



English 9 Independent Novel Study

CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN FICTION

***Obasan* – Joy Kogawa**

Based on the author's own experiences, this award-winning novel was the first to tell the story of the evacuation, relocation, and dispersal of Canadian citizens of Japanese ancestry during the Second World War.

***The Boy in the Burning House* – Tim Wynne-Jones**

Jim Hawkins is having trouble coping with his father's mysterious disappearance. After all, it's been two years since his father vanished and Jim still doesn't know whether his father is dead or alive. Then one day Jim meets Ruth Rose, a sixteen-year-old misfit who happens to be the town pastor's stepdaughter. Ruth's dislike for her stepfather is clear from the start, but when she accuses him of murder, Jim decides to investigate. This fascinating narrative chronicles Jim's heart-wrenching search for the truth, as he discovers an unsettling evil lurking at the heart of a small town.

***The Maestro* – Tim Wynne-Jones**

When Burl Crow runs away from home to escape his brutal father, he heads for the place he knows best — the wilderness. Craving solitude, he is stunned by the sight of a grand piano dangling from a helicopter, and even more startled to find himself drawn to the sounds that eventually come from it. Tracing the source of the music, Burl finds Nathaniel Orlando Gow, the Maestro, standing on the deck of a strange, pyramid-like cabin. The reclusive, eccentric Maestro (based on the brilliant Canadian pianist Glenn Gould) has chosen to escape, too, and only reluctantly offers the wet, starving Burl shelter. Slowly but surely, the two form a bond, and Burl's eyes are opened to a world he never dreamed of.

***We all Fall Down* – Eric Walters**

Today is September 10, 2001, and Will, a grade nine student, is spending the day at his father's workplace tomorrow as a part of a school assignment. Will's dad works for an international trading company on the eighty-fifth floor of the World Trade Centre in Manhattan. In this fast-paced and dramatic new novel, Will discovers a new side to his father during an event that continues to affect the world. As Will's new teacher says, tomorrow "might be an experience that changes your entire life."

CONTEMPORARY FICTION FROM AROUND THE WORLD

***Feed* – M.T. Anderson**

In the future where most people have computer implants in their heads to control their environment, a boy meets an unusual girl who is in serious trouble.

***In the Heat of the Night* – John Ball**

While on a trip back home in Mississippi, detective Virgil Tibbs is arrested for the murder of a prominent industrialist. His only crimes: being out late at night and being black. After some prodding by his boss, Tibbs joins forces with the bigoted town sheriff to catch the real killer.

***The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* – John Boyne**

Set during World War II, a story seen through the innocent eyes of Bruno, the eight-year-old son of the commandant at a concentration camp, whose forbidden friendship with a Jewish boy on the other side of the camp fence has startling and unexpected consequences.

***The Hunger Games* – Suzanne Collins**

In a future North America, where the rulers of Panem maintain control through an annual televised survival competition pitting young people from each of the twelve districts against one another, sixteen-year-old Katniss's skills are put to the test when she voluntarily takes her younger sister's place.

***I am the Cheese* – Robert Cormier**

This complicated, chilling novel of savagery of modern society. Adam Farmer is on a journey - he has to get to Rutterburg with a parcel for his father. But as he travels, he starts to remember the events leading up to this point, memories which are also being forced out in grueling psychiatric interviews. What is the secret of Adam Farmer? And what will happen when he finds out?

***The Maze Runner* – James Dashner**

When Thomas wakes up in the lift, the only thing he can remember is his first name. His memory is blank. But he's not alone. When the elevator's doors open, Thomas finds himself surrounded by kids who welcome him to the Glade—a large, open expanse surrounded by stone walls. Just like Thomas, the Gladers don't know why or how they got to there. All they know is that every morning the stone doors to the maze that surrounds them have opened. Thomas might be more important than he could ever guess. If only he could unlock the dark secrets buried within his mind.

***Whirligig* – Paul Fleischman**

While travelling to each corner of the country to build a whirligig in memory of the girl whose death he causes, sixteen-year-old Brian finds forgiveness and atonement.

