

PLAINFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT #202
9-12 APPROVED NOVEL LIST

PLEASE NOTE: This is a list of novels that are used for literacy instruction in Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202. These summaries were created using a variety of resources such as Novelist, Follett's Titlewave, The Lexile Framework for Reading, Amazon.com and Commonsense.com. This list and the summaries contained therein are provided as a convenient reference only. The opinions and statements contained in each of the novels are those of the author only and do not represent the opinions or interests of Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202. Further, Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202 does not represent that the summaries accurately reflect or represent the views of the authors.

Title	Novel Summary
GRADE 9	
<p>To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee</p> <p>Award 1961 Pulitzer for fiction; 1999 Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Outstanding Books for the College Bound Scout's father defends a black man accused of raping a white woman in a small Alabama town during the 1930s</p>	<p>Scout's father defends a black man accused of raping a white woman in a small Alabama town during the 1930s.</p> <p><i>Discrimination</i></p>
<p>Twelve Angry Men by Reginald Rose</p>	<p>Play; boy is on trial for killing his father.</p> <p><i>Language</i></p>
<p>Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare</p>	<p>Play; one of the most famous works by William Shakespeare. It is about star-crossed lovers.</p>
<p>The Odyssey by Homer</p>	<p>Epic poem; Describes the adventures of the hero Odysseus as he encounters many monsters and other obstacles on his journey home from the Trojan War.</p>
<p>Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck</p>	<p>The tragic story of two itinerant ranch hands on the run - one is the lifelong companion to the other, a developmentally disabled man.</p> <p><i>Discrimination/Language/Sexual reference</i></p>
<p>A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens</p>	<p>Dickens's classic tale of the French Revolution brings to life a time of terror and treason, and chronicles a starving people who rise in frenzy and hate to overthrow a corrupt and decadent regime.</p>
<p>Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare</p>	<p>Play; Julius Caesar is assassinated by his friends and colleagues.</p>
<p>Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury</p> <p>Award 1954 Hugo-Novel winner</p>	<p>A book burner in a future fascist state finds out books are a vital part of a culture he never knew. He clandestinely pursues reading, until he is betrayed.</p>
<p>A Separate Peace by John Knowles</p> <p>Award Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Foundation Award from the National Institute of Arts and Letters; 1960 William Faulkner Award</p>	<p>Set at a boys' boarding school in New England during the early years of World War II, this is a harrowing and luminous parable of the dark side of adolescence.</p>
<p>The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins</p> <p>Award 2001 Caudill Award Nominee; 2011 Abraham Lincoln High School Award Nominees; 2010 Read House Children's Award (School Library Association)</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Violence</i></p>
<p>The Body of Christopher Creed by Carol Plum-Ucci</p> <p>Awards 2001 Michael L. Printz Honor Award. (This award is to recognize literary excellence in young adult literature.)</p> <p>2001 Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Best Books for Young Adults.</p> <p>2003 The South Carolina Children's Book Award. (This award is given to works deemed outstanding by a committee of media specialists, teachers, students, parents and other literacy professionals.)</p>	<p>A story of the effect teenage intolerance can have on misfits.</p>
10th Grade	

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<p align="center">Night by Elie Wiesel</p> <p align="center">Award 2007 ALA's Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults; Oprah's Book Club.</p>	<p>A memoir that focuses on the final year of the Holocaust-a year that the author spent at Auschwitz.</p> <p><i>Discrimination</i></p>
<p align="center">The Taming of the Shrew by William Shakespeare</p>	<p>Play; battle between the sexes.</p>
<p align="center">Hiroshima by John Hersey</p> <p align="center">Award 1999 YALSA Outstanding Books for the College Bound.</p>	<p>Pulitzer prize-winning author John Hersey recorded the stories of Hiroshima residents shortly after the atomic explosion.</p>
