



The Ninth Grade Reading List



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Happy Reading!



1. To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee

The story takes place in a small fictional town of Maycomb, Alabama, in the 1930s, as told through the eyes of six-year-old Scout Finch. She lives with her older brother Jem and her middle-aged lawyer father, Atticus Finch. Her father was assigned to defend a wrongly accused black man named Tom Robinson. The trial sends their small Southern town into a frenzy, and Jem and Scout soon find themselves involved in the events that followed the trial and the aftermath of it. One of the most powerful and deeply moving novels about injustice, racism, and equality, and the painful process of growing up. To Kill a Mockingbird is widely regarded as a masterpiece of American literature. It is a novel that will continue to speak to future generations.

2. First Test (Protector of the Small # 1) by Tamora Pierce

Keladry of Mindelan is the first girl in the medieval realm of Tortall who dares to take advantage of a new rule permitting women to train for knighthood. Kel believes that women can be fearless warriors and aspires to be one after spending her childhood in a land where women are trained to be warriors. She is prepared to face the rigorous training of a page as well as to face harsh criticisms and discrimination. However, Lord Wyldon, the training master, who is against girls becoming knights, puts her on one-year probation in which no male page has ever had to endure. Will Kel rise to the challenge and prove that she is worthy?

3. Unbroken (The Young Adult Adaptation): An Olympian's Journey from Airman to Castaway to Captive by Laura Hillenbrand

Unbroken is the biography of World War II hero and former Olympian Louis Zamperini. Louis became an airman during World War II, which led to the doomed flight and his imprisonment in Japan as a POW. His experiences in the prison camp are described in the story, along with his survival and resilience in overcoming the hardships and torture he endured. Unbroken brings the story of one of history's most thrilling survival epics to life with more than a hundred photos and an exclusive interview with Zamperini. This is an amazing and inspiring book for young readers.



4. Ben Archer And The Cosmic Fall by Rae Knightly

12-year-old Ben Archer witnessed UFOs crash into the fields next to his grandfather's house. Ben also discovers he has been given an alien power, whose significance could put human lives at risk. After government agents rush in to remove all evidence of the crash, Ben is forced to flee with an alien named Mesmo, the sole survivor of the crash. Throughout the book, readers will be glued to the page as they follow Ben and his family outruns a mysterious shape-shifter while dealing with alien powers. Readers who enjoy science fiction and adventure will love this fast-paced, action-packed read.

5. Once by Morris Gleitzman

Once tells the story of a young Jewish boy named Felix, who lives in Poland in 1942. He has been hidden from the Nazis in a Catholic orphanage and believes his parents will be coming for him any day. Felix has a knack for creating stories that shield him from facing the horrible reality around him. As the story progresses, we see that Felix doesn't know anything about the war or what's happening in his Nazi-occupied town. One day, believing his parents might be in danger, he runs away to find them. Despite witnessing the reality and the true horrors of war as he travels outside the orphanage, Felix never loses hope.

6. Of Mice And Men by John Steinbeck

George Milton and Lennie Small are an unlikely pair. George is small and quick, and highly protective of Lennie, while Lennie is huge and physically strong but has the mind of a young child. Affected by the Great Depression, the two are migrant ranch workers who move from place to place in California in search of work. They hope to achieve their dream of owning their own piece of land one day. The fulfillment of their dream seems within reach when they find a job on a ranch, however, Lennie, unaware of the physical strength he possesses, gets himself into trouble and their hopes and dreams begin to crumble. Of Mice and Men is a gripping and powerful classic fiction that is well worth reading.



7. The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

Comprised of 12 districts and a wealthy capitol, a country called Panem has emerged in the ruins of what once was North America after an unspecified apocalyptic event. As a way of keeping the districts in line and as a punishment for a past rebellion against the Capitol, one boy and one girl between the ages of 12 and 18 from each district are chosen to take part in the annual Hunger Games. 16-year-old Katniss Everdeen volunteered to be a tribute at the 74th Hunger Games to replace her 12-year-old sister, Primrose. She will represent District 12 along with Peeta Mellark. Pitted against bigger and stronger contenders, Katniss and Peeta must find a way to survive.