***Paper Towns* – John Green**

Quentin Jacobsen has spent a lifetime of loving the magnificently adventurous Margo Roth Spiegelman from afar. So when she cracks open a window and climbs into his life—dressed like a ninja and summoning him for an ingenious campaign of revenge, he follows her. After their all-nighter ends, and a new day breaks, Q arrives at school to discover that Margo, always an enigma, has vanished. But there are clues. And they're for Q. Urged down a disconnected path, the closer he gets, the less Q sees the girl he thought he knew....

***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 fifteen-year-old boy, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secret information about his mother.

***Fever* – Laurie Halse Anderson**

In 1793 Philadelphia, sixteen-year-old Matilda Cook, separated from her sick mother, learns about perseverance and self-reliance when she is forced to cope with the horrors of a yellow fever epidemic

***Speak* – Laurie Halse Anderson**

A traumatic event near the end of the summer has a devastating effect on Melinda's freshman year in high school. She is friendless, outcast, because she busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops, so now nobody will talk to her, let alone listen to her. As time passes, she becomes increasingly isolated and practically stops talking altogether. Only her art class offers any solace and she is finally able to face what really happened at that terrible party.

***Dune* – Frank Herbert**

This science fiction novel will be forever considered a triumph of the imagination. Set on the desert planet Arrakis, *Dune* is the story of the boy Paul Atreides, who would become the mysterious man known as Muad'Dib. He would avenge the traitorous plot against his noble family -- and would bring to fruition humankind's most ancient and unattainable dream.

***Touching Spirit Bear* – Ben Mikaelson**

Cole Mathews is a fifteen year-old juvenile delinquent from Minneapolis. Cole's parents are no better than he is. All his life, Cole has been referred from therapist to therapist, and from detention center to detention center. After Cole seeks vengeance on a boy named Peter by ruthlessly beating him, Cole realizes that he may not have any more chances in life. Faced with a possible lengthy jail sentence, Cole seeks out any alternative that he can find. His parole officer, Garvey, suggests that he try a Native American method called Circle Justice. Garvey, being a Native American of the Tlingit tribe, knows that Circle Justice could change Cole's attitude towards life and others permanently, but he questions Cole's sincerity.

***Eragon: The Inheritance, Book I* – Christopher Paolini**

Fifteen-year-old Eragon believes that he is merely a poor farm boy—until his destiny as a Dragon Rider is revealed. Gifted with only an ancient sword, a loyal dragon, and sage advice from an old storyteller, Eragon is soon swept into a dangerous tapestry of magic, glory, and power. Now his choices could save—or destroy—the Empire.

Dancing Carl – Gary Paulson

In the winter, life in McKinley, Minnesota, revolves around the rinks, where kids play hockey and grown-ups skate to scratchy phonograph records. Then, the year Marsh and his best friend, Willy, are twelve, Carl appears at the rink, wearing a battered, old leather flight jacket and doing a strange dance that is both beautiful and disturbing to watch. It is Marsh and Willy who discover the terrible secret behind Carl's dance, a secret that threatens to destroy him.

Hatchet – Gary Paulson

Thirteen-year-old Brian Robeson is on his way to visit his father when the single-engine plane in which he is flying crashes. Suddenly, Brian finds himself alone in the Canadian wilderness with nothing but a tattered Windbreaker and the hatchet his mother gave him as a present -- and the dreadful secret that has been tearing him apart since his parent's divorce. But now Brian has no time for anger, self-pity, or despair -- it will take all his know-how and determination, and more courage than he knew he possessed, to survive.

Divergent – Veronica Roth

In Beatrice Prior's dystopian Chicago, society is divided into five factions, each dedicated to the cultivation of a particular virtue: Candor (the honest), Abnegation (the selfless), Dauntless (the brave), Amity (the peaceful), and Erudite (the intelligent). On an appointed day of every year, all sixteen-year-olds must select the faction to which they will devote the rest of their lives. For Beatrice, the decision is between staying with her family and being who she really is-- she can't have both. So she makes a choice that surprises everyone, including herself. During the highly competitive initiation that follows, Beatrice renames herself Tris and struggles to determine who her friends really are--and where, exactly, a romance with a sometimes fascinating, sometimes infuriating boy fits into the life she's chosen.

