

"...this heartbreaking love story about two funny, fragile, and wildly damaged high school kids named Violet and Finch is worth reading. Niven is a skillful storyteller who never patronizes her characters—or her audience." – Entertainment Weekly. Fiction.

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http://bhsenglish.wikispaces.com/summer_reading