

Freshmen Reading List

Class of 2016

Fundamentals of Freshman English

Seabiscuit

by **Laura Hillenbrand**

Seabiscuit was one of the most electrifying and popular attractions in sports history and the single biggest newsmaker in the world in 1938, receiving more coverage than FDR, Hitler, or Mussolini. But his success was a surprise to the racing establishment, which had written off the crooked-legged racehorse with the sad tail.

It's Superman! A Novel

by **Tom DeHaven**

Coming of age in rural 1930s America with X-ray vision, the power to stop bullets, and the ability to fly isn't exactly every boy's story. Follow young Clark's whirlwind journey from Kansas to New York City's *Daily Planet*.

October Sky (Rocket Boys)

by **Homer Hickman**

It was 1957, the year Sputnik raced across the Appalachian sky, and the small town of Coalwood, West Virginia, was slowly dying. Faced with an uncertain future, Homer Hickman nurtured a dream: to send rockets into outer space

A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier

by **Ishmael Beah**

This gripping story recounts his experiences as a boy growing up in Sierra Leone in the 1990s, during one of the most brutal and violent civil wars in recent history. Rebel forces destroyed his childhood when they hit his village, driving him to leave his home and travel the arid deserts and jungles of Africa. After several months of struggle, he was recruited by the national army, made a full soldier and learned to shoot an AK-47, and hated everyone who came up against the rebels.

Virals

by **Kathy Reichs**

Tory Brennan, niece of acclaimed forensic anthropologist Temperance Brennan (of the *Bones* novels and hit TV show), is the leader of a ragtag band of teenage "sci-philes" who live on a secluded island off the coast of South Carolina. When the group rescues a dog caged for medical testing on a nearby island, they are exposed to an experimental strain of canine parvovirus that changes their lives forever.

Bruiser**by Neal Shusterman**

There's a reason why Brewster can't have friends—why he can't care about too many people. Because when he cares about you, things start to happen. Impossible things that can't be explained. I know, because they're happening to me.

Shiver**by Maggie Stiefvater**

For years, Grace has watched the wolves in the woods behind her house. One yellow-eyed wolf--her wolf--is a chilling presence she can't seem to live without. Meanwhile, Sam has lived two lives: In winter, the frozen woods, the protection of the pack, and the silent company of a fearless girl. In summer, a few precious months of being human . . . until the cold makes him shift back again.

Whale Talk**by Chris Crutcher**

A varsity letter jacket: it's exclusive, nearly unattainable, revered . . . and everything that's screwed up about Cutter High, as far as T. J. Jones is concerned. That's why T. J. is determined to have the unlikeliest swim team a high school has ever seen—earn letter jackets of their own. Without a pool, they will fight for their dignity, they will fight with each other, and sometimes they will just fight. For T. J. and his crew of misfits, the quest may be far more valuable than the reward.

Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie**by David Lubar**

Scott Hudson chronicles the ups and downs of his eventful freshman year in high school, as he joins the newspaper, works as a stage manager for the spring play, learns a lot from his English teacher, tries to help a student who attempts suicide, is beaten up because of a girl, and goes to the spring dance. By the end, Scott has outgrown his freshman insecurities, realizing that he has carved a place for himself in the high-school world.

The Secret Life of Bees**by Sue Monk Kidd**

Running away from a loveless father, Lily and her housekeeper are taken in by a fascinating trio of sisters, who hold the key to Lily's memories of her mother.

Freshman English

Shadow Divers

by Robert Kurson

Deep-wreck divers are used to operating with almost no headroom and in zero visibility, navigating by touch alone; it is a compliment to be told "When you die, no one will ever find your body." Kurson's exciting account centers on two divers, John Chatterton and Robert Kohler, who in 1991 found an unidentified U-boat embedded in the ocean floor off the coast of New Jersey. The task of identifying it leads them to Germany, Washington, D.C., and the darkest corners of the submarine itself.

The Natural

by Bernard Malamud

The story of Roy Hobbs - an athlete born with rare and wondrous gift - who is robbed of his prime playing years by a youthful indiscretion that nearly costs him his life. But at an age when most players are considering retirement, Roy re-enters the game, lifting the lowly New York Knights from last place into pennant contention and becoming an instant hero in the process.

Saving the World

by Julia Alvarez

In Alvarez's appealingly earnest fifth novel (after *A Cafecito Story*), two women living two centuries apart each face "a crisis of the soul" when their fates are tied to idealistic men whose commitments to medical humanitarian missions end in disillusionment. Alma Heubner's husband, Richard, goes to the Dominican Republic to help eradicate AIDS, while Alma, a bestselling Latina writer, stays at home in Vermont to work on a story about a real, ill-fated 19th-century expedition chaperoned by Doña Isabel Sendales y Gómez, the spinster director of a Spanish orphanage who agrees to vaccinate 20 of her charges with cowpox and bring them from Spain to Central America to prevent future smallpox epidemics.

Matched

by Ally Condie

Condie introduces readers to the "perfect" Society. Cassia Reyes is a model student, daughter, and citizen. How could she not be when the Society has everything planned and functioning perfectly? All of her needs are met: food, shelter, education, career training, and even her future husband are selected by officials who know what is best for each individual by studying statistical data and probable odds. She even knows when she will die, on her 80th birthday, just as the Society dictates. At her Match Banquet she is paired with Xander, her best friend and certainly her soul mate. But when a computer error shows her the face of Ky, an Aberration, instead of Xander, cracks begin to appear in the Society's facade of perfection.