<p align="center">They Cage the Animals at Night by Michael Burch Jennings</p> <p align="center">Award Received the Eliot Rosewater Indiana High School book Award, also known as the Rosie Award. The award was created to encourage recreational reading by Indiana high school students. Additionally, the award is intended to promote public cooperation in broadening reading programs for students.</p>	<p>Autobiographical account of a young boy's determination to survive despite abandonment, physical abuse, and humiliation after being left by his ailing mother at an orphanage.</p> <p><i>Violence/Drug-Alcohol Reference</i></p>
<p align="center">Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt</p> <p align="center">Awards 1997 Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction; 1996 Library Journal Best Books; 1997 American Library Association Most Notable Books; Los Angeles Times Book Prizes; National Book Critics Circle Award; 1999 YALSA Outstanding Books for the College Bound.</p>	<p>The author recounts his childhood in Depression-era Brooklyn as the child of Irish immigrants who decide to return to worse poverty in Ireland.</p> <p><i>Tobacco-Alcohol reference/Language</i></p>
<p align="center">Princess: a true story of life behind the veil in Saudi Arabia by Jean P. Sasson</p>	<p>Saudi Arabian princess describes the inequities for women in her country, discussing arranged marriages for child brides, the murder of female babies, and her own life in the shadow of men.</p> <p><i>Sexual content</i></p>
<p align="center">Rumor of War by Phillip Caputo</p>	<p>A personal memoir of the war in Vietnam, in which the author first served as a Marine and which he later covered as a reporter.</p> <p><i>Violence</i></p>
<p align="center">The Hot Zone by Richard Preston</p> <p align="center">Awards 1995 School Library Journal's Adult Books for High School Students; 1996 YALSA Best Books for Young Adults; Garden State Teen Book Awards</p>	<p>Describes how a strain of a lethal, infectious, previously unknown virus showed up in 1989 at a Virginia laboratory and the efforts of a military biohazard SWAT team to identify and prevent the spread of the virus.</p>
<p align="center">Ryan White: My Own Story by Ryan White</p> <p align="center">Award Iowa Teen Award</p>	<p>Ryan White describes how he contracted AIDS, the negative response of his friends and neighbors in his home town, his battle to reenter school, and his fight to educate people about the disease.</p>
<p align="center">The Water is Wide by Pat Conroy</p>	<p>A teacher recounts a year on Yamacraw Island, off the South Carolina coast, when he helped black children gain an awareness of themselves as well as the world around them.</p>
<p align="center">There are No Children Here by Alex Kotlowitz</p> <p align="center">Award 1992 American Library Association Notable Books Award</p>	<p>Examines the lives of two inner-city brothers who live in a Chicago housing project and their daily struggle for survival and enduring hope.</p> <p><i>Drug-Alcohol reference</i></p>

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<p>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou</p> <p>Awards YALSA 100 Best Books (1950-2000); 1999 YALSA Outstanding Books for the College Bound</p>	<p>A black woman recalls the anguish of her childhood in Arkansas and her adolescence in northern slums.</p> <p><i>Language /Discrimination/Sexual reference</i></p>
<p>Warriors Don't Cry by Melba Patillo Beals</p> <p>Award 1995 ALA Notable Books</p>	<p>One of the nine Black teenagers chosen to integrate Little Rock, Arkansas' Central High School in 1957 offers an account of her ordeal.</p> <p><i>Discrimination</i></p>
<p>Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare</p>	<p>Depicts the humorous mishaps which follow when young Claudio is duped into believing his fiancée has been unfaithful.</p>
<p>The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros</p> <p>Award 1999 YALSA Outstanding Books for the College Bound</p>	<p>For Esperanza, a young girl growing up in the Hispanic quarter of Chicago, life is an endless landscape of concrete and run-down tenements, and she tries to rise above the hopelessness.</p> <p><i>Violence/Sexual content</i></p>
<p>A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen</p>	<p>A woman's journey of self-discovery and primary struggle against the selfish, stifling, and oppressive attitudes of her husband and of the society that he represents.</p>
<p>The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd</p> <p>Awards 2002 School Library Journal's Adult Books for High School Students; 2003 YALSA Best Books for Young Adults; 2008 YALSA Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults; 2009 YALSA Outstanding Books for the College Bound</p>	<p>After her "stand-in mother," a bold black woman named Rosaleen, insults the three biggest racists in town, Lily Owens joins Rosaleen on a journey to Tiburon, South Carolina, where they are taken in by three black, bee-keeping sisters.</p> <p><i>Discrimination</i></p>
