

# Summer Reading

## Tenth Grade English – Required Summer Reading 2009 Chantilly High School

**Rationale:** Summer reading is an FCPS requirement of all rising tenth grade students. Returning to school in September is much easier for those who have maintained the habit of responsive reading during the summer. Summer reading provides a pleasurable broadening of a teenager's experiences. Students who read as a source of both intellectual stimulation and overall relaxation are likely to become lifelong readers. Those who read over the summer months are more articulate speakers and more graceful writers, skills that are aligned with the Chantilly High School English Department's goals for each and every student.

**For discounted prices:** please visit and order through [www.akjbookclub.net](http://www.akjbookclub.net). You can also order your books for the entire year based upon the course in which you have enrolled.

**All English 10 students (does NOT include Pre-AP students)** are required to read *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom (ISBN #: 0751536822). This book was well-accepted by students last year.

Part melodrama and part parable, Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* weaves together three stories, all told about the same man: 83-year-old Eddie, the head maintenance person at Ruby Point Amusement Park. As the novel opens, readers are told that Eddie, unsuspecting, is only minutes away from death as he goes about his typical business at the park. Albom then traces Eddie's world through his tragic final moments, his funeral, and the ensuing days as friends clean out his apartment and adjust to life without him. In alternating sections, Albom flashes back to Eddie's birthdays, telling his life story as a kind of progress report over candles and cake each year. And in the third and last thread of the novel, Albom follows Eddie into heaven where the maintenance man sequentially encounters five pivotal figures from his life (a la A Christmas Carol). Each person has been waiting for him in heaven, and, as Albom reveals, each life (and death) was woven into Eddie's own in ways he never suspected. Each soul has a story to tell, a secret to reveal, and a lesson to share. Through them Eddie understands the meaning of his own life even as his arrival brings closure to theirs.

**Assessment:** Students should read closely and be prepared to complete both objective and written assessments during the second week of school. Students are encouraged to annotate their texts and take notes focused on the themes, symbols and elements of characterization found in the plot to help with comprehension; no notes will be checked or graded by the teacher.

**All Pre- AP 10 students** are required to read *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini (ISBN# 1594480001).

Hosseini's stunning debut novel starts as an eloquent Afghan version of the American immigrant experience in the late 20th century, but betrayal and redemption come to the forefront when the narrator, a writer, returns to his ravaged homeland to rescue the son of his childhood friend after the boy's parents are shot during the Taliban takeover in the mid '90s. Amir, the son of a well-to-do Kabul merchant, is the first-person narrator, who marries, moves to California and becomes a successful novelist. But he remains haunted by a childhood incident in which he betrayed the trust of his best friend, a Hazara boy named Hassan, who receives a brutal beating from some local bullies. After establishing himself in America, Amir learns that the Taliban have murdered Hassan and his wife, raising questions about the fate of his son, Sohrab. Spurred on by childhood guilt, Amir makes the difficult journey to Kabul, only to learn the boy has been enslaved by a former childhood bully who has become a prominent Taliban official. The price Amir must pay to recover the boy is just one of several brilliant, startling plot twists that make this book memorable both as a political chronicle and a deeply personal tale about how childhood choices affect our adult lives. The character studies alone would make this a noteworthy debut, from the portrait of the sensitive, insecure Amir to the multilayered development of his father, Baba, whose sacrifices and scandalous behavior are fully revealed only when Amir returns to Afghanistan and learns the true nature of his relationship to Hassan. Add an incisive, perceptive examination of recent Afghan history and its ramifications in both America and the Middle East, and the result is a complete work of literature that succeeds in exploring the culture of a previously obscure nation that has become a pivot point in the global politics of the new millennium.

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**For those who object to any material in *The Kite Runner*,** please read *Cold Sassy Tree* by Olive Ann Burns (ISBN #: 038531258) instead.

*Cold Sassy Tree*, a novel full of warm humor and honesty, is told by Willy Tweedy, a fourteen-year-old boy living in a small, turn-of-the-century Georgia town. Will's hero is his Grandpa Rucker, who runs the town's general store, carrying all the power and privilege thereof. When Grandpa Rucker suddenly marries his store's young milliner barely three weeks after his wife's death, the town is set on its ear. Will Tweedy matures as he watches his family's reaction and adjustment to the news. He is trapped in the awkward phase of rising to adult expectations - driving the first cars in town - while still orchestrating wild pranks and starting scandalous gossip through his childish bragging. He seeks the wisdom of his grandpa and has his eyes opened to southern "ways" under the tutelage of Grandpa's new Yankee wife, Miss Love. Still, Will "couldn't figure out...why in the heck she would marry the old man." But Miss Love's influence seems to be transforming Grandpa into a younger man, and the answer unfolds slowly and sweetly as Will Tweedy becomes the confidante and staunch defender of this unlikely couple. The lessons of life and death, of piety and irreverence, form the basis of memorable characters and a story that is both difficult to put down and hard to leave.

\*Summaries taken from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)