Friday Night Lights**by H.G. Bissinger**

Secular religions are fascinating in the devotion and zealousness they breed, and in Texas, high school football has its own rabid hold over the faithful. Odessa, a city in decline in the desert of West Texas, where the Permian High School Panthers have managed to compile the winningest record in state annals. Indeed, as this breathtaking examination of the town, the team, its coaches, and its young players chronicles, the team, for better and for worse, *is* the town; the communal health and self-image of the latter is directly linked to the on-field success of the former.

My Sister's Keeper**by Jodi Picoult**

Anna was genetically engineered to be a perfect match for her cancer-ridden older sister. Since birth, the 13-year-old has donated platelets, blood, her umbilical cord, and bone marrow as part of her family's struggle to lengthen Kate's life. Anna is now being considered as a kidney donor in a last-ditch attempt to save her 16-year-old sister. As this compelling story opens, Anna has hired a lawyer to represent her in a medical emancipation suit to allow her to have control over her own body.

Eragon**by Christopher Paolini**

Fifteen-year-old Eragon believes that he is merely a poor farm boy—until his destiny as a Dragon Rider is revealed. Gifted with only an ancient sword, a loyal dragon, and sage advice from an old storyteller, Eragon is soon swept into a dangerous tapestry of magic, glory, and power. Now his choices could save—or destroy—the Empire.

Into the Wild**by Jon Krakauer**

In April 1992, a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. He had given \$25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet, and invented a new life for himself. Four months later, his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter.

Monster**by Walter Dean Myers**

We find Steve Harmon 16 years old and on trial for murder. His parents' hearts break as they watch the drama unfold from their seats in the back of the courtroom. Did Steve serve as the lookout when Bobo Evans and James King robbed the drugstore and then killed the store's owner in the commotion? Or was he just in the wrong place at the wrong time?

The Perfect Storm**by Sebastian Junger**

Meteorologists called the storm that hit North America's eastern seaboard in October 1991 a "perfect storm" because of the rare combination of factors that created it. For everyone else, it was perfect hell. Junger attempts to re-create the last moments of the *Andrea Gail* as well as the perilous high-seas rescues of other victims of the storm.

Honors Freshmen English

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan

by Lisa See

A story set in 19th century China and centered on the lifelong friendship between two girls who develop their own secret code as a way to contend with the rigid cultural norms imposed on women.

Life as We Knew It

by Susan Beth Pfeffer

Miranda's disbelief turns to fear in a split second when a meteor knocks the moon closer to the earth. How should her family prepare for the future when worldwide tsunamis wipe out the coasts, earthquakes rock the continents, and volcanic ash blocks out the sun? As summer turns to Arctic winter, Miranda, her two brothers, and their mother retreat to the unexpected safe haven of their sunroom, where they subsist on stockpiled food and limited water in the warmth of a wood-burning stove.

Wintergirls

by Laurie Halse Anderson

Lia and Cassie were best friends, wintergirls frozen in matchstick bodies. But now Cassie is dead. Lia's mother is busy saving other people's lives. Her father is away on business. Her stepmother is clueless. And the voice inside Lia's head keeps telling her to remain in control, stay strong, lose more, and weigh less. If she keeps on going this way – thin, thinner, thinnest – maybe she'll disappear altogether.

Murder on the Orient Express

by Agatha Christie

Hercule Poirot is a dapper detective for whom murder solving is a precise, intellectual exercise. Poirot agrees to interview all aboard the famous Orient Express' Calais Coach, hoping to find the killer of an American millionaire before the local police arrive.

Hiroshima

by 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. Almost four decades after the original publication of this book, Hersey went back to Hiroshima in search of the people whose stories he had told. His account of what he discovered about them is now the moving final chapter.

Lord of the Flies

by William Golding

Set during World War II, the story describes the plight of a group of British schoolboys stranded on a Pacific island after their plane was shot down en route to England. Two of the boys, Ralph and Piggy, discover a conch in the lagoon near the beach and use it to call all the other survivors, setting up a mock democratic government with Ralph as leader. Piggy continues to advise and give logic and reason to Ralph's rule.

Alas, Babylon

by Pat Frank

The classic apocalyptic novel that stunned the nation with its vivid portrayal of a small town's survival after nuclear holocaust devastates the country

Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother

by Amy Chua

An awe-inspiring, often hilarious, and unerringly honest story of one mother's exercise in extreme parenting, revealing the rewards-and the costs-of raising her children the Chinese way.

The Two Hearts of Kwasi Boachi

by Arthur Japin

"The first ten years of my life I was not black." Thus begins this startlingly eloquent and beautiful tale based on the true story of Kwasi Boachi, a 19th-century African prince who was sent with his cousin, Kwame, to be raised in Holland as a guest of the royal family. Narrated by Kwasi himself, the story movingly portrays the perplexing dichotomy of the cousins' situation: black men of royal ancestry, they are subject to insidious bigotry even as they enjoy status among Europe's highest echelons. As their lives wind down different paths—Kwame back to Africa where he enlists in the Dutch army, Kwasi to an Indonesian coffee plantation where success remains mysteriously elusive—they become aware of a terrible truth that lies at the heart of their experiences.