<p>The Color of Water by James McBride</p> <p>Award 1997 ALA Notable books; 1999 YALSA Outstanding Books for the College Bound</p>	<p>A young African American man describes growing up as one of twelve children of a white mother and Black father, and discusses his mother's contributions to his life and his confusion over his own identity.</p>
<p>The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald</p>	<p>Jay Gatsby still adores Daisy Buchanan although she has married someone else, and risks everything to lure her back.</p> <p><i>Violence/Drug-Alcohol reference/Sexual reference</i></p>
<p>The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck</p> <p>Award 1940 Pulitzer Prize; 1999 YALSA Outstanding Books for the College Bound</p>	<p>Oklahoma farmers forced from their dustbowl home during the Depression, try to find work as migrant fruit pickers in California.</p> <p><i>Violence/Language</i></p>
<p>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain</p>	<p>Huckleberry Finn, an abused outcast, rafts with Jim, a runaway slave, down the Mississippi River, where they have a variety of experiences.</p> <p><i>Language /Violence</i></p>
<p>All My Sons by Arthur Miller</p>	<p>A play a manufacturer of aircraft parts during World War II who allows faulty cylinder heads to be sold to the Army and when caught, blames his employee and neighbor, destroying many lives in the process.</p>
<p>A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry</p>	<p>A Raisin in the Sun portrays a few weeks in the life of the Youngers, an African-American family living on the South Side of Chicago in the 1950s.</p> <p><i>Discrimination</i></p>
<p>The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams</p>	<p>A play about tough decisions people make for themselves that affect others and adversely themselves.</p>
<p>Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller</p>	<p>An unsuccessful traveling salesman, in his early sixties, finally confronts his shattered dreams.</p>

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<p>The Red Badge of Courage by Stephen Crane</p>	<p>A young Union soldier struggles with his conflicting emotions about violence, death, and the nature of bravery in this ironic, skeptical account of the Civil War.</p>
<p>The Awakening by Kate Chopin</p> <p>Award 1999 YALSA Outstanding Books for the College Bound</p>	<p>The story centers around a woman and her struggle to reconcile her increasingly unorthodox views on femininity and motherhood with the prevailing social attitudes of the turn-of-the-century South.</p> <p><i>Sexual content</i></p>
<p>Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe</p>	<p>Traces the growing friction between village leaders and Europeans determined to save the heathen souls of Africa. But its hero, a noble man who is driven by destructive forces, speaks a universal tongue.</p> <p><i>Violence</i></p>
<p>The Martian Chronicles by Ray Bradbury</p>	<p>The tranquility of Mars is disrupted by the earthmen who have come to conquer space, colonize the planet, and escape a doomed Earth.</p>
<p>The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan</p> <p>Award 1990 ALA Notable Books; YALSA 100 Best Books (1950-2000)</p>	<p>Encompassing two generations and a rich blend of Chinese and American history, the story of four struggling, strong women also reveals their daughter's memories and feelings.</p>
<p>Cat's Cradle by Kurt Vonnegut</p>	<p>A young writer decides to interview the children of a scientist primarily responsible for the creation of the atomic bomb.</p> <p><i>Language</i></p>
<p>Dear America by Bernard Edelman</p>	<p>Contains letters and poems written to families and friends by soldiers expressing their homesickness and the horrors of war.</p>
<p>The Book Thief by Markus Zusak</p> <p>Awards Book Sense Book of the Year: Children's Literature; Booklist Editors' Choice – books for Youth-Older Readers; 2006 Garden State Teen Book Awards (New Jersey); Kathleen Mitchell Award (Australia); 2007 Michael L. Printz Honor Books; 2006 Parents' Choice Awards; 2006 School Library Journal Best Books; Sydney Taylor book Award; 2007 Texas Tayshas Reading Lists; 2007 USBBY Outstanding International Books; 2007 YALSA Best Books for Young Adults; 2009 YALSA Outstanding Books for the College Bound; 2009 YALSA Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Violence/Language</i></p>
11TH Grade	
<p>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain</p>	<p>Huckleberry Finn, an abused outcast, rafts with Jim, a runaway slave, down the Mississippi River, where they have a variety of experiences.</p> <p><i>Language/Violence</i></p>
<p>The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald</p>	<p>Jay Gatsby still adores Daisy Buchanan although she has married someone else, and he risks everything to lure her back.</p> <p><i>Violence/Drug-Alcohol reference/Sexual reference</i></p>