8. The Librarian Of Auschwitz by Antonio Iturbe

Based on the story of Dita Kraus's real-life experience as a Holocaust prisoner as a young girl. Along with her parents, fourteen-year-old Dita is imprisoned by the Nazis at Auschwitz. As Dita is adjusting to the constant terror and appalling living conditions inside the camp, she is assigned to be the protector and keeper of eight forbidden books. As Dita becomes the librarian of Auschwitz, she must find the courage to protect her family and the books at all costs, even if it means risking her own life. It is a moving and unforgettable story of courage, survival, and hope amid the darkest of times.

9. The Sun Is Also a Star by Nicola Yoon

Natasha is a Jamaican girl facing deportation and on her last day in NYC. Daniel, a Korean-American, who is on the path that his parents want whether he likes it or not, is on his way to a college interview for Yale. When Natasha--a realist and a science nerd, and Daniel--a hopeless romantic and a poet, meet by some random chance, a sweet love story unfolds as they teach each other different ways to look at life.

10. I Am The Messenger by Markus Zusak

Ed Kennedy is an uninspired cab driver just living his life day by day and with nothing much of a future. Living in a shack with his coffee-drinking dog, Doorman, he prefers to play cards with his friends every week and does nothing to improve his situation. Ed also has an unrequited love for his best friend, Audrey. When he inadvertently stops a bank robbery one day, he becomes an overnight hero. His routine and mundane life are interrupted when he found himself receiving mysterious playing cards in the mail. This is when Ed becomes the messenger...but who is behind all this?



11. Goddess In The Machine by Lora Beth Johnson

Andra wakes up 1,000 years later from cryogenic sleep. She needs to figure out what went wrong as she is supposed to wake up in a hundred years, not a thousand. Now, everyone around her calls her a Goddess, and what's worse, everyone she knew--including her family and friends--are all dead hundreds of years ago. Somehow, people think that she is a deity in this strange new world, so she plays along to find out what really happened, and to get back to Earth. Goddess in the Machine is an intriguing and fast-paced novel with unique characters and shocking plot twists that makes reading this sci-fi adventure truly worthwhile.

12. Game by Walter Dean Myers

Drew Larson lives in Harlem. He is the star player of his high school basketball team. He dreams to play college basketball and getting drafted to the NBA someday. But there are some obstacles. His coach lets a new player, Tomas, be the team's new star player. As Drew starts to get less playing time, he must find a way to prove that he is serious about his goals and dreams even when things don't go as planned. Thought-provoking and with a lot of detailed court action, Game is a must-read for sports fans.

13. Hot Dog Girl by Jennifer Dugan

It is the summer before senior year and Lou is determined to make it the best and most epic summer of her life. She and her friends work at the Magic Castle Playland, an amusement park that she love since childhood. This summer, she is assigned to be the dancing hot dog--again. She works with her best friend, Seeley, who is not too thrilled about Lou's schemes to get close to her crush who plays the park's pirate. To make matters worse, it turns out that Magic Castle will be closing for good--unless they find a way to stop it. Hot Dog Girl is a cute coming-of-age story with likable characters that will make summer readings so much more enjoyable.

14. We Are Okay by Nina LaCour

College freshman Marin stays alone in her university dorm during Christmas break instead of returning home to San Francisco. Marin's best friend, Mabel, comes to visit her from California. The presence of Mabel forces Marin to confront the painful memories of her past and why she fled and left everything behind. Throughout the story, readers learn more about Marin's life and the tragedy that she tries to escape. An emotional journey awaits readers in this thought-provoking, bittersweet, and powerful novel.



15. *Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie* by David Lubar

Scott Hudson knows that being a high school freshman isn't easy. Bullied, trying to impress his crush, and seeing that his childhood friends are growing apart, it can be easily overwhelming. There are a lot of changes happening in Scott's life, and to top it off, his mother announces that she is pregnant. So Scott decides to make a survival journal of his freshman year for when his soon-to-be-born brother reaches his teen years and gets to high school. In the journal, he writes down his thoughts and advice for his baby brother on his view of freshman year. Scott's experiences in this quick, witty, and fun read will resonate with high school freshmen and those who are beginning high school.

