Dear AP Literature and Composition class of 2020-21,

There’s so much going on in our world today that we need to create balance for ourselves: A balance between active engagement with conversations on national, social, and local levels and a conscious disengagement from all of that to internally regroup and maintain a sense of ourselves and our values.

Summertime’s a great time to seek that balance! We won’t have summer work for AP English this year, and that was decided well before... well, before. However, in light of the fact that you may have fewer activities and trips this summer, I encourage you to pursue reading, and to that end I am providing a list of recommended reading. Most of these are contemporary novels, but I’ve thrown in a few classics for people who can’t get enough of those. I’ve included some nonfiction too, even though we would not read it for AP lit class; there’s just so much good, thought-provoking stuff out there! Read whatever you want, and I hope that it will challenge your mind and stimulate your thinking, keeping you sharp for class in the fall!

(If you want individual suggestions from me, contact me at kwilde@wcboe.org. Tell me a couple books you love and at least one that doesn’t thrill you, and I’ll try to play matchmaker 😊)

I look forward to meeting you and talking with you about your reading in whatever format school takes next fall... Enjoy your summer!

Mrs. Wilde

Classics:

Pride & Prejudice (1813) Jane Austen
Frankenstein (1818) Mary Shelley
Anna Karenina (1877) Leo Tolstoy
20th Century Works:
Their Eyes Were Watching God (1937) Zora Neale Hurston
For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940) Ernest Hemingway
The Bluest Eye (1970) Toni Morrison
The Color Purple (1982) Alice Walker
A Handmaid’s Tale (1985) Margaret Atwood
In the Time of the Butterflies (1995) Julia Alvarez

21st Century Works:
Purple Hibiscus (2003) Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close (2006) Jonathan Foer
The Round House (2012) Louise Erdrich
The Goldfinch (2013) Donna Tartt
Station Eleven (2014) Emily St. John Mandel
Swing Time (2016) Zadie Smith
The Nix (2016) Nathan Hill
Pachinko (2017) Min Jin Lee
The Leavers (2017) Lisa Ko
Behold the Dreamers (2017) Imbolo Mbue
Exit West (2017) Mohsin Hamid
Long Way Down (2017) Jason Reynolds
There, There (2018) Tommy Orange
Southernmost (2018) Silas House
The Poet X (2018) Elizabeth Acevedo
Nickel Boys (2019) Colson Whitehead
When I Walk through That Door, I Am (2019) Jimmy Santiago Baca
Non-Fiction Works:

Just Mercy (2014) Bryan Stevenson – Just made into a movie currently available free for streaming (through June)

The Opposite of Loneliness (2014) Marina Keegan


Between the World and Me (2015) Ta-Nehisi Coates

Born a Crime (2016) Trevor Noah – Highly recommend the audio version read by Noah!

They Can’t Kill Us Til They Kill Us (2017) Hanif Abdurraqib (Just look at the cover of this and you have to read it!)


Becoming (2018) Michelle Obama – Another with audio read by the author!

Educated (2018) Tara Westover