

Portland High School / Portland Library

2009 Suggested Summer Reading List for Grades 11 & 12

***Black Elk Speaks* by John G. Neihardt**

This is the story of the Lakota visionary and healer Nicholas Black Elk (1863-1950) and his people during the momentous twilight years of the nineteenth century. Black Elk met John G. Neihardt (1881-1973) in 1930 on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota and chose Neihardt to tell his story.

***Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* by Dee Brown**

Beginning with the Long Walk of the Navajos in 1860 and ending 30 years later with the massacre of Sioux men, women, and children at Wounded Knee in South Dakota, it tells how the American Indians lost their land and lives.

***Circus Fire: A True Story of an American Tragedy* by Stewart O'Nan**

On July 6, 1944, the big top of the Ringling Brothers' circus caught fire during an afternoon performance in Hartford, Connecticut and quickly burned to the ground. At the heart of the narrative is O'Nan's harrowing, minute-by-minute account of the actual burning.

***Deep End of the Ocean* by Jacquelyn Mitchard**

In a few short minutes in a crowded hotel lobby, Beth's world changes forever. Her two-year-old son, Ben, left in the care of older brother Vincent, disappears. Despite the efforts of police and friends, the search for Ben fails, and Beth retreats into grief.

***Eagle Blue: A Team, a Tribe, and a High School Basketball Season in Arctic Alaska* by Michael D'Orso**

Eight miles above the Arctic Circle, there's a village with a basketball tradition that lights up winter's darkness and a team of native Alaskan boys.

***Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Tracy Chevalier**

The girl in Dutch artist Vermeer's painting is Griet, the 16-year-old servant of his household. Is she more than his model?

***The Glass Castle: A Memoir* by Jeannette Walls**

Not the easiest of childhoods, the Walls children learned to support themselves, eat out of trashcans, and paint their skin so the holes in their clothing didn't show.

***Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster* by Jon Krakauer**

Accepting an assignment from *Outside* magazine to investigate whether it was safe for wealthy amateur climbers to tackle the mountain, Krakauer joined an expedition. However, Krakauer got more than he bargained for when a blinding snowstorm hits the mountain's peaks.

***Just Listen* by Sarah Dessen**

Isolated from friends who believe the worst because she has not been truthful with them, sixteen-year-old Annabel finds an ally in classmate Owen, whose honesty and passion for music help her to face and to share what really happened at a party that changed her life.

***The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini**

Amir and Hassan play together daily in Kabul, and when Amir wins the annual kite contest, Hassan offers

to track down the opponent's kite as a prize. When he finds it, bullies trap and rape him as Amir stands by too terrified to help.

***Lone Survivor* by Marcus Luttrell**

In June of 2005, Luttrell led a four-man team of Navy SEALs into the mountains of Afghanistan on a mission to kill a Taliban leader. The team encountered two adult men and a teenage boy. About an hour later, the Taliban launched an attack that claimed the lives of all the SEALs except Luttrell.

***Marley and Me* by John Grogan**

John and Jenny fall in love with a Labrador retriever puppy, just a cute, tiny bundle of fur. Marley soon grows to mammoth proportions and brings with him slobber and destruction.

***Midnight at the Dragon Café* by Judy Fong Bates**

Su-Jen Chou meets her elderly father for the first time when she and her mother leave China to join him in a small Ontario town. Family secrets make this novel a breathless read.

***My Jim* by Nancy Rawles**

This is the story of Sadie Watson, the wife Jim left behind when he joined Huck Finn on his adventures down the Mississippi River.

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

Anna was genetically engineered to be a perfect match for her cancer-ridden older sister. She has donated platelets, blood, her umbilical cord, and bone marrow. Since she is being considered as a kidney donor, she files a medical emancipation suit to allow her to have control over her own body.

***The Necessary Beggar* by Susan Palwick**

Darroti and Gallicina fall in love. Darroti is accused of murdering her and is sentenced to exile in another dimension. The magic of Gandiffri isn't lost to them; it lives in a tiny pet beetle, in the unbreakable bond of love, and in a ghost seeking redemption.

***The Pelican Brief* by John Grisham**

Two Supreme Court justices have been assassinated, and in New Orleans, a young law student prepares a legal brief. Suddenly, Darby Shaw is witness to a murder and forced into hiding.

***Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky**

Charlie finds that he has drifted away from old friends and finds a new and satisfying social set of bright bohemians. These new friends make more sense to Charlie than his star football-playing older brother and very busy older sister.

***Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver**

In 1959, evangelical preacher Nathan Price moves his wife and four daughters from Georgia to a village in the Belgian Congo. The family is nearly destroyed from their dysfunction and cultural arrogance.

***Praying for Gil Hodges* by Thomas Oliphant**

When driving over an Indiana bridge named after Hodges, memories are set off about the Brooklyn Dodgers' World Series victory. This isn't just a book about baseball, but it's about a family that finds comfort in the sport and life in post World War II New York City.

***Riding the Bus with My Sister: A True Life Journey* by Rachel Simon**

When she received an invitation to her mentally retarded sister's annual Plan of Care review, Simon realized that this was Beth's way of attempting to bring her back into her life. Beth challenged the author to give a year of her life to riding "her" buses with her.

***The Road* by Cormac McCarthy**

A father and a son, walk down a road toward the sea in a destroyed world. With every scrap of food looted, many of the living have turned to cannibalism.

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

Lily Owen, neglected by her father and isolated on their Georgia peach farm, spends hours imagining when she was loved and nurtured by her mother. These fantasies are her heart's answer to the family story that Lily accidentally shot and killed her mother.

***Snow in August* by Pet Hamill**

In 1947 Brooklyn, Michael Devlin, an 11-year-old Irish kid who spends his days reading Captain Marvel and anticipating the arrival of Jackie Robinson, makes the acquaintance of a recently emigrated Orthodox rabbi. In exchange for lessons in English and baseball, Rabbi Hirsch teaches him Yiddish and tells him of Jewish life in old Prague and of the mysteries of the Kabbalah.

***Soldier's Heart : Being the Story of the Enlistment and Due Service of the Boy Charley Goddard in the First Minnesota Volunteers* by Gary Paulsen**

Charley Goddard, a hard-working, sweet-tempered Minnesota farm boy, can't wait to sign up to defend the Union. The devoted son is not prepared for the inedible food, ill-fitting uniform, and the carnage on the battlefields.

Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace One School at a Time by Greg Mortenson
On a 1993 expedition to climb K2, Mortenson stumbled upon a remote mountain village in Pakistan. Out of gratitude for the villagers' assistance when he was lost and near death, he vowed to build a school for the children who were scratching lessons in the dirt.

***Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom**

On a weekly basis, a former student visits Morrie Schwartz, a one of a kind professor who is dying of a terminal illness. Even on his deathbed, the man teaches us all about living robustly and fully.

***Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher**

Despite his natural ability, T.J. has steered away from organized sports until he's asked to help form a swim team.

***Where I'm Bound* by Allen B. Ballard**

Joe Duckett, whose father was African and whose mother was "part colored, part Choctaw," escaped from the Mississippi plantation where he and his family were enslaved. He joins the Union army and the man moves up the ranks of the Third United States Colored Cavalry. All the while, he sorely misses his wife and their three children and holds on to the dream of reuniting with them.

***Whirligig* by Paul Fleischman**

Brent attends a party where he is rejected by the girl he's been lusting after. Drunk, furious, and humiliated, he tries to kill himself on the trip home, but his reckless driving kills a stranger instead.