16. *Where She Fell* by Kaitlin Ward

There is a swamp near Eliza's house that is said to hold legends, in which people have fallen into, and never to be seen again. A young aspiring geologist, Eliza knows that it is impossible for people to fall to the center of the earth. When her friends dared to go to the swamp, Eliza can't help but feel scared. As they explore the swamp, she fell into a sinkhole. Eliza soon found herself in a cave with people who have also been trapped there for years and have made the cave their home. There seems to be no way out for Eliza and the other survivors, trapped in this strange underground world full of vicious creatures and giant bugs. Will she be able to reach the surface?

17. *Mirage: A Novel (Mirage Series, 1)* by Somaiya Daud

18-year-old Amani is kidnapped from her family during her community's traditional coming of age ceremony. She will be taken to the imperial palace, the Ziyaana, to train as a body-double for the hated crown princess, Princess Maram, the daughter of the Vathek leader. Set on Andala, a planet conquered by the Vathek Empire, Amani must play this role to perfection, even if it means risking her life.

Mirage is a sci-fi fantasy story inspired by Moroccan culture with complex and interesting characters, and a rich, dazzling world as the backdrop. Fans of sci-fi and fantasy stories should not miss this.



18. Skyhunter by Marie Lu

The Karensa Federation invaded every country in the world except for Mara, the last free nation. Talin Kanami is a refugee working as a Striker, Mara's most elite branch of soldiers that stands as the last defense against the evil Federation and its army of mutant beasts. After Talin saves a mysterious prisoner from the Federation, she has a feeling he has secrets, and she must unravel those secrets to decide whether he is an enemy spy or an ally who could save them all.

19. Hidden Talents by David Lubar

13-year-old Martin Anderson is expelled from every other school. As his last chance, Martin is sent to Edgeview Alternative School, a boarding school for troubled kids. He begins meeting a lot of new friends in this school. He soon discovers that his friends have unique talents. They all have hidden psychic and telekinetic abilities, but none would admit it. Martin thinks it's cool having these psychic powers, but his friends think otherwise. Eventually, Martin helps them harness their superpowers, but feels sad about being the only one without them. Will he discover his own special power too?

20. The Surprising Power Of A Good Dumpling by Wai Chim

Anna Chiu has her hands full. When she's not helping out at her father's restaurant, she's looking after her younger siblings and her mother who suffers from a debilitating mental illness. Due to all her responsibilities and her struggle to juggle school and the needs of her family, Anna feels she can't be a regular teen. When she meets Rory, the delivery boy for her father's restaurant, things seem to be okay for a while. But when her mom's condition worsens, things go from bad to worse.

The Surprising Power of a Good Dumpling delicately examines how mental illness intersects with Asian identity, culture, and values in a candid and honest way. This is a feel-good, yet important and insightful read about family, food, and first love.



21. Charming As A Verb by Ben Philippe

Henri Haltiwanger is a charming high-school senior and a first-generation Haitian-American. He is a popular and well-liked student at his prestigious school and a trusted dog walker for his rich New York city neighbors. He is also under a lot of pressure to achieve his ultimate dream of going to Columbia University. Henri has mastered the method of charming people, but someone seems immune to Henri's charms--his classmate and socially-awkward neighbor, Corinne Troy. When Corinne discovers Henri's not-so-honest dog-walking scheme, she blackmails him to help her change her image at school. Henri agrees to help her. What happens next is something they both didn't expect.

22. Lily's Crossing by Patricia Reilly Giff

Every summer, Lily, her grandmother, and her father go to their summer home in Rockaway, near the Atlantic Ocean. It is the summer of 1944, and the whole world is at war. Lily's father is called to work overseas as an engineer to help the allied troops. Her best friend, Margaret, has to move with her family to Michigan, as her dad has to work in a wartime factory. Nothing seems to be like it was, and Lily is devastated. She meets a boy named Albert, a refugee from Hungary who comes to stay with Lily's neighbors. Soon after, they become friends. They both tell lies to each other, but then Lily's mischievous ways and tall tales may place her new friend Albert's life in jeopardy.

