



## English 10 Independent Novel Study

### CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN FICTION

#### ***A Girl Like That* – Tanaz Bhathena**

Sixteen-year-old Zarin Wadia is many things: a bright and vivacious student, an orphan, a risk taker. She's also the kind of girl that parents warn their kids to stay away from: a troublemaker whose many romances are the subject of endless gossip at school. *You don't want to get involved with a girl like that*, they say. So how is it that eighteen-year-old Porus Dumasia has only ever had eyes for her? And how did Zarin and Porus end up dead in a car together, crashed on the side of a highway in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia? When the religious police arrive on the scene, everything everyone thought they knew about Zarin is questioned. And as her story is pieced together, told through multiple perspectives, it becomes clear that she was far more than just a girl like that.

#### ***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.

#### ***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.

#### ***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 Life of Pi* – Yann Martel**

This fantasy adventure novel features the protagonist, Piscine Molitor "Pi" Patel, a Tamil boy from Pondicherry, explores issues of spirituality and practicality from an early age. He survives 227 days after a shipwreck while stranded on a boat in the Pacific Ocean with a Bengal tiger named Richard Parker.

#### ***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 (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.

***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.

**CONTEMPORARY FICTION FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

***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.

***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.

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

In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. Long ago the districts waged war on the Capitol and were defeated. As part of the surrender terms, each district agreed to send one boy and one girl to appear in an annual televised event called, "The Hunger Games," a fight to the death on live TV. Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who lives alone with her mother and younger sister, regards it as a death sentence when she is forced to represent her district in the Games. The terrain, rules, and level of audience participation may change but one thing is constant: kill or be killed.

***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.

***Sarah's Key – Tatiana de Rosnay***

Paris, July 1942: Sarah, a ten year-old girl, is brutally arrested with her family by the French police in the Vel' d'Hiv' roundup, but not before she locks her younger brother in a cupboard in the family's apartment, thinking that she will be back within a few hours. Paris, May 2002: On Vel' d'Hiv's 60th anniversary, journalist Julia Jarmond is asked to write an article about this black day in France's past. Through her contemporary investigation, she stumbles onto a trail of long-hidden family secrets that connect her to Sarah. Julia finds herself compelled to retrace the girl's ordeal, from that terrible term in the Vel d'Hiv', to the camps, and beyond.

***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.

***Whirligig* – Paul Fleischman**

With a family always on the move, popularity and the ability to fit in quickly are vital to Brent Bishop's high school survival. When he blows his chances with the girl of his dreams in front of everyone, he's devastated. Brent tries to end it all in a fatal car crash—and ends up killing Lea, an innocent teen unfortunate enough to cross his path. Lea's mother asks Brent one thing: that he create four whirligigs from a picture of Lea and set them up at the four corners of the USA to keep Lea's spirit alive.

***If I Ever Get Out of Here* – Eric Gansworth**

Lewis "Shoe" Blake is used to the joys and difficulties of life on the Tuscarora Indian reservation in 1975: the joking, the Fireball games, the snow blowing through his roof. What he's not used to is white people being nice to him—people like George Haddonfield, whose family recently moved to town with the Air Force. As the boys connect through their mutual passion for music, especially the Beatles, Lewis has to lie more and more to hide the reality of his family's poverty from George.

***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**

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.

***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.

***The Book of Negroes* – Lawrence Hill**

This book tells the story of the life of Aminata Diallo, born in Bayo, West Africa, in 1745 who at the age of 11 is captured and sold into slavery. Detailing her struggles as a slave on a South Carolina plantation and her efforts to regain her freedom, the story is both harrowing and awe inspiring.

***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.

***The Secret Life of Bees*– Sue Monk Kidd**

Set in South Carolina in 1964, the story is about Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. When Lily's fierce-hearted black "stand-in mother," Rosaleen, insults three of the deepest racists in town, Lily decides to spring them both free. They escape to Tiburon, South Carolina—a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. Taken in by an eccentric trio of black beekeeping sisters, Lily is introduced to their mesmerizing world of bees and honey, and the Black Madonna.

***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.

***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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**The 57 Bus –Dashka Slater (Non-fiction)**

One teenager in a skirt.

One teenager with a lighter.

One moment that changes both of their lives forever.

—If it weren't for the 57 bus, Sasha and Richard never would have met. Both were high school students from Oakland, California, one of the most diverse cities in the country, but they inhabited different worlds. Sasha, a white teen, lived in the middle-class foothills and attended a small private school. Richard, a black teen, lived in the crime-plagued flatlands and attended a large public one. Each day, their paths overlapped for a mere eight minutes. But one afternoon on the bus ride home from school, a single reckless act left Sasha severely burned, and Richard charged with two hate crimes and facing life imprisonment. The case garnered international attention, thrusting both teenagers into the spotlight.

**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 Secret Daughter – Shilpi Somaya Gowda**

On the eve of the monsoons, in a remote Indian village, Kavita gives birth to a baby girl. But in a culture that favours sons, the only way for Kavita to save her newborn daughter's life is to give her away. It is a decision that will haunt her and her husband for the rest of their lives, even after the arrival of their cherished son. Halfway around the globe, Somer, an American doctor, decides to adopt a child after making the wrenching discovery that she will never have one of her own. When she and her husband, Krishnan, see a photo of the baby with the gold-flecked eyes from a Mumbai orphanage, they are overwhelmed with emotion.



***The Wave – Todd Stasser***

Mr. Ross has always been different from other teachers. He is dynamic, involved, and likes to take a more hands on approach to 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.

***The Help – Kathryn Stockett***

Aibileen is a black maid in 1962 Jackson, Mississippi, who's always taken orders quietly, but lately she's unable to hold her bitterness back. Her friend Minny has never held her tongue but now must somehow keep secrets about her employer that leave her speechless. White socialite Skeeter just graduated college. She's full of ambition, but without a husband, she's considered a failure. Together, these seemingly different women join together to write a tell-all book about work as a black maid in the South, that could forever alter their destinies and the life of a small town.

***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 mahjong, 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 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.

***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 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 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. At first David does not question his society. 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 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 Glass Castle – Jeannette Walls***

This is a memoir of resilience and redemption, of a family that is deeply dysfunctional and uniquely vibrant. The charismatic father captures his children's imagination, but drank and was dishonest. The mother didn't want the responsibility of raising a family and the children learned to take care of themselves. Jeannette Walls tells her story of what it is like growing up in an intense, but loyal family.

## **THE 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.

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

Etched against the background of a dying rural society, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was Thomas Hardy's 'bestseller,' and Tess Durbeyfield remains his most striking and tragic heroine. Of all the characters he created, she meant the most to him. 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.

### ***To Kill a Mockingbird – Harper Lee***

*To Kill a Mockingbird* is primarily a novel about growing up under extraordinary circumstances in the 1930s in the Southern United States. The story covers a span of three years, during which the main characters undergo significant changes. Scout Finch lives with her brother Jem and their father Atticus in the fictitious town of Maycomb, Alabama.

### ***Ivanhoe – Sir Walter Scott***

As the first novel in English to seriously deal with issues of race, *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. The beautiful Jewess Rebecca loves and saves him, while he is forced to a dramatic trial by combat.

### ***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!

### ***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.