Ender's Game – Orson Scott Card

This award-winning classic is the story of Ender Wiggin, a boy genetically engineered to be a superior military mind and bred to win Earth's long war with an alien insectoid race. Ender is the Wiggin drafted to the orbiting Battle School for rigorous military training. Ender's skills make him a leader in school and respected in the Battle Room, where children play at mock battles in zero gravity. Yet growing up in an artificial community of young soldiers, Ender suffers greatly from isolation, rivalry from his peers, pressure from the adult teachers, and an unsettling fear of the alien invaders.

Star Girl – Jerry Spinelli

In this story about the perils of popularity, the courage of nonconformity, and the thrill of first love, an eccentric student named Stargirl changes Mica High School forever.

The Wave – Todd Strasser

Mr. Ross has always been different from other teachers. He is dynamic, involved, and likes to take a more hands on approach to teaching, creating different games and ways for the children to interact with the material he is teaching. When he starts to discuss the Nazis and World War II in his history class, his students question why the Germans went along with the horrors Hitler perpetrated. Unable to explain why, Mr. Ross instead stages and experiment. He creates a group called The Wave, where students are equal parts of a whole, exhibiting discipline and action. When group synergy takes over, Mr. Ross is equally amazed and frightened at the things that take place.

Night – Elie Wiesel

This autobiographical story traces events from 1941 to 1945, during which time Wiesel and his family are taken from their village to a Nazi concentration camp. The family is split apart and Wiesel never again sees his mother and one of his sisters. The rest of the story focuses on Wiesel and his father as they struggle to survive the brutal horrors of the camps.

The Pigman – Paul Zindel

When sophomores John and Lorraine played a practical joke a few months ago on a stranger named Angelo Pignati, they had no idea what they were starting. Virtually overnight, almost against their will, the two befriended the lonely old man; it wasn't long before they were more comfortable in his house than their own. But now Mr. Pignati is dead. And for John and Lorraine, the only way to find peace is to write down their friend's story -- the story of the Pigman.

***The Book Thief* – Markus Zusak**

At her brother's graveside, Liesel Meminger's life is changed when she picks up a single object, partially hidden in the snow. She collects a book, left there by accident, and it is her first act of book thievery. So begins a love affair with books and words. Liesel, with the help of her accordion-playing foster father, learns to read. Soon she is stealing books from Nazi book-burnings, the mayor's wife's library, and anywhere there are books to be found. The novel is predominantly set in World War II Munich. These are dangerous times. When Liesel's foster family hides a Jewish person in their basement, Liesel's world is both opened and closed down.

CLASSICS

***Never Cry Wolf* – Farley Mowat**

Hordes of bloodthirsty wolves are slaughtering the arctic caribou, and the government's Wildlife Service assigns naturalist Farley Mowat to investigate. Mowat is dropped alone onto the frozen tundra, where he begins his mission to live among the howling wolf packs and study their ways.

***Oliver Twist* – Charles Dickens**

This is the classic story of an orphan brought up in a workhouse and sold into apprenticeship to an undertaker. Travel with him to London as he rebels against starvation and ill treatment, only to be caught up in a different set of troubles. Oliver Twist is also famous for its recreation through the splendidly realized figures of Fagin, Nancy, the Artful Dodger, and the evil Bill Sikes— of the vast London underworld of pickpockets, thieves, prostitutes, and abandoned children.

***The Pearl*]– John Steinbeck**

Like his father and grandfather before him, Kino is a poor diver, gathering pearls from the Gulf beds that once brought great wealth to the kings of Spain and now provide Kino, Juana, and their infant son with meager subsistence. Then, on a day like any other, Kino emerges from the sea with a pearl as large as a sea gull's egg, as "perfect as the moon." With the pearl comes hope, the promise of comfort and of security.

***The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* – Mark Twain**

Join Huck and Jim as they encounter a wrecked steamship full of thieves, a fake duke and king, and two families locked in an epic feud in this timeless classic!

