

Springfield Public Schools
12th Grade Summer Reading List
2019

The Tempest by William Shakespeare

This comedy takes place on an island that is controlled by a magician who was banished there. While in exile, he has raised a daughter who has never seen other people until a shipwreck caused by a tempest nearby. This story involves a funny monster, a magic sprite, drunken sailors, and love-at-first-sight, all while dealing with the complicated theme of power.

Everything is Illuminated by Jonathan Safran Foer

The first standout novel from author Jonathan Safran Foer follows a young man on a journey to the Ukraine in search of answers about his grandfather who perished in WWII. In his hilarious and heartfelt journey he encounters an absurd tour guide who makes this emotional quest both entertaining and meaningful.

What is the What by David Eggers

This epic novel follows Valentino Achak Deng, a Sudanese refugee, as he travels hundreds of miles across the Sudan fleeing from militia, government attackers, and the dangers of the land. When he finally reaches the U.S., he finds a land of opportunity but also of struggle. This profoundly heartfelt and surprisingly funny novel deals with issues of displacement, identity, and the challenges of trying to build a new life from the tragedy of genocide.

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot

This is a must-read for anyone interested in life sciences, social work, or social justice. Henrietta's cancerous tissue, taken without her knowledge or consent, turned out to provide the foundation for countless medical breakthroughs and vaccines. Meanwhile, Henrietta's family continued to live in poverty and frequently poor health, begging the questions, Who owns our bodies? And who carries our memories?

First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers by Luong Ung

Told from the perspective of a five-year old girl, this memoir follows a family's courageous survival through the 1970s genocide in Cambodia.

The Body of Christopher Creed by Carol Plum-Ucci

This novel gives a realistic and haunting exploration of bullying's worst-case scenario. No one knows what happened to Christopher Creed, the boy known as the class freak, the bullies' punching bag. He simply vanished. Determined to discover the truth, Torey Adams, one of Creed's former tormenters, implicates himself and discovers the importance of tolerance.

The Road by Cormac McCarthy

This novel follows the difficult journey of a father and son through an annihilated, post-apocalyptic America. Both father and son must face the dangers of a lawless time in which morality is forgotten and during which the best and the worst of human nature are revealed.

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

By the author of the best-seller *The Kite Runner*, this moving novel is told from the perspective of two women struggling to come to terms with the repressive rule in Taliban-run Afghanistan.

The Tiger Ladies: A Memoir of Kashmir by Sudah Kohl

For Kohl, Kashmir was paradise, a place of supreme beauty and harmony cradled by the divine Himalayas. This all vanished with the militant Islamic movement and the violent struggle between Pakistan and India over her homeland.

Zenzele: A Letter for My Daughter by J. Nozipo Maraire

Through a series of letters a mother shares with her daughter, who is entering Harvard University, her secrets about her past and her astonishing experiences in Zimbabwe's independence struggle.

Bossypants by Tina Fey

The mastermind of the Emmy winning show "30 Rock," Tina Fey, offers more than witticisms in *Bossypants*. She grants access to her days as a nerdy child all the way up to being a mother. Tina Fey delivers plenty of laughs while still providing moments of introspection and honesty about her roles as an actress, writer, and producer.

The Odessa File by Frederick Forsyth

The suicide of an elderly Jewish holocaust survivor sparks the interest of a young German journalist. After reading the diary, the journalist learns that many former Nazis are alive and still living and working in Germany. Set in the early 1960s, this fast-paced novel explores the possibility of many war criminals living under aliases and the potential of a secret organization protecting them.