**Here is a list of books that you can use to get ideas for your choices. Some of these books might be close to 700 pages and can count as 1 book for the semester. You may want to go onto Amazon or Goodreads and read other reviews to get a clearer picture of the books. Some are current titles; some are tried and true classics. If you want explore a classic literary novel, please check with me first for my approval. Enjoy!!!!!**

**\*\*NO John Green, Maze Runner, Divergent, Hunger Games, If I Stay, Percy Jackson, Harry Potter, etc.**

**The Kitchen House – Kathleen Grissom**

Grissom's unsentimental debut twists the conventions of the antebellum novel just enough to give readers an involving new perspective on what would otherwise be fairly stock material. Lavinia, an orphaned seven-year-old white indentured servant, arrives in 1791 to work in the kitchen house at Tall Oaks, a Tidewater, Va., tobacco plantation owned by Capt. James Pyke. Belle, the captain's illegitimate half-white daughter who runs the kitchen house, shares narration duties, and the two distinctly different voices chronicle a troublesome 20 years: Lavinia becomes close to the slaves working the kitchen house, but she can't fully fit in because of her race. At 17, she marries Marshall, the captain's brutish son turned inept plantation master, and as Lavinia ingratiates herself into the family and the big house, racial tensions boil over into lynching, rape, arson, and murder. The plantation's social order's emphasis on violence, love, power, and corruption provides a trove of tension and grit, while the many nefarious doings will keep readers hooked to the twisted, yet hopeful, conclusion.

**Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime – Mark Haddon Lexile: 1180L**

Christopher Boone, the autistic 15-year-old narrator of this revelatory novel, relaxes by groaning and doing math problems in his head, eats red-but not yellow or brown-foods and screams when he is touched. Strange as he may seem, other people are far more of a conundrum to him, for he lacks the intuitive "theory of mind" by which most of us sense what's going on in other people's heads. When his neighbor's poodle is killed and Christopher is falsely accused of the crime, he decides that he will take a page from Sherlock Holmes (one of his favorite characters) and track down the killer. As the mystery leads him to the secrets of his parents' broken marriage and then into an odyssey to find his place in the world, he must fall back on deductive logic to navigate the emotional complexities of a social world that remains a closed book to him. In the hands of first-time novelist Haddon, Christopher is a fascinating case study and, above all, a sympathetic boy: not closed off, as the stereotype would have it, but too open-overwhelmed by sensations, bereft of the filters through which normal people screen their surroundings. Christopher can only make sense of the chaos of stimuli by imposing arbitrary patterns ("4 yellow cars in a row made it a Black Day, which is a day when I don't speak to anyone and sit on my own reading books and don't eat my lunch and Take No Risks"). His literal-minded observations make for a kind of poetic sensibility and a poignant evocation of character. Though Christopher insists, "This will not be a funny book. I cannot tell jokes because I do not understand them," the novel brims with touching, ironic humor. The result is an eye-opening work in a unique and compelling literary voice.

**Confederacy of Dunces – John Kennedy Toole Lexile: 800L**

Oooo-eeee! Toole's outrageous rambling farce comes to life with the wonderful voices of Arte Johnson. Surely one of the greatest matches ever of the written to the spoken word. Toole's novel, written in the early 1960s and published posthumously in the early 1980s, is one of the great comic works of the century and still fresh 35 years later. Toole's finest achievement is protagonist Ignatius J. Reilly, a great intellectual and deadbeat glutton who roams the squalor and charm of New Orleans causing enormous chaos, selling a few hot dogs from his weenie wagon, and suffering a pyloric valve shutdown at the general looniness of the characters he meets in places like the Night of Joy nightclub. Johnson has created a unique voice for each of the many fantastic, overblown crazies woven into this wild story.

**What She Left Behind – Ellen Marie Wiseman**

In this stunning new novel, the acclaimed author of THE PLUM TREE merges the past and present into a haunting story about the nature of love and loyalty—and the lengths we will go to protect those who need us most.

Ten years ago, Izzy Stone’s mother fatally shot her father while he slept. Devastated by her mother’s apparent insanity, Izzy, now seventeen, refuses to visit her in prison. But her new foster parents, employees at a local museum, have enlisted Izzy’s help in cataloging items at a long-shuttered state asylum. There, amid piles of abandoned belongings, Izzy discovers a stack of unopened letters, a decades old journal, and a window into her own past. Clara Cartwright, eighteen years old in 1929, is caught between her overbearing parents and her love for an Italian immigrant. Furious when she rejects an arranged marriage, Clara’s father sends her to a genteel home for nervous invalids. But when his fortune is lost in the stock market crash, he can no longer afford her care—and Clara is committed to the public asylum. Even as Izzy deals with the challenges of yet another new beginning, Clara’s story keeps drawing her into the past. If Clara was never really mentally ill, could something else explain her own mother’s violent act? Piecing together Clara’s fate compels Izzy to re-examine her own choices—with shocking and unexpected results. Illuminating and provocative, WHAT SHE LEFT BEHIND is a masterful novel about the yearning to belong—and the mysteries that can belie even the most ordinary life.

**The Weird Sisters – Eleanor Brown**

The Andreas family is one of readers. Their father, a renowned Shakespeare professor who speaks almost entirely in verse, has named his three daughters after famous Shakespearean women. When the sisters return to their childhood home, ostensibly to care for their ailing mother, but really to lick their wounds and bury their secrets, they are horrified to find the others there. See, we love each other. We just don't happen to like each other very much. But the sisters soon discover that everything they've been running from -- one another, their small hometown, and themselves -- might offer more than they ever expected.