<p>Our Town by Thornton Wilder</p> <p>Award Pulitzer Prize for Literature</p>	<p>Explores the lives of people living in a small, quintessentially American town.</p>
<p>The Crucible by Arthur Miller</p>	<p>A veiled reflection of the anticommunist witch-hunts of the 1950s, this play portrays seventeenth-century Salem, Massachusetts as a rigid theocracy eager to ferret out real or imagined deviations from the norm, and indicts everyone in Salem - and by extension American society - for the crimes of intolerance and blind hatred.</p>

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<p align="center">The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne</p>	<p>In early colonial Massachusetts, a young woman endures the consequences of her sin of adultery and spends the rest of her life in atonement.</p>
<p align="center">The House of the Seven Gables by Nathaniel Hawthorne</p>	<p>The curse of Mathew Maule descends on seven generations of the inhabitants of an old New England house.</p>
<p align="center">My Antonia by Willa Cather</p>	<p>Antonia works as a servant for her neighbors after her father's death, elopes, and then returns to marry a Bohemian farmer.</p>
<p align="center">Frankenstein by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelly</p>	<p>A monster assembled by a scientist from parts of dead bodies develops a mind of his own as he learns to loathe himself and hate his creator.</p>
<p align="center">Heart of Darkness and the Secret Sharer by Joseph Conrad</p>	<p>Two short novels of human savagery in Africa and the conflicting loyalties of a ship's officer depict man's potential for good and evil.</p>
<p align="center">Sense and Sensibility by Jane Austen</p>	<p>Two sisters, one practical and conventional, the other emotional and sentimental, find that only through compromise of their mutual differences can they get along.</p>
<p align="center">The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer</p>	<p>Story of a group of pilgrims who pass the time during their journey by telling each other tales.</p>
<p align="center">Macbeth by William Shakespeare</p>	<p>Story of the rise and fall of a Scottish King. <i>Violence/Drug-Alcohol reference</i></p>
<p align="center">Beowulf</p>	<p>Anglo-Saxon poem recounting the story of Beowulf's battle with the monster, Grendel. <i>Violence</i></p>
<p align="center">Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte</p>	<p>In early nineteenth-century England, an orphaned young woman accepts employment as a governess and soon finds herself in love with her employer who has a terrible secret.</p>
<p align="center">Great Expectations by Charles Dickens</p>	<p>After harsh early years, Pip, an orphan growing up in Victorian England, is given the means to become a gentleman by an unknown benefactor and learns that outward appearances can be deceiving.</p>
<p align="center">One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey</p>	<p>McMurphy, a criminal who feigns insanity, is admitted to a mental hospital where he challenges the autocratic authority of the head nurse.</p>
<p align="center">Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller</p>	<p>An unsuccessful traveling salesman, in his early sixties, finally confronts his shattered dreams.</p>
<p align="center">All the President's Men by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward</p>	<p>The two Washington Post reporters present the inside story of their inquiry into the persons involved in the Watergate scandal.</p>
<p align="center">The Miss Firecracker Contest by Beth Henley</p>	<p>A play based in a small Mississippi town in the mid 1980's during which the protagonist hopes that winning a local beauty contest will provide the self-esteem and validation destroyed by her dysfunctional family and her own poor choices. <i>Language/Sexual Reference</i></p>
<p align="center">A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams</p>	<p>Set in the French Quarter of New Orleans during the restless years following World War II, this is the story of Blanche DuBois, a fragile and neurotic woman on a desperate prowl for someplace in the world to call her own. <i>Sexual reference</i></p>
<p align="center">The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien</p> <p align="center">Award 1991 ALA Notable Books; YALSA 100 Best Books (1950-2000); 1999 YALSA Outstanding Books for the College Bound</p>	<p>Heroic young men carry the emotional weight of their lives to war in Vietnam in a patchwork account of a modern journey into the heart of darkness. <i>Language/Violence</i></p>

