



English 10 Independent Novel Study

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 World War II.

***Crow Lake* – Mary Lawson**

A shimmering tale of love, death and redemption set in a rural northern community where time has stood still. Tragic, funny and unforgettable, this deceptively simple masterpiece about the perils of hero worship leapt to the top of the bestseller lists only days after being released.

***Disappearing Moon Café* – Sky Lee**

Sometimes funny, sometimes scandalous, always riveting, this extraordinary first novel traces the lives and passionate loves of the women of the Wong family through four generations. As past sins and inborn strengths are passed on from mother to daughter to granddaughter, each generation confronts, in its own way, the same problems-isolation, racism, the clash of cultures- and each evolves a little bit more.

***The Stone Carvers* – Jane Urquhart**

At the center of the story is Klara Becker, the granddaughter of a master woodcarver, who spends her childhood in a German-settled community in southwestern Ontario in the years leading up to the Great War. It is a childhood punctuated by tremendous losses: her mother dies of cancer when she is a teenager; her older brother, in love with wandering, eventually leaves the family; and her brief but passionate love affair with Eamon O'Sullivan is cut short when he volunteers for action and never returns. But Klara's inherited gift for carving eventually reunites her with her brother and gives her purpose as she works on the memorial that will make her whole again.

***The Day of the Triffids* – John Wyndham**

William Masen happened to escape being blinded in the green inferno -- he was hospitalized with his eyes bandaged following surgery -- and he is now one of the few humans left who can see, who can avoid being attacked by triffids, who might be able to save mankind from the chaos and possible extinction threatened by this cataclysm.

***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 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.

***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 Lottery* – Beth Goobie**

Every student at Saskatoon Collegiate knew that the most important aspects of school life were controlled by a secret club called the Shadow Council. Each fall, Shadow held a traditional lottery during which a single student's name was drawn. The winner was the lottery victim. The student body shunned the lottery winner for the entire year. This year's victim was fifteen-year-old Sally Hanson.

CONTEMPORARY FICTION

***Go Ask Alice* – Anonymous**

This groundbreaking classic is more compelling than ever for today's readers. A sensation when it was first published and a perennial best seller ever since, this real-life diary charts an anonymous teenage girl's struggles with the seductive - and often fatal - world of drugs.

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

Twenty-four are forced to enter. Only the winner survives. In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by 12 outlying districts. The Capitol is harsh and cruel and keeps the districts in line by forcing them all to send one girl and one boy between the ages of twelve and eighteen to participate in the annual Hunger Games, a fight to the death on live TV.

***Fahrenheit 451* – Ray Bradbury**

The novel is set in a grim alternate-future setting ruled by a tyrannical government in which firemen, as we understand them, no longer exist: Here, firemen don't douse fires, they ignite them. And they do this specifically in homes that house the most evil of evils: books.

***Ender's Game* – Orson Scott Card**

Ender Wiggin is 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.

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

In this complicated, chilling novel of savagery of modern society, Adam mentally relives his past while facing the interrogation and trauma of his present life as a guest of the government.

***The Power of One* – Bryce Courtenay**

A boy named Peekay copes with the harsh realities of racism, war and lies in South Africa. Born to an Englishwoman, nurtured by a black woman and tormented persistently throughout his youth, he vows to survive and become the welterweight champion of the world. However, his journey is filled with modern prejudice and tribal superstitions. He learns of the power of words and communication and its ability to transform lives and communities. As he learns to sustain himself through the mystical and spiritual world he appreciates, he manages to see through the cruelty of the world.

***Children of the River* – Linda Crew**

Sundara fled Cambodia with her aunt's family to escape the Khmer Rouge army when she was thirteen, leaving behind her parents, her brother and sister, and the boy she had loved since she was a child. Now, four years later, she struggles to fit in at her Oregon high school and to be "a good Cambodian girl" at home. A good Cambodian girl never dates; she waits for her family to arrange her marriage to a Cambodian boy. Yet Sundara and Jonathan, an extraordinary American boy, are powerfully drawn to each other.

***House of the Scorpion* – Nancy Farmer**

Matt is a clone of El Patrón, a powerful drug lord of the land of Opium. He has lived in the poppy fields with Celia, a kind and deeply religious servant woman. He knows little about his existence until he is discovered by a group of children playing in the fields and wonders why he isn't like them. Though Matt has been spared the fate of most clones, which have their intelligence destroyed at birth, the evil inhabitants of El Patrón's empire consider Matt a "beast." When El Patrón dies at the age of 146, Matt escapes. After a near misadventure in his escape, Matt makes his way back home and begins to rid the country of its evils.

***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.

***Blaine's Way* – Monica Hughes**

Blaine Williams recalls his troubled childhood during the Great Depression and his adolescence leading up to the onset of World War II.

Looking for Alibrandi – Melinda Marchetta

Set in Sydney, this novel tells a story of Josaphine, a seventeen-year-old illegitimate Italian girl, who comes to terms with love, family secrets, and her ethnicity during her last year of secondary schooling.

Poisonwood Bible – Barbara Kingsolver

This is a story told by the wife and four daughters of Nathan Price, a fierce, evangelical Baptist who takes his family and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959. They carry with them everything they believe they will need from home, but soon find that all of it -- from garden seeds to Scripture -- is calamitously transformed on African soil. What follows is a suspenseful epic of one family's tragic undoing and remarkable reconstruction over the course of three decades in postcolonial Africa.

The Tribes of Palos Verdes – Joy Nicholson

Medina Mason is a defiant, awkward newcomer to the affluent beach community of Palos Verdes, California. As her parents' marriage disintegrates and her beloved brother falls prey to the temptations of drugs and the lunacy of their mother, Medina surfs to survive, finding the bitter solace in the rough comfort of the waves. This is the moving story of growing up "different," of the love between siblings, and of one girl's power to save herself.

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.

I Capture the Castle – Dodie Smith

This is the journal of Cassandra Mortmain: an extraordinary account of life with her equally extraordinary family. First, there is her eccentric father. Then there is Rose: beautiful, vain and bored -- and her stepmother Topaz, an artist's model who likes to commune with nature. Finally, there is Stephen: dazzlingly handsome and hopelessly in love with Cassandra. In the cold and crumbling castle which is their home, Cassandra records events with characteristic honesty, as she tries to come to terms with her own feelings. The result is both marvelously funny and genuinely moving.

The Joy Luck Club – Amy Tan

In 1949, four Chinese women -- drawn together by the shadow of their past -- begin meeting in San Francisco to play mah jong, invest in stocks, and "say" stories. They call their gathering the Joy Luck Club and forge a relationship that binds them for more than three decades.

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."

Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood – Rebecca Wells

The story follows renowned theatre director Siddalee Walker, who inadvertently mentions some colourful family secrets to a columnist for the *New York Times*. The public then brands her mother, Vivi, a "tap dancing child abuser." Vivi virtually disowns Sidida, but Vivi's intrepid gang of lifelong friends, the Ya-Yas, sashay in and conspire to bring everyone back together.

A Separate Peace – John Knowles

Gene Forrester is a quiet, intellectual student at Devon School in New Hampshire. During the summer session of 1942, he becomes close friends with his daredevil roommate Finny, whose innate charisma consistently allows him to get away with mischief. Finny prods Gene into making a dangerous jump out of a tree into a river, and the two start a secret society based on this ritual. Gene gradually begins to envy Finny's astonishing athletic abilities, manifested in Finny's breaking a school swimming record on his first try. The background of World War II also parallels the relationship between Gene and Finny.

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 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.

The Chrysalids – John Wyndham

The novel is set in the future after a devastating global nuclear war. David, the young hero of the novel, lives in a tight-knit community of religious and genetic fundamentalists, always on the alert for any deviation from the norm of God's creation. Abnormal plants are publicly burned, abnormal humans (who are not really considered human) are also condemned to destruction-unless they succeed in fleeing to the Fringes, that Wild Country where, as the authorities say, nothing is reliable and the devil does his work. David grows up ringed by admonitions: "KEEP PURE THE STOCK OF THE LORD; WATCH THOU FOR THE MUTANT." At first he does not question. Then, however, he realizes that he too is out of the ordinary, in possession of a power that could doom him to death or introduce him to a new, unimagined world of freedom.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time – Mark Haddon

Narrated by a fifteen-year-old autistic savant obsessed with Sherlock Holmes, this dazzling novel weaves together an old-fashioned mystery, a contemporary coming-of-age story, and a fascinating excursion into a mind incapable of processing emotions. Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. Although gifted with a superbly logical brain, Christopher is autistic. Everyday interactions and admonishments have little meaning for him. At fifteen, Christopher's carefully constructed world falls apart when he finds his neighbour's dog Wellington impaled on a garden fork, and he is initially blamed for the killing. Christopher decides that he will track down the real killer, and turns to his favourite fictional character, the impeccably logical Sherlock Holmes, for inspiration.

Saving Francesca – Melinda Marchetta

This novel is about a teenage girl commencing Year Eleven at an all boys' school that has just started accepting girls. Francesca misses her friends and has to deal with her mother who is confined to bed after having a breakdown. She does not expect to make new friends, to fall in love or to find that it's within her power to bring her family back together.

House of the Scorpion – Nancy Farmer

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CLASSICS

***Persuasion* – Jane Austen**

Anne Elliot, daughter of the snobbish, spendthrift Sir Walter Elliot, is a woman of quiet charm and deep feelings. When she was nineteen, she fell in love with—and was engaged to— a naval officer, the fearless and headstrong Captain Wentworth. But the young man had no fortune, and Anne allowed herself to be persuaded, against her profoundest instinct, to give him up. Now, at twenty-seven, Anne is startled to learn that Captain Wentworth has returned, now a rich man and still unwed. However, he seems cold and unforgiving. Even worse, he appears to be infatuated by the flighty and pretty Louisa Musgrove. Anne and Wentworth are thrown together in the social world and an eager new suitor appears for Anne.

***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.

***Man in the Iron Mask* – Alexander Dumas**

The Musketeers are back in another exciting adventure! This time a terrible secret threatens to bring down the throne of France. Aramis, Athos, Porthos, and d'Artagnan must rally once again to serve their king and save the country!

***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!

***Tess of the d'Urbervilles* – Thomas Hardy**

Tess is hopelessly torn between two men —Alec d'Urberville, a wealthy, dissolute young man who seduces her in a lonely wood, and Angel Clare, her provincial, moralistic, and unforgiving husband—Tess escapes from her vise of passion through a horrible, desperate act.

***Ivanhoe* – Sir Walter Scott**

Ivanhoe is a spellbinding romantic tale of chivalry, peril and rescue. Returning home from the crusades to claim his inheritance, the noble young *Ivanhoe* vies for the love of Rowena and becomes involved in the struggle between Richard Coeur de Lion and his brother John. Taking part in the tournament at Ashby-de-la-Zouche, *Ivanhoe* befriends Robin Hood, Friar Tuck and Robin's merry men.

***20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* – Jules Verne**

French Professor Aronnax and his servant join the Abraham Lincoln, an American vessel, on a mission to find and destroy a "sea-unicorn of colossal dimensions." When they encounter the "sea monster," Professor Aronnax, his servant, and the hot-tempered harpooner, Ned Land are knocked overboard. The three must cling to the beast or drown; soon they realize that it is really a man-made underwater vehicle. Captain Nemo captures the men on his incredible submarine, the *Nautilus*. The captain and his unwilling passengers thus embark on a deep-sea odyssey. But the villainous Nemo has a darker purpose for his voyage... revenge on humanity.