**All the Light We Cannot See – Anthony Doerr Lexile: 880L**

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE. From the highly acclaimed, multiple award-winning Anthony Doerr, the beautiful, stunningly ambitious instant New York Times bestseller about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II. Marie-Laure lives with her father in Paris near the Museum of Natural History, where he works as the master of its thousands of locks. When she is six, Marie-Laure goes blind and her father builds a perfect miniature of their neighborhood so she can memorize it by touch and navigate her way home. When she is twelve, the Nazis occupy Paris and father and daughter flee to the walled citadel of Saint-Malo, where Marie-Laure’s reclusive great-uncle lives in a tall house by the sea. With them they carry what might be the museum’s most valuable and dangerous jewel. In a mining town in Germany, the orphan Werner grows up with his younger sister, enchanted by a crude radio they find. Werner becomes an expert at building and fixing these crucial new instruments, a talent that wins him a place at a brutal academy for Hitler Youth, then a special assignment to track the resistance. More and more aware of the human cost of his intelligence, Werner travels through the heart of the war and, finally, into Saint-Malo, where his story and Marie-Laure’s converge. Doerr’s “stunning sense of physical detail and gorgeous metaphors” (San Francisco Chronicle) are dazzling. Deftly interweaving the lives of Marie-Laure and Werner, he illuminates the ways, against all odds, people try to be good to one another. Ten years in the writing, a National Book Award finalist, All the Light We Cannot See is a magnificent, deeply moving novel from a writer “whose sentences never fail to thrill” (Los Angeles Times).

**Defending Jacob – William Landay**

At the heart of Landay's exceptional novel is a parent's worst nightmare. Assistant district attorney Andy Barber, his wife, Laurie, and their teenage son, Jacob, are living an idyllic existence in a middle class Massachusetts suburb until one of Jacob's classmates is stabbed to death in the picturesque park where the locals jog, walk their dogs and picnic. It soon becomes clear that Jacob is the prime suspect and the Barbers have to confront the possibility that the child they have doted from birth may be a sociopathic killer. Andy takes a forced leave of absence from his job and helps defend the son he loves from a charge he cannot believe is true. Is he engaging in self-deception? How far will he go to protect his family? Laurie wonders if something she did as a parent has created a monster and her guilt destroys her. And then there is Jacob. Is he a typical angst filled teenager or a psychopathic monster? Landay skillfully keeps the reader guessing about Jacob's culpability and true nature up to the shocking final chapters. What makes Defending Jacob special is the way Landay gives the reader the twists, turns and surprises found in the best legal thrillers while making its centerpiece the tragedy faced by a normal family who are thrust into a nightmare.

**The Goldfinch – Donna Tartt**

Donna Tartt's latest novel clocks in at an unwieldy 784 pages. The story begins with an explosion at the Metropolitan Museum that kills narrator Theo Decker's beloved mother and results in his unlikely possession of a Dutch masterwork called The Goldfinch. Shootouts, gangsters, pillowcases, storage lockers, and the black market for art all play parts in the ensuing life of the painting in Theo's care. With the same flair for suspense that made The Secret History (1992) such a masterpiece, The Goldfinch features the pulp of a typical bildungsroman—Theo's dissolution into teenage delinquency and climb back out, his passionate friendship with the very funny Boris, his obsession with Pippa (a girl he first encounters minutes before the explosion)—but the painting is the novel's secret heart. Theo's fate hinges on the painting, and both take on depth as it steers Theo's life. Some sentences are clunky (suddenly and meanwhile abound), metaphors are repetitive (Theo's mother is compared to birds three times in 10 pages), and plot points are overly coincidental (as if inspired by TV), but there's a bewitching urgency to the narration that's impossible to resist. Theo is magnetic, perhaps because of his well-meaning criminality. The Goldfinch is a pleasure to read; with more economy to the brushstrokes, it might have been great.

**One Summer, America 1927 – Bill Bryson**

The summer of 1927 began with Charles Lindbergh crossing the Atlantic. Meanwhile, Babe Ruth was closing in on the home run record. In Newark, New Jersey, Alvin “Shipwreck” Kelly sat atop a flagpole for twelve days, and in Chicago, the gangster Al Capone was tightening his grip on bootlegging. The first true “talking picture,” Al Jolson’s The Jazz Singer, was filmed, forever changing the motion picture industry. All this and much, much more transpired in the year Americans attempted and accomplished outsized things—and when the twentieth century truly became the American century. One Summer transforms it all into narrative nonfiction of the highest order.

**The Atlantis Gene – A. G. Riddle**

The Immari are good at keeping secrets. For 2,000 years, they've hidden the truth about human evolution. They've also searched for an ancient enemy--a threat that could wipe out the human race. Now the search is over.

Off the coast of Antarctica, a research vessel discovers a mysterious structure buried deep in an iceberg. It has been there for thousands of years, and something is guarding it. As the Immari rush to execute their plan, a brilliant geneticist makes a discovery that could change everything. Dr. Kate Warner moved to Jakarta, Indonesia to escape her past. She hasn't recovered from what happened to her, but she has made an incredible breakthrough: a cure for autism. Or so she thinks. What she has found is far more dangerous--for her and the entire human race. Her work could be the key to the next stage of human evolution. In the hands of the Immari, it would mean the end of humanity as we know it. Agent David Vale has spent ten years trying to stop the Immari. Now he's out of time. His informant is dead. His organization has been infiltrated. His enemy is hunting him. But when David receives a coded message related to the Immari attack, he risks everything to save the one person that can help him solve it: Dr. Kate Warner. Together, Kate and David must race to unravel a global conspiracy and learn the truth about the Atlantis Gene... and human origins. Their journey takes them to the far corners of the globe and into the secrets of their pasts. The Immari are close on their heels and will stop at nothing to obtain Kate's research and force the next stage of human evolution--even if it means killing 99.9% of the world's population. David and Kate can stop them... if they can trust each other. And stay alive.

**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.

**Life After Life – Kate Atkinson Lexile: 970L**

On a cold and snowy night in 1910, Ursula Todd is born, the third child of a wealthy English banker and his wife. She dies before she can draw her first breath. On that same cold and snowy night, Ursula Todd is born, lets out a lusty wail, and embarks upon a life that will be, to say the least, unusual. For as she grows, she also dies, repeatedly, in any number of ways. Ursula's world is in turmoil, facing the unspeakable evil of the two greatest wars in history. What power and force can one woman exert over the fate of civilization -- if only she has the chance?

**American Gods – Neil Gaiman Lexile: 840L**

Titans clash, but with more fuss than fury in this fantasy demi-epic from the author of Neverwhere. The intriguing premise of Gaiman's tale is that the gods of European yore, who came to North America with their immigrant believers, are squaring off for a rumble with new indigenous deities: "gods of credit card and freeway, of Internet and telephone, of radio and hospital and television, gods of plastic and of beeper and of neon." They all walk around in mufti, disguised as ordinary people, which causes no end of trouble for 32-year-old protagonist Shadow Moon, who can't turn around without bumping into a minor divinity. Released from prison the day after his beloved wife dies in a car accident, Shadow takes a job as emissary for Mr. Wednesday, avatar of the Norse god Grimnir, unaware that his boss's recruiting trip across the American heartland will subject him to repeat visits from the reanimated corpse of his dead wife and brutal roughing up by the goons of Wednesday's adversary, Mr. World. At last Shadow must reevaluate his own deeply held beliefs in order to determine his crucial role in the final showdown. Gaiman tries to keep the magical and the mundane evenly balanced, but he is clearly more interested in the activities of his human protagonists: Shadow's poignant personal moments and the tale's affectionate slices of smalltown life are much better developed than the aimless plot, which bounces Shadow from one episodic encounter to another in a design only the gods seem to know. Mere mortal readers will enjoy the tale's wit, but puzzle over its strained mythopoeia.

**A Short History of Nearly Everything – Bill Bryson Lexile: 1190L**

Now, in his biggest book, he confronts his greatest challenge: to understand—and, if possible, answer—the oldest, biggest questions we have posed about the universe and ourselves. Taking as territory everything from the Big Bang to the rise of civilization, Bryson seeks to understand how we got from there being nothing at all to there being us. To that end, he has attached himself to a host of the world’s most advanced (and often obsessed) archaeologists, anthropologists, and mathematicians, travelling to their offices, laboratories, and field camps. He has read (or tried to read) their books, pestered them with questions, apprenticed himself to their powerful minds. A Short History of Nearly Everything is the record of this quest, and it is a sometimes profound, sometimes funny, and always supremely clear and entertaining adventure in the realms of human knowledge, as only Bill Bryson can render it. Science has never been more involving or entertaining.

**Rabbit Run – John Updike Lexile: 960L**

Rabbit, Run is the book that established John Updike as one of the major American novelists of his—or any other—generation. Its hero is Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom, a onetime high-school basketball star who on an impulse deserts his wife and son. He is twenty-six years old, a man-child caught in a struggle between instinct and thought, self and society, sexual gratification and family duty—even, in a sense, human hard-heartedness and divine Grace. Though his flight from home traces a zigzag of evasion, he holds to the faith that he is on the right path, an invisible line toward his own salvation as straight as a ruler’s edge.

**Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance – Robert M. Pirzig Lexile: 1040L**

One of the most important and influential books written in the past half-century, Robert M. Pirsig's Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance is a powerful, moving, and penetrating examination of how we live . . . and a breathtaking meditation on how to live better. Here is the book that transformed a generation: an unforgettable narration of a summer motorcycle trip across America's Northwest, undertaken by a father and his young son. A story of love and fear -- of growth, discovery, and acceptance -- that becomes a profound personal and philosophical odyssey into life's fundamental questions, this uniquely exhilarating modern classic is both touching and transcendent, resonant with the myriad confusions of existence . . . and the small, essential triumphs that propel us forward.

**Dinner at The Homesick Restaurant – Anne Tyler Lexile: 720L**

Pearl Tull is nearing the end of her life but not of her memory. It was a Sunday night in 1944 when her husband left the little row house on Baltimore’s Calvert Street, abandoning Pearl to raise their three children alone: Jenny, high-spirited and determined, nurturing to strangers but distant to those she loves; the older son, Cody, a wild and incorrigible youth possessed by the lure of power and money; and sweet, clumsy Ezra, Pearl’s favorite, who never stops yearning for the perfect family that could never be his own. Now Pearl and her three grown children have gathered together again–with anger, hope, and a beautiful, harsh, and dazzling story to tell.