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<p>Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer</p> <p>Award 1997 YALSA Best Books for Young Adults; Garden State Teen Book Awards (New Jersey)</p>	<p>The story of a young man who embarked on a solo journey into the wilds of Alaska and whose body was discovered four months later, explores the fascinating allure that the wilderness has for the American imagination.</p> <p><i>Violence/Language/Drug-Alcohol reference</i></p>
<p>The Pest House by Jim Crace</p>	<p>In a futuristic American wasteland, an injured Franklin Lopez joins forces with Margaret, a woman suffering from a deadly infection and confined to the Pesthouse, as the two discover that their dreams of a safe future mean following an unexpected path.</p>
<p>The Bingo Palace by Louise Erdrich</p>	<p>Back on his reservation, Lipsha Morrissey, falls in love with Shawnee Ray and is torn between success, life's meaning, love, money, the future, and the past.</p>
<p>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents by Julia Alvarez</p> <p>Award 1992 ALA Notable Books</p>	<p>The four Garcia girls escape the Dominican Republic and a life of privilege in the 1960s to come to the United States and difficult adjustment.</p>
<p>The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahirmm</p> <p>Awards 2003 New York Times Notable Books; 2003 School Library Journal's Adult Books for High School Students</p>	<p>A portrait of the immigrant experience follows the Ganguli family from their traditional life in India through their arrival in Massachusetts in the late 1960s and their difficult melding into an American way of life.</p>
<p>Native Speaker by Chang-rae Lee</p> <p>Awards 1996 ALA Notable Books; Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award; Oregon Book Awards: Ken Kesey Award for Fiction</p>	<p>Henry Park, a Korean-American private spy, is challenged by a new assignment to investigate a rising politician, but the secrets he uncovers threaten his cultural identity and his relationship with his wife.</p>
<p>This Boy's Life: a memoir by Tobias Wolff</p>	<p>The author chronicles the tumultuous events of his early life, discussing his parents' divorce, the nomadic wanderings with his mother that followed, and the strange and eventful process of growing up.</p>
<p>1984 (Nineteen eighty-four) by George Orwell</p>	<p>Portrays life in a future time when a totalitarian government watches over all citizens and directs all activities.</p>
<p>The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath</p> <p>Award YALSA 100 Best Books</p>	<p>Esther Greenwood, a talented and successful writer, finally succumbs to madness when the world around her begins to falter.</p> <p><i>Language/Sexual reference</i></p>
<p>12th Grade</p>	
<p>Angels and Demons by Dan Brown</p>	<p>World-renowned Harvard symbologist is summoned to a Swiss research facility to analyze a mysterious symbol seared into the chest of a murder victim.</p> <p><i>Violence</i></p>
<p>Storm Front by Jim Butcher</p>	<p>Harry Dresden is called by the Chicago Police Department to help investigate a double murder, but his work doubles when he agrees to help find a missing husband.</p> <p><i>Violence</i></p>

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<p align="center">Clear and Present Danger by Tom Clancy</p>	<p>When a U.S. president decides that drug smuggling has become a "clear and present danger" to national security, the response is a complex and covert military campaign against the "Colombian Cartel."</p> <p><i>Violence/Drug-Alcohol reference</i></p>
<p align="center">The Lake of the Dead Languages by Carol Goodman</p>	<p>Jane Hudson returns to the placid, isolated shores of the lake side school she left twenty years earlier after a terrible tragedy in the hopes of making a fresh start with her young daughter.</p>
<p align="center">The Client by John Grisham</p>	<p>Eleven-year-old Mark Sway witnesses the bizarre suicide of a New Orleans attorney and is left with a deadly secret concerning a recent murder of a Louisiana Senator.</p> <p><i>Violence</i></p>
<p align="center">Phantoms by Dean Koontz</p>	<p>After finding one hundred and fifty people dead in the tiny mountain town of Snowfield, California, officials cannot imagine anything as gruesome as the real reason for their death.</p>
<p align="center">Salem's Lot by Stephen King</p>	<p>A stranger with an evil secret harms the lives of many inhabitants of a small New England town.</p> <p><i>Violence/Language</i></p>
<p align="center">Mystic River by Dennis Lehane</p>	<p>An emotionally wrenching crime drama about the effects of a savage killing on a tightly knit, blue-collar Boston neighborhood.</p> <p><i>Violence/Sexual reference</i></p>
<p align="center">The Bourne Identity by Robert Ludlum</p>	<p>Jason Bourne, having been rescued from the Mediterranean Sea after being shot, awakes with no memory of who he is, and as he races to learn about his past, he begins to uncover clues that lead him to believe he is an international assassin and his life is in danger.</p> <p><i>Violence</i></p>