23. Haben: The Deafblind Woman Who Conquered Harvard Law by Haben Girma

Haben's story is an autobiographical story of Harvard's first deaf-blind law school graduate. Haben grew up with limited vision and hearing that grew worse over the years. In this book, she shares her experiences from her childhood to professional life and how she navigates life and overcomes obstacles, using her unique problem-solving skills. Her experiences climbing Alaska's Mendenhall Glacier, building a school in Mali to helping a friend are part of her moving story of hope, resilience, and determination which also brings awareness and advocacy for people with disabilities.



24. The Silence Between Us by Alison Gervais

Maya has lost her hearing because of an illness. Now, Maya has to move across the country and attend a hearing school for the first time. As the only deaf student in school, Maya is struggling to adjust. However, she is determined not to let her disability hold her back. When she finds a new group of friends and when one of her classmates starts learning sign language to communicate with her, things start to look up for her. The Silence Between Us is an engaging and heartwarming story about a girl who refuses to let her deafness be an obstacle to finding herself and her place in the world.

25. Looking for Alaska by John Green

This award-winning and powerful novel follows teenage Miles Halter as he leaves for boarding school in search of the "Great Perhaps." Miles then meets Alaska Young, who will pull him into her world--and nothing will ever be the same. A brilliant and thought-provoking story of famous last words and first love, Looking for Alaska is an excellent book for teens.

26. Aristotle And Dante Discover The Secrets Of The Universe by Benjamin Alire Saenz

The story follows Aristotle "Ari" Mendoza and Dante Quintana as they first meet during a boring summer. Ari is an angry teen with family troubles, while Dante is articulate, confident, and has a unique perspective on life. They first seem to have nothing in common, but as they spend more time together, they develop a special friendship that will eventually help them discover their true, authentic selves. This is a beautiful, thought-provoking book about family, friendship, love, and discovering one's identity.

27. In The Key Of Nira Ghani by Natasha Deen

In this relatable, poignant coming-of-age story, a Guyanese girl has to balance her parents' expectations and traditions while finding her own path to becoming a great trumpeter. In the Key of Nira Ghani is a beautiful, well-written story that will resonate with all ages.



28. A Taste For Monsters by Matthew J. Kirby

It is 1888, and London is terrorized by Jack the Ripper. Evelyn, a young woman whose face is disfigured from her work in a matchstick factory, seeks refuge in a hospital, hoping to be a nurse. She was, instead, assigned to be a maid to Joseph Merrick, who is more well-known as the Elephant Man. Through Mr. Merrick, she finds a gentle kindred spirit who understands her. When the Ripper murders begin, Evelyn must help Mr. Merrick figure out how to help the ghosts of the Ripper's dead, who are haunting them every night. A fan of true crime and ghost stories will enjoy reading this historical fiction full of suspense and mystery.

29. The Clockwork Three by Matthew J. Kirby

This book follows three children who are brought together by extraordinary events. Giuseppe, an orphaned street musician from Italy, discovers a mysterious green violin that may be the key to his freedom. Hannah, a strong-willed girl who works as a hotel maid, learns about a hidden treasure and is determined to find it; and Frederick, another orphan, and a talented clockmaker's apprentice is determined to build an automaton..if only he could find a mechanical head. Together, their lives became intertwined, creating a strong bond of friendship that eventually helped them conquer even their darkest fears.

30. A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

A Thousand Splendid Suns is about Afghanistan's history, from the Soviet takeover in the 1980s through the post 9/11 Taliban control, told through the eyes of two brave, intelligent young women who, despite the odds, remain optimistic. It is a remarkable, heart-rending novel of an unforgiving time, devastation, and loss, as well as hope and the unbreakable bond of friendship.



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