**Watership Down – Richard Adams Lexile: 880L**

A phenomenal worldwide bestseller for more than forty years, Richard Adams's Watership Down is a timeless classic and one of the most beloved novels of all time. Set in England's Downs, a once idyllic rural landscape, this stirring tale of adventure, courage, and survival follows a band of very special creatures on their flight from the intrusion of man and the certain destruction of their home. Led by a stouthearted pair of brothers, they journey forth from their native Sandleford Warren through the harrowing trials posed by predators and adversaries, to a mysterious promised land and a more perfect society.

**Pillars of the Earth – Ken Follett**

From #1 New York Times bestselling author Ken Follett comes this spellbinding epic set in twelfth-century England. The Pillars of the Earth tells the story of the lives entwined in the building of the greatest Gothic cathedral the world has ever known-and a struggle between good and evil that will turn church against state, and brother against brother.

**The Bride’s Farewell - Meg Rosoff**

In Meg Rosoff’s fourth novel, a young woman in 1850s rural England runs away from home on horseback the day she’s to marry her childhood sweetheart. Pell is from a poor preacher’s family and she’s watched her mother suffer for years under the burden of caring for an ever-increasing number of children. Pell yearns to escape the inevitable repetition of such a life.

She understands horses better than people and sets off for Salisbury Fair, where horse trading takes place, in the hope of finding work and buying herself some time. But as she rides farther away from home, Pell’s feelings for her parents, her siblings, and her fiancé surprise her with their strength and alter the course of her travels. And her journey leads her to find love where she least expects it.

**A Brief History of Montmaray - Michelle Cooper Lexile: 1000L**

Sophie Fitzosborne lives in a crumbling castle in the tiny island kingdom of Montmaray with her eccentric and impoverished royal family. When she receives a journal for her sixteenth birthday, Sophie decides to chronicle day-to-day life on the island. But this is 1936, and the news that trickles in from the mainland reveals a world on the brink of war. The politics of Europe seem far away from their remote island—until two German officers land a boat on Montmaray. And then suddenly politics become very personal indeed. *A Brief History of Montmaray* is a heart-stopping tale of loyalty, love, and loss, and of fighting to hold on to home when the world is exploding all around you.

**Charles and Emma: The Darwin’s’ Leap of Faith - Deborah Heiligman Lexile: 1020L**

Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species*, his revolutionary tract on evolution and the fundamental ideas involved, in 1859. Nearly 150 years later, the theory of evolution continues to create tension between the scientific and religious communities. Challenges about teaching the theory of evolution in schools occur annually all over the country. This same debate raged within Darwin himself, and played an important part in his marriage: his wife, Emma, was quite religious, and her faith gave Charles a lot to think about as he worked on a theory that continues to spark intense debates.

**Impossible – Nancy Werlin Lexile: HL670L**

Inspired by the classic folk ballad “Scarborough Fair,” this is a wonderfully riveting novel of suspense, romance, and fantasy. Lucy is seventeen when she discovers that she is the latest recipient of a generations-old family curse that requires her to complete three seemingly impossible tasks or risk falling into madness and passing the curse on to the next generation. Unlike her ancestors, though, Lucy has family, friends, and other modern resources to help her out. But will it be enough to conquer this age-old evil?

**Jumped – Rita Williams-Garcia Lexile: HL600L**

Leticia, a gossipy high-school student, knows that “Girl fights are ugly. Girl fights are personal.” She says this after overhearing that Dominique, the tough-as-nails basketball player, is planning to beat up pink-clad fashion-plate Trina at 2:45. The infraction was minor—the oblivious Trina cut off Dominique in the hallway—but for Dominique it was the last of a series of insults, the worst of which was being benched by Coach for failing to improve her grades. Bouncing between the three first-person accounts within the span of a single school day, Williams-Garcia makes the drama feel not only immediate but suffocatingly tense, as each tick of the clock speeds the three girls toward collision. Along the way, the characters’ disregard of such high-school stalwarts as A Separate Peace and Of Mice and Men subtly prepares the reader for the messy and gut-wrenching conclusion.

**Marcelo in the Real World by Francisco X Lexile: HL700L**

Marcelo Sandoval hears music no one else can hear--part of the autism-like impairment no doctor has been able to identify--and he's always attended a special school where his differences have been protected. But the summer after his junior year, his father demands that Marcelo work in his law firm's mailroom in order to experience "the real world." There Marcelo meets Jasmine, his beautiful and surprising coworker, and Wendell, the son of another partner in the firm. He learns about competition and jealousy, anger and desire. But it's a picture he finds in a file -- a picture of a girl with half a face -- that truly connects him with the real world: its suffering, its injustice, and what he can do to fight.

**The Monstrumologist by Rick Yancey Lexile: 900L**

These are the secrets I have kept. This is the trust I never betrayed. But he is dead now and has been for more than forty years, the one who gave me his trust, the one for whom I kept these secrets. The one who saved me . . . and the one who cursed me. So begins the journal of Will Henry, orphaned assistant to Dr. Pellinore War throp, a man with a most unusual specialty: monstrumology, the study of monsters. In his time with the doctor, Will has met many a mysterious late-night visitor, and seen things he never imagined were real. But when a grave robber comes calling in the middle of the night with a grueso me find, he brings with him their most deadly case yet.Critically acclaimed author Rick Yancey has written a gothic tour de force that explores the darkest heart of man and monster and asks the question: When does a man become the very thing he hunts?

**My Abandonment by Peter Rock**

A thirteen-year-old girl and her father live in Forest Park, the enormous nature preserve in Portland, Oregon. There they inhabit an elaborate cave shelter, bathe in a nearby creek, store perishables at the water’s edge, use a makeshift septic system, tend a garden, even keep a library of sorts. Once a week, they go to the city to buy groceries and otherwise merge with the civilized world. But one small mistake allows a backcountry jogger to discover them, which derails their entire existence, ultimately provoking a deeper flight. Inspired by a true story and told through the startlingly sincere voice of a young narrator, Caroline, Peter Rock's My Abandonmentis a riveting journey into life at the margins, and a mesmerizing tale of survival and hope

**Alice I Have Been by Melanie Benjamin**

Few works of literature are as universally beloved as*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. Now, in this spellbinding historical novel, we meet the young girl whose bright spirit sent her on an unforgettable trip down the rabbit hole–and the grown woman whose story is no less enthralling.  love story and a literary mystery, Alice I Have Been brilliantly blends fact and fiction to capture the passionate spirit of a woman who was truly worthy of her fictional alter ego, in a world as captivating as the Wonderland only she could inspire.

**The Historian by Elizabeth Kostova**

In this riveting debut of breathtaking scope, a young girl discovers her father's darkest secret and embarks on a harrowing journey across Europe to complete the quest he never could -- to find history's most legendary fiend -- Dracula.

**Look Me In the Eye: My life with Asperger’s by John Elder Robinson:**

This memoir, by the older brother of writer Augusten Burroughs, is a witty, moving, and insightful glimpse into the life of a person living with an autistic spectrum disorder. Undiagnosed as a child, and failing in junior high, Robison was encouraged by some audiovisual teachers to fix their broken equipment, and he discovered a more comfortable world of machines and circuits, of muted colors, soft light, and mechanical perfection. This led to jobs (and many hilarious events) in worlds where strange behavior is seen as normal: developing intricate rocket-shooting guitars for the rock band Kiss and computerized toys for the Milton Bradley Company. Finally, at age 40, while Robinson was running a successful business repairing high-end cars, a therapist correctly diagnosed him as having Asperger’s. In the end, Robison succeeds in his goal of helping those who are struggling to grow up or live with Asperger’s to see how it is not a disease but a way of being that needs no cure except understanding and encouragement from others.

**Becoming Odyssa- Jennifer Parr Davis**

After graduating from college, Jennifer isn't sure what she wants to do with her life. She is drawn to the Appalachian Trail, a 2175-mile footpath that stretches from Georgia to Maine. Though her friends and family think she's crazy, she sets out alone to hike the trail, hoping it will give her time to think about what she wants to do next. The next four months are the most physically and emotionally challenging of her life. She quickly discovers that thru-hiking is harder than she had imagined: coping with blisters and aching shoulders from the 30-pound pack she carries; sleeping on the hard wooden floors of trail shelters; hiking through endless torrents of rain and even a blizzard. With every step she takes, Jennifer transitions from an over-confident college graduate to a student of the trail, braving situations she never imagined before her thru-hike. The trail is full of unexpected kindness, generosity, and humor. And when tragedy strikes, she learns that she can depend on other people to help her in times of need.

**Living on the Black- John Feinstein**

Pitchers are at the heart of baseball. Each has the potential to make his team a winner or, very quickly, a loser. The pressure is huge. In the end, only those with both the arm and the heart and the ability to manage extraordinary stress will emerge as champions. John Feinstein looks into this complex side of the game through the events of one nerve-racking season and through the eyes of two great pitchers trying to perform at the highest possible level in the twilight of their careers in the biggest media fishbowl in America. Tom Glavine and Mike Mussina have seen it all in the Major Leagues, remarkable highs and heartbreaking lows. Both entered the 2007 season in search of individual milestones and one more shot at the World Series--Glavine with the Mets, Mussina a few miles and one borough away with the Yankees. Despite their proximity, they experienced very different seasons--one pitching for a team dealing with the pressure of trying to qualify for the World Series for the first time in seven years; the other with a legendary team, expected to be there every year. Feinstein captures the rollercoaster that was the 2007 season for both teams through the experiences of two pitchers at the center of it all. John Feinstein provides a true insider's look into the most intensely watched and scrutinized position in sports-Major League starting pitcher.

**Broken Laces- Rodney Walther**

Jack "The Cannon" Kennedy thinks he's living the American Dream. A fancy house in the Houston suburbs. A promising career. And a loving wife who tolerates his long hours and selfish ways. In one horrific instant, he loses his wife. Then his job. Then his hope. And that just leaves Kellen, the young son Jack hardly knows or understands. Jack realizes he must reconnect with Kellen or they'll never get past their shared grief. But Jack's biggest obstacle is staring back from the mirror. Desperate to reach Kellen, he turns to baseball, the game he once loved. With Jack, a win-at-all-costs former star pitcher, coaching his son's Little League team, what could possibly go wrong?

**War Room- Michael Holley**

Football games aren’t won on Sundays in the fall. They’re won on draft day in the spring—in the war room. In this landmark book, *New York Times* bestselling author Michael Holley takes readers behind the scenes of three contending National Football League teams and into the brilliant minds of Bill Belichick and his two former protégés Thomas Dimitroff and Scott Pioli. Holley masterfully shows how a single idea conceived by Belichick in 1991—how to build the perfect team—triggered a journey filled with miraculous finishes, heartbreaking losses, broken relationships, and Super Bowl championships. Readers are given unprecedented access—from the draft room to the locker room to the sidelines—and insights into why Belichick is considered to be the NFL’s best coach and premier strategist.

**Scoreboard, Baby: A Story of College Football, Crime & Complicity- Ken Armstrong Lexile: 860L**

Now, in Scoreboard, Baby, Armstrong and Perry go behind the scenes of the Huskies’ Cinderella story to reveal a timeless morality tale about the price of obsession, the creep of fanaticism, and the ways in which a community can lose even when its team wins. The authors unearth the true story from firsthand interviews and thousands of pages of documents: the forensic report on a bloody fingerprint; the notes of a detective investigating allegations of rape; confidential memoranda of prosecutors; and the criminal records of the dozen-plus players arrested that year with scant mention in the newspapers and minimal consequences in the courts. The statement of a judge, sentencing one player to thirty days in jail, says it all: “to be served after football season.

**Go Set A Watchman – Harper Lee Lexile: 870L**

Maycomb, Alabama. Twenty-six-year-old Jean Louise Finch—"Scout"—returns home from New York City to visit her aging father, Atticus. Set against the backdrop of the civil rights tensions and political turmoil that were transforming the South, Jean Louise's homecoming turns bittersweet when she learns disturbing truths about her close-knit family, the town, and the people dearest to her. Memories from her childhood flood back, and her values and assumptions are thrown into doubt. Featuring many of the iconic characters from To Kill a Mockingbird, Go Set a Watchman perfectly captures a young woman, and a world, in painful yet necessary transition out of the illusions of the past—a journey that can only be guided by one's own conscience. Written in the mid-1950s, Go Set a Watchman imparts a fuller, richer understanding and appreciation of Harper Lee. Here is an unforgettable novel of wisdom, humanity, passion, humor, and effortless precision—a profoundly affecting work of art that is both wonderfully evocative of another era and relevant to our own times. It not only confirms the enduring brilliance of To Kill a Mockingbird, but also serves as its essential companion, adding depth, context, and new meaning to an American classic.

**The Story of Edgar Sawtelle - David Wroblewski Lexile: 900L**

Born mute, speaking only in sign, Edgar Sawtelle leads an idyllic life with his parents on their farm in remote northern Wisconsin. For generations, the Sawtelles have raised and trained a fictional breed of dog whose remarkable gift for companionship is epitomized by Almondine, Edgar's lifelong friend and ally. Edgar seems poised to carry on his family's traditions, but when catastrophe strikes, he finds his once-peaceful home engulfed in turmoil. Forced to flee into the vast wilderness lying beyond the Sawtelle farm, Edgar comes of age in the wild, fighting for his survival and that of the three yearling dogs who accompany him, until the day he is forced to choose between leaving forever or returning home to confront the mysteries he has left unsolved. Filled with breathtaking scenes—the elemental north woods, the sweep of seasons, an iconic American barn, a fateful vision rendered in the falling rain—The Story of Edgar Sawtelle is a meditation on the limits of language and what lies beyond, a brilliantly inventive retelling of an ancient story, and an epic tale of devotion, betrayal, and courage in the American heartland.

**The Boys in the Boat – Daniel James Brown Lexile: 1000L**

For readers of Unbroken, out of the depths of the Depression comes an irresistible story about beating the odds and finding hope in the most desperate of times—the improbable, intimate account of how nine working-class boys from the American West showed the world at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin what true grit really meant.

It was an unlikely quest from the start. With a team composed of the sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the University of Washington’s eight-oar crew team was never expected to defeat the elite teams of the East Coast and Great Britain, yet they did, going on to shock the world by defeating the German team rowing for Adolf Hitler. The emotional heart of the tale lies with Joe Rantz, a teenager without family or prospects, who rows not only to regain his shattered self-regard but also to find a real place for himself in the world. Drawing on the boys’ own journals and vivid memories of a once-in-a-lifetime shared dream, Brown has created an unforgettable portrait of an era, a celebration of a remarkable achievement, and a chronicle of one extraordinary young man’s personal quest.

**The Little Stranger – Sarah Waters**

One postwar summer in his home of rural Warwickshire, Dr. Faraday, the son of a maid who has built a life of quiet respectability as a country physician, is called to a patient at lonely Hundreds Hall. Home to the Ayres family for over two centuries, the Georgian house, once impressive and handsome, is now in decline, its masonry crumbling, its gardens choked with weeds, the clock in its stable yard permanently fixed at twenty to nine. Its owners—mother, son, and daughter—are struggling to keep pace with a changing society, as well as with conflicts of their own. But are the Ayreses haunted by something more sinister than a dying way of life? Little does Dr. Faraday know how closely, and how terrifyingly, their story is about to become intimately entwined with his.

**Into Thin Air – Jon Krakauer Lexile: 1320L**

A bank of clouds was assembling on the not-so-distant horizon, but journalist-mountaineer Jon Krakauer, standing on the summit of Mt. Everest, saw nothing that "suggested that a murderous storm was bearing down." He was wrong. The storm, which claimed five lives and left countless more--including Krakauer's--in guilt-ridden disarray, would also provide the impetus for **Into Thin Air**, Krakauer's epic account of the May 1996 disaster.  
  
By writing **Into Thin Air**, Krakauer may have hoped to exorcise some of his own demons and lay to rest some of the painful questions that still surround the event. He takes great pains to provide a balanced picture of the people and events he witnessed and gives due credit to the tireless and dedicated Sherpas. He also avoids blasting easy targets such as Sandy Pittman, the wealthy socialite who brought an espresso maker along on the expedition. Krakauer's highly personal inquiry into the catastrophe provides a great deal of insight into what went wrong. But for Krakauer himself, further interviews and investigations only lead him to the conclusion that his perceived failures were directly responsible for a fellow climber's death. Clearly, Krakauer remains haunted by the disaster, and although he relates a number of incidents in which he acted selflessly and even heroically, he seems unable to view those instances objectively. In the end, despite his evenhanded and even generous assessment of others' actions, he reserves a full measure of vitriol for himself.

**The Night Circus – Erin Morganstern Lexile: 950L**

The circus arrives without warning. No announcements precede it. It is simply there, when yesterday it was not. Within the black-and-white striped canvas tents is an utterly unique experience full of breathtaking amazements. It is called *Le Cirque des Rêves*, and it is only open at night.   
  
But behind the scenes, a fierce competition is underway: a duel between two young magicians, Celia and Marco, who have been trained since childhood expressly for this purpose by their mercurial instructors. Unbeknownst to them both, this is a game in which only one can be left standing. Despite the high stakes, Celia and Marco soon tumble headfirst into love, setting off a domino effect of dangerous consequences, and leaving the lives of everyone, from the performers to the patrons, hanging in the balance.

**The Language of Flowers – Vanessa Diffenbaugh**

The Victorian language of flowers was used to convey romantic expressions: honeysuckle for devotion, asters for patience, and red roses for love. But for Victoria Jones, it’s been more useful in communicating mistrust and solitude. After a childhood spent in the foster-care system, she is unable to get close to anybody, and her only connection to the world is through flowers and their meanings. Now eighteen and emancipated from the system with nowhere to go, Victoria realizes she has a gift for helping others through the flowers she chooses for them. But an unexpected encounter with a mysterious stranger has her questioning what’s been missing in her life. And when she’s forced to confront a painful secret from her past, she must decide whether it’s worth risking everything for a second chance at happiness.

**Code Name Verity – Elizabeth Wein Lexile: 1020L**

Oct. 11th, 1943-A British spy plane crashes in Nazi-occupied France. Its pilot and passenger are best friends. One of the girls has a chance at survival. The other has lost the game before it's barely begun.  
When "Verity" is arrested by the Gestapo, she's sure she doesn't stand a chance. As a secret agent captured in enemy territory, she's living a spy's worst nightmare. Her Nazi interrogators give her a simple choice: reveal her mission or face a grisly execution.  
As she intricately weaves her confession, Verity uncovers her past, how she became friends with the pilot Maddie, and why she left Maddie in the wrecked fuselage of their plane. On each new scrap of paper, Verity battles for her life, confronting her views on courage, failure and her desperate hope to make it home. But will trading her secrets be enough to save her from the enemy?   
A Michael L. Printz Award Honor book that was called "a fiendishly-plotted mind game of a novel" in*The New York Times*, *Code Name Verity*is a visceral read of danger, resolve, and survival that shows just how far true friends will go to save each other

**Neverwhere – Neil Gaiman Lexile: 760L**

Selected as one of NPR’S Top 100 Science Fiction and Fantasy Books of All Time. Published in 1997, Neverwhere heralded the arrival of a major talent and became a touchstone of urban fantasy. Over the years, a number of versions were produced both in the U.S. and the U.K. Now Gaiman’s preferred edition of his classic novel reconciles these works and reinstates a number of scenes cut from the original published books.

Richard Mayhew is a young London businessman with a good heart whose life is changed forever when he stops to help a bleeding girl—an act of kindness that plunges him into a world he never dreamed existed. Slipping through the cracks of reality, Richard lands in Neverwhere—a London of shadows and darkness, monsters and saints, murderers and angels that exists entirely in a subterranean labyrinth. Neverwhere is home to Door, the mysterious girl Richard helped in the London Above. Here in Neverwhere, Door is a powerful noblewoman who has vowed to find the evil agent of her family’s slaughter and thwart the destruction of this strange underworld kingdom. If Richard is ever to return to his former life and home, he must join Lady Door’s quest to save her world—and may well die trying.

**The Nightingale – Kristin Hannah**

With courage, grace and powerful insight, bestselling author Kristin Hannah captures the epic panorama of WWII and illuminates an intimate part of history seldom seen: the women's war. The Nightingale tells the stories of two sisters, separated by years and experience, by ideals, passion and circumstance, each embarking on her own dangerous path toward survival, love, and freedom in German-occupied, war-torn France--a heartbreakingly beautiful novel that celebrates the resilience of the human spirit and the durability of women. It is a novel for everyone, a novel for a lifetime.

**Downsiders – Neal Shusterman Lexile: 1110L**

Beneath the sewer grates and manholes of the city lies a strange and secret world called the Downside. Every Downsider knows that it's forbidden to go Topside, and most fear a collision of the two worlds. But fourteen-year-old Talon is curious about what goes on above ground, and one day he ventures out in search of medicine for his ailing sister. There he meets Lindsay, who is as curious about Talon's world as he is about hers. When Lindsay visits the Downside for the first time, she marvels at the spirit of the Downsiders, and the way they create works of art from topside "trash," like old subway tokens and forgotten earrings. As awed as she is by the Downside, however, she also questions its origins, and when she finds out that this fantastic world is not all it appears to be, she is determined to tell Talon the truth. Then a construction accident threatens to crush Talon's world, and his loyalty is put to the test. Can the truth save the Downside, or will it destroy an entire civilization? Neal Shusterman takes readers on an amazing journey into a place that's only a few steps away, yet beyond their wildest dreams.

**The Passage – Justin Cronin**

NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST NOVELS OF THE YEAR BY TIME MAGAZINE AND ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY The Washington Post • Esquire • U.S. News & World Report • NPR’s On Point • St. Louis Post-Dispatch • BookPage • Library Journal   
 An epic and gripping tale of catastrophe and survival, The Passage is the story of Amy—abandoned by her mother at the age of six, pursued and then imprisoned by the shadowy figures behind a government experiment of apocalyptic proportions. But Special Agent Brad Wolgast, the lawman sent to track her down, is disarmed by the curiously quiet girl—and risks everything to save her. As the experiment goes nightmarishly wrong, Wolgast secures her escape—but he can’t stop society’s collapse. And as Amy walks alone, across miles and decades, into a future dark with violence and despair, she is filled with the mysterious and terrifying knowledge that only she has the power to save the ruined world.

**Longbourne – Jo Baker**

The servants take center stage in this irresistibly imagined belowstairs answer to Pride and Prejudice. While Elizabeth Bennet and her sisters fuss over balls and husbands, Sarah, their orphaned housemaid, is beginning to chafe against the boundaries of her class. When a new footman arrives at Longbourn under mysterious circumstances, the carefully choreographed world she has known all her life threatens to be completely, perhaps irrevocably, upended. Mentioned only fleetingly in Jane Austen’s classic, here Jo Baker dares to take us beyond the drawing rooms of Regency England and, in doing so, uncovers the real world of the novel that has captivated readers’ hearts around the world for generations.

**House at Riverton – Kate Morton**

Grace Bradley went to work at Riverton House as a servant when she was just a girl, before the First World War. For years her life was inextricably tied up with the Hartford family, most particularly the two daughters, Hannah and Emmeline. In the summer of 1924, at a glittering society party held at the house, a young poet shot himself. The only witnesses were Hannah and Emmeline and only they -- and Grace -- know the truth.  In 1999, when Grace is ninety-eight years old and living out her last days in a nursing home, she is visited by a young director who is making a film about the events of that summer. She takes Grace back to Riverton House and reawakens her memories. Told in flashback, this is the story of Grace's youth during the last days of Edwardian aristocratic privilege shattered by war, of the vibrant twenties and the changes she witnessed as an entire way of life vanished forever. The novel is full of secrets -- some revealed, others hidden forever, reminiscent of the romantic suspense of Daphne du Maurier. It is also a meditation on memory, the devastation of war and a beautifully rendered window into a fascinating time in history.  Originally published to critical acclaim in Australia, already sold in ten countries and a #1 bestseller in England, The House at Riverton is a vivid, page-turning novel of suspense and passion, with characters -- and an ending -- the reader won't soon forget.

**Boy’s Life – Robert McCammon**

Don’t miss the thrilling novel from #1 New York Times bestselling award-winning author Robert McCammon, in a book that Publishers Weekly calls “both a mystery that will satisfy the most finicky aficionado and a boisterous travelogue.” Zephyr, Alabama, is an idyllic hometown for eleven-year-old Cory Mackenson—a place where monsters swim the river deep and friends are forever. Then, one cold spring morning, Cory and his father witness a car plunge into a lake—and a desperate rescue attempt brings his father face-to-face with a terrible vision of death that will haunt him forever.  As Cory struggles to understand his father’s pain, his eyes are slowly opened to the forces of good and evil that are manifested in Zephyr. From an ancient, mystical woman who can hear the dead and bewitch the living, to a violent clan of moonshiners, Cory must confront the secrets that hide in the shadows of his hometown—for his father’s sanity and his own life hang in the balance.

Middlesex – Jeffrey Eugenides

"I was born twice: first, as a baby girl, on a remarkably smogless Detroit day of January 1960; and then again, as a teenage boy, in an emergency room near Petoskey, Michigan, in August of l974. . . My birth certificate lists my name as Calliope Helen Stephanides. My most recent driver's license...records my first name simply as Cal." So begins the breathtaking story of Calliope Stephanides and three generations of the Greek-American Stephanides family who travel from a tiny village overlooking Mount Olympus in Asia Minor to Prohibition-era Detroit, witnessing its glory days as the Motor City, and the race riots of l967, before they move out to the tree-lined streets of suburban Grosse Pointe, Michigan. To understand why Calliope is not like other girls, she has to uncover a guilty family secret and the astonishing genetic history that turns Callie into Cal, one of the most audacious and wondrous narrators in contemporary fiction. Lyrical and thrilling, Middlesex is an exhilarating reinvention of the American epic. Middlesex is the winner of the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

Other Authors to Consider:

Philip Roth

Johnathan Franzen

Anne Tyler

Toni Morrison

Gabriel Garcia-Marquez

Check these sites for inspiration:

<https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/10203.The_BBC_Book_List_Challenge>

<http://www.modernlibrary.com/top-100/100-best-novels/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/aug/17/the-100-best-novels-written-in-english-the-full-list>