<p align="center">Boy's Life by Robert McCammon</p>	<p>When Cory Mackenson accompanies his father on his milk route one spring day in 1964, they see a car plunge into a bottomless lake. As Cory and his father search for the truth about the incident, they come face-to-face with the forces of good and evil in their hometown.</p>
<p align="center">Dead Witch Walking by Kim Harrison</p>	<p>Bounty hunter and witch Rachel Morgan helps to keep the vampires and other night creatures of Cincinnati in line and away from the city's innocent inhabitants.</p>
<p align="center">Interview with the Vampire by Anne Rice</p>	<p>Contains the confessions of a vampire which are hypnotic, shocking, and erotic.</p> <p><i>Language/Violence/Sexual reference</i></p>
<p align="center">Once Upon a Quinceanera by Julia Alvarez</p>	<p>Explores a Latina girl's coming of age ceremony, discussing the origins and cultural importance of a quinceanera and providing insight into the financial and social implications of a quince party.</p>
<p align="center">Friday Night Lights by H.G. Bissinger</p>	<p>Follows the 1988 season of the Permian Panthers, a high school football team in Odessa, Texas, exploring the lives of the players and the impact of the championship team on the small town.</p>
<p align="center">In Cold Blood by Truman Capote</p>	<p>An account of the murders of the four members of the Clutter family in Holcomb, Kansas, in 1959 by two drifters.</p> <p><i>Language/Violence</i></p>
<p align="center">Nickel and Dimed by Barbara Ehrenreich</p>	<p>Author Barbara Ehrenreich relates her experiences from 1998 to 2000, during which time joined the ranks of the working poor as a waitress, hotel housekeeper, cleaning woman, nursing home aide, and Wal-Mart clerk to see for herself how America's "unskilled" workers are able to survive on only \$6 or \$7 an hour.</p>
<p align="center">A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius by Dave Eggers</p>	<p>A memoir in which the author discusses the unrelated deaths of his parents within a period of months, his newly acquired responsibility for his eight-year-old brother, and his creation of a satirical magazine.</p>

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PLEASE NOTE: This is a list of novels that are used for literacy instruction in Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202. These summaries were created using a variety of resources such as Novelist, Follett's Titlewave, The Lexile Framework for Reading, Amazon.com and Commonsense.com. This list and the summaries contained therein are provided as a convenient reference only. The opinions and statements contained in each of the novels are those of the author only and do not represent the opinions or interests of Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202. Further, Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202 does not represent that the summaries accurately reflect or represent the views of the authors.

Title	Novel Summary
<p>The Perfect Storm by S. Junger</p>	<p>In 1991, as Halloween nears, a cold front moves south from Canada, a hurricane swirls over Bermuda, and an intense storm builds over the Great Lakes. These forces converge to create the cruelest holiday trick of all, a 100-year tempest that catches the North Atlantic fishing fleet off guard and unprotected.</p>
<p>Into the Wild by John Krakauer</p>	<p>Tells the story of a twenty-four-year-old man who walked into the Alaskan wilderness on an idealistic journey and was found dead of starvation four months later. Attempts are made to discover what led the young man to that point.</p>
<p>The Devil in the White City by Erik Larson</p> <p>Award 2009 YALSA Outstanding Books for the College Bound</p>	<p>A story of the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 focuses primarily on two men: Daniel H. Burnham, the architect who was the driving force behind the fair, and Henry H. Holmes, a sadistic serial killer working under the cover of the busy fair.</p> <p><i>Violence</i></p>
<p>Lone Survivor by Marcus Luttrell</p>	<p>American Navy SEAL and team leader tells his story of the loss of his teammates in July 2005 along the mountainous Afghanistan-Pakistan border to al-Qaida insurgents.</p> <p><i>Violence</i></p>
<p>Dreams From My Father by Barack Obama</p>	<p>Barack Obama tells the story of his life as the son of a black African father and a white American mother, searching for a workable meaning to his life as an African-American.</p>
<p>Miracle in the Andes by Nando Parrado</p>	<p>Parrado chronicles his and his rugby teammates' ten-week struggle to survive in the Andes Mountains after their plane crashed on October 13, 1972.</p>
<p>The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch</p>	<p>Computer science professor Randy Pausch, who has been diagnosed with terminal cancer, discusses how to overcome obstacles in one's life and achieve one's dreams.</p>
<p>Stiff by Mary Roach</p>	<p>Explores how human cadavers have been used throughout history.</p>
<p>The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls</p> <p>Award 2009 ALA Books for the College Bound</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Drug-Alcohol reference</i></p>
<p>Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe</p>	<p>Set in an Ibo village in Nigeria, the novel describes pre-Christian tribal life and shows how the coming of the white man led to the breaking up of the old ways.</p> <p><i>Discrimination</i></p>
<p>Reservation Blues by Sherman Alexie</p>	<p>Robert Johnson sold his soul to the devil in 1931, and was murdered seven years later. He reappears in 1992 on the Spokane Indian Reservation and meets Thomas Builds-the-Fire, who starts Coyote Springs, an all-Indian Catholic rock-and-roll band.</p>
<p>In the Time of Butterflies by Julia Alvarez</p>	<p>Gives a fictionalized account of four sisters in the Dominican Republic under the dictatorship of General Trujillo.</p>
<p>Love Medicine by Louise Erdrich</p>	<p>Examines the lives of several generations of families who live on and around a Chippewa reservation in North Dakota, following various characters who suffer due to government policies, poverty, alcoholism, and other problems.</p> <p><i>Drug-Alcohol reference</i></p>
<p>Memoirs of a Geisha by Arthur Golden</p>	<p>Nitta Sayuri, a young Japanese woman who was taken from her home at the age of nine and sold into slavery as a geisha, discovers a rare opportunity for freedom when the outbreak of World War II forces an end to the only life she has ever known.</p> <p><i>Violence</i></p>

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<p align="center">Snow Falling on Cedars by David Guterson</p>	<p>When a newspaper journalist covers the trial of a Japanese American accused of murder, he must come to terms with his own past.</p>
<p align="center">A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini</p> <p align="center">Awards 2011 Abraham Lincoln High School Award Nominees; 2009-2010 Eliot Rosewater High School Book Award Nominees</p>	<p>Two Afghan women grow close, despite their nearly twenty-year age difference and initial rivalry, as they suffer at the hands of a common enemy - their abusive, much-older husband, Rasheed.</p> <p><i>Violence</i></p>
<p align="center">Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston</p>	<p>An African-American woman searches for a fulfilling relationship through two loveless marriages and finally finds it in the person of Tea Cake, an itinerant laborer and gambler.</p> <p><i>Drug-Alcohol reference</i></p>
<p align="center">The Life of Pi by Yann Martel</p>	<p>Pi Patel, having spent an idyllic childhood in Pondicherry, India, as the son of a zookeeper, sets off with his family at the age of sixteen to start anew in Canada, but his life takes a turn when the ship sinks in the Pacific, leaving him adrift on a raft with a 450-pound Bengal tiger for company.</p>
<p align="center">Cry, the Beloved Country by Allan Paton</p>	<p>Zulu pastor Stephen Kumalo travels to Johannesburg on an errand for a friend and to visit his son, Absalom, only to learn Absalom has been accused of murdering white city engineer and social activist Arthur Jarvis.</p>
<p align="center">The Chosen by Chaim Potok</p>	<p>Recounts the story of Reuven Malter and Danny Saunders--one an orthodox Jew, the other the son of a Hasidic rabbi--and the course of their friendship as they grow up in Brooklyn.</p>
<p align="center">Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys</p>	<p>Story of a young woman in the Caribbean whose family's past will be used against her by her cold-hearted and prideful husband.</p>
<p align="center">Snow Flower and the Secret Fan by Lisa See</p>	<p>Friends Snow Flower and Lily find solace in their bond as they face isolation, arranged marriages, loss, and motherhood in nineteenth-century China.</p>
<p align="center">The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan</p> <p align="center">Award 1990 ALA Notable Books; YALSA 100 Best Books (1950-2000)</p>	<p>The personal, often painful, histories of four Chinese American women who began meeting in San Francisco in 1949 to play mah jong are revealed as the daughter of one who has died searches for her sisters in China to tell them about the mother they never knew.</p>
<p align="center">The Bonesetter's Daughter by Amy Tan</p>	<p>San Francisco ghostwriter Ruth Young finally begins to understand her Alzheimer's-afflicted mother LuLing's preoccupation with ghