Perfection Learning "Book Recommendations Survey" Results

Top 25 Recent Books for the Classroom

	Book/Author/Description	Teacher Suggestions For Classroom Use	Item #	Copyright	Teacher Class Recommendations											
					6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade	World Literature	American Literature	British Literature	AP English	Multicultural
1	**The Kite Runner** *Khaled Hosseini* This book describes Afghanistan's rich culture and beauty, a land in process of being destroyed. Amir, haunted by his betrayal of his childhood friend, a son of his father's servant, returns to Kabul as an adult after learning Hassan has been killed.	• "I use this as summer reading, giving students a window into a culture and religion most know very little about." • Literary analysis: theme, symbolism, conflict, characterization, style • Theme study: atonement, family, race, revenge • Unit study: Middle East • Modern historical events • Literature circles	PB: 3510201 CC: 3510202	2003			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
2	**Life of Pi** *Yann Martel* Pi survives a shipwreck with a hyena, a zebra, an orangutan, and a tiger. With intelligence, daring, and inexpressible fear, Pi manages to keep his wits about him as the animals begin to assert their places in the food chain.	• Literary analysis: character, theme, point of view • Theme studies: religion, heroism • Cross-curricular unit study: South Asia • Comparative study: religion and culture • "We discuss content, symbolism, structure, psychological processing (and expression) of experiences too difficult to describe in real terms." • Read aloud • Summer reading	PB: 3496901 CC: 3496902	2003				•	•	•	•	•	•		•	
3	**The Secret Life of Bees** *Sue Monk Kidd* South Carolina, 1964. Lily's life has been shaped around a blurred memory of the afternoon her mother died. When her "stand-in mother" insults three of the town's fiercest racists, they escape to Tiburon, a town that holds the secret to her mother's past.	• "I use this book as "Book Club Book." A group of four read this book and discuss it in a literature circle format and then present it to the class in a creative project." • "With parent letters, I include other contemporary novels along the same theme so that students can write papers regarding how each author handles the given theme."	PB: 3440001 CC: 3440002	2002		•	•	•	•		•		•		•	
4	**The Things They Carried** *Tim O'Brien* An arc of fictional episodes, taking place in the childhoods of its characters, in the jungles of Vietnam, and back home in America two decades later.	• Theme study: war, Vietnam era • "This book works well for a theme study of coming of age novels; it pairs particularly well with *The Catcher in the Rye* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*."	PB: 4221501 CC: 4221502	1998									•		•	
5	**Monster** *Walter Dean Myers* While on trial as an accomplice to a murder, 16-year-old Steve Harmon records his experiences in prison and in the courtroom in the form of a film script, as he tries to come to terms with the course his life has taken.	• Literature circles • "Theme study on responsibility, and literary analysis. This book is written as a screenplay." • "I use it before we begin our Mock Trial." • "I have used *Monster* mainly for modeling, silent reading time, elements of plot, and character analysis."	PB: 3163201 CC: 3163202	2003			•	•	•	•			•			

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6	**Speak** *Laurie Halse Anderson* High school freshman Melinda barely speaks. She is a social outcast for making the 911 call that ended a wild party, one at which she was raped—something she has been unable to tell anyone.	• "A good discussion starter about teen issues in our society and also as a platform for our research project." • "It is excellent for discussing character development, and literary devices such as symbolism and character foil. It is part of my fiction unit and I use it to review the elements of fiction (plot structure, characterization, point of view, etc.). It is also great for discussing voice."	PB: 2813801 CC: 2813802	1999				•	•							
7	**Touching Spirit Bear** *Ben Mikaelsen* After his anger erupts into violence and to avoid prison, Cole agrees to participate in a sentencing alternative based on Native American Circle Justice at a remote Alaskan Island, and encounters a huge Spirit Bear that changes his life.	• Literary analysis: "We especially talk about symbolism, characterization (dynamic and static characters, flashback, setting, and theme)." • Independent reading: "reluctant male readers" • "Research background information; write paper" • Shared reading	PB: 3789501 CC: 3789502	2001		•	•									
8	**The Glass Castle** *Jeannette Walls* The author recalls her life growing up in a dysfunctional family with an alcoholic father and distant mother and describes how she and her siblings had to fend for themselves until they finally found the resources and will to leave home.	• "We use it in a unit with *The Giver*. We examine dystopias, talk about societal rules, etc. " • "Students used it for their Reader Workshop and with their Literature Circles. Book promotes self-awareness and finding one's true identity." • "Stylistic analysis, theme, philosophical discussions of finding authentic self."	PB: 2823901	2001		•	•							•	•	
9	**Tuesdays with Morrie** *Mitch Albom* True story chronicling the lessons learned about the meaning of life from visits between sportswriter Mitch Albom and his former professor, Morrie Schwartz, who is dying of Lou Gehrig's disease.	• Literary analysis • "High-interest, nonfiction reading in a standard English 11 class" • At-risk students: "In addition to covering appropriate grade-level expectations, this particular selection helps them empathize with others and think about the purpose of their own lives. We listen to the entire selection on CD (as read by the author himself) and discuss at appropriate intervals."	PB: 3175401 CC: 3175402	1997					•	•	•		•			
10	**The Poisonwood Bible** *Barbara Kingsolver* The wife and four daughters of a Baptist missionary tell the story of their family's three decades of epic struggles in postcolonial Africa detailing their tragic undoing and remarkable reconstruction. Includes a bibliography.	• Language and literary analysis • "Coming of age outside of native culture." • "Good comparison/contrast with *Things Fall Apart* and *Heart of Darkness*." • "Reluctant readers—boys" • "Since the book is narrated by five different narrators, it is a great tool for studying the ways authors create different voices."	PB: 2799401	1999					•				•		•	

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					Teacher Class Recommendations											
11	**The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time** *Mark Haddon* Despite his overwhelming fear of interacting with people, Christopher, a mathematically gifted, autistic 15-year-old boy, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secret information about his mother.	• Genre: modern British literature • Theme study: accepting others • Literary analysis: point of view • Independent reading • "This title has been used on AP exams." • "Comparing to *The Catcher in the Rye* in terms of reliable/unreliable narrator." • Summer reading	PB: 3510301 CC: 3510302	2003				•			•			•	•	
12	**Uglies** *Scott Westerfeld* In Tally's world, reaching 16 brings an operation that turns you from ugly to pretty and Tally's almost there, but when her friend runs away, Tally learns about a new side of pretty world and must choose between betrayal and never turning pretty.	• "This novel provides an excellent opportunity to introduce bullying as a theme study." • "Character study: relevance to current events and students' lives" • "I teach a reading comprehension course so we focus on comprehension strategies. We used graphic organizers throughout the book to help us understand the text."	PB: 2816401 CC: 2816402	2005		•	•		•							
13	**Peace Like a River** *Leif Enger* Enger tells the story of 11-year-old Reuben Land, an asthmatic boy who has reason to believe in miracles. Along with his sister and father, Reuben finds himself on a cross-country search for his outlaw older brother who has been controversially charged with murder. Their journey is touched by serendipity and the kindness of strangers, and its remarkable conclusion shows how family, love, and faith can stand up to the most terrifying of enemies, the most tragic of fates.	• Literary analysis: characterization, motivation • "Connections to real life" • Contemporary novel • "also good coming of age book"	PB: S721001 CC: S721002	2002				•					•			
14	**A Thousand Splendid Suns** *Khaled Hosseini* Hosseini shows the tenuous alliance made between two Afghan women who are both married to the same brutal older man. Miriam, an illegitimate daughter, is 15 when she is married to Rasheed. Years later he takes another wife, the orphaned 14-year-old Laila. Together, the two women, subjugated by culture and circumstance, must find a way to survive and protect that most-precious of commodities—hope.	• Literary analysis • Theme study • Treatment of women • "Some teachers are using it as literature circles, others as a study follow up to *The Kite Runner*."	HB: R142906	2007							•	•			•	•

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					Teacher Class Recommendations											
15	**My Sister's Keeper** *Jodi Picoult* Thirteen-year-old Anna, conceived to provide blood and bone marrow for her sister Kate who was diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia at the age of two, decides to sue her parents for control of her body when her mother wants her to donate a kidney.	• Literature circles • Literary and character analysis • "as an extension of Dante's *Inferno"* • "Help in discovering the life of the author and insights into his body of work."	PB: 2816201 CC: 2816202	2004				•	•			•		•		
16	**Five People You Meet in Heaven** *Mitch Albom* A bitter 83-year-old war veteran who believes his life is meaningless dies while trying to save a little girl's life and finds himself in heaven, where five people from his past explain what his years on Earth really meant.	• Theme study: "Cinderella" motif, cultures • Contemporary Literature Circles • "I teach to seniors for the reason they are entering a new phase in their life and that their lives touch others even if they don't believe it does."	PB: 6828801 CC: 6828802	2003							•			•	•	
17	**How to Read Literature Like a Professor** *Thomas C. Foster* What does it mean when a fictional hero takes a journey? Shares a meal? Gets drenched in a sudden rain shower? Often, there is much more going on in a novel or poem than is readily visible on the surface...In this practical and amusing guide to literature, Thomas C. Foster shows how easy and gratifying it is to unlock those hidden truths.	• Theme study: values • "Introductory material for AP Literature class" • "Students learn various literary devices and styles by reading and applying."	PB: R050801 CC: R050802	2003			•							•		
18	**Looking for Alaska** *John Green* Sixteen-year-old Miles's first year at Culver Creek Preparatory School in Alabama includes good friends and great pranks but is defined by the search for answers about life and death after a fatal car crash. Michael L. Printz Award Winner 2006.	• Literary analysis • Character study • Companion book with *The Catcher in the Rye*	PB: 2731701 CC: 2731702	2005							•		•			
19	**Into the Wild** *Jon Krakauer* Krakauer retraces the steps of a 23-year-old young man who, renouncing possessions, heads into the Alaskan wild and is destroyed by nature and his own bad choices to find meaning in the death.	• Nonfiction unit • "Realistic adventure; relationship issues; conflict issues" • "I use it to show struggling students that sometimes it's not all about how they performed in school that determines whether they will be successful in life."	PB: 5595901 CC: 5595902	1997		•			•				•			
20	**The Road** *Cormac McCarthy* Set in the smoking ashes of a post-apocalyptic America, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* tells the story of a father-son journey toward the sea and an uncertain salvation.	• Literary analysis: essay • Summer reading • Theme study: "related to the nature of evil and man's capacity for making moral choices"	PB: R101401 CC: R101402	2006									•		•	

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					Teacher Class Recommendations											
21	**Twilight** *Stephanie Meyer* When 17-year-old Bella leaves Phoenix to live with her father in Forks, Washington, she meets an exquisitely handsome boy at school for whom she feels an overwhelming attraction and who she comes to realize is not wholly human.	• Genre: myths and legends • Summer reading • "This is a wildly popular book for independent reading."	PB: 2732501 CC: 2732502	2005		•	•	•								
22	**The Lightning Thief** *Rick Riordan* Twelve-year-old Percy Jackson learns he is a demigod, the son of a mortal woman and Poseidon, god of the sea. His mother sends him to a summer camp for demigods where he and his new friends set out on a quest to prevent a war between the gods.	• Literary analysis • Independent reading: "Many girls in my classes just love this one!"	PB: 2734601 CC: 2734602	2005		•	•						•			
23	**The Schwa Was Here** *Neal Shusterman* A Brooklyn eighth-grader nicknamed Antsy befriends the Schwa, an "invisible-ish" boy who is tired of blending into his surroundings and going unnoticed by nearly everyone.	• Theme study: respect • Literature Circles • "Because I implement a reader/writer workshop approach in my classroom, we did not finish this as an entire class. However, students were allowed to decide if they want to continue and most did."	PB: 3540001 CC: 3540002	2004	•	•	•	•								
24	**Tangerine** *Edward Bloor* Paul Fisher's older brother, Erik, is a high school football star, but to Paul he's no hero.	• Literary analysis • Outside reading • Cultural study	PB: 2801001 CC: 2801002	1998		•	•	•								
25	**The Book Thief** *Markus Zusak* Trying to make sense of the horrors of World War II, Death relates the story of Liesel—a young German girl whose book-stealing and story-telling talents help sustain her family and the Jewish man they are hiding, as well as their neighbors.	• "I suggested this novel to many of my students to read for independent reading."	PB: 2781501 CC: 2781502	2006		•	•									

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More Recommended Books for the Classroom

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				Class Recommendations											
1	**Street Love** *Walter Dean Myers* This story, told in free verse, is set against a background of street gangs and poverty in Harlem in which 16-year-old African American Damian takes a bold step to ensure that he and his new love will not be separated.	PB: 2827801 CC: 2827802	2006		•	•	•	•	•	•		•			•
2	**Skin** *Adrienne Maria Vrettos* When his parents decide to separate, eighth-grader Donnie watches with horror as the physical condition of his 16-year-old sister, Karen, deteriorates due to an eating disorder.	PB: 2829201 CC: 2829202	2006				•	•	•	•		•			
3	**Stumptown Kid** *Carol Gorman & Ron J. Findley* In a small Iowa town in 1952, 11-year-old Charlie, whose father died in the Korean War, learns the meanings of both racism and heroism when he befriends a black man who had played baseball in the Negro Leagues.	PB: 2790201 CC: 2790202	2005	•	•	•						•			•
4	**Firegirl** *Tony Abbott* A middle school boy's life is changed when Jessica, a girl disfigured by burns, starts attending his Catholic school while receiving treatment at a local hospital.	PB: 2840901 CC: 2840902	2006	•	•	•						•			
5	**Chicken Boy** *Francis O'Rourke Dowell* Since the death of his mother, Tobin's family life and school life have been in disarray, but after he starts raising chickens with his seventh-grade classmate, Henry, everything starts to fall into place.	PB: 3163201 CC: 3163202	2005	•	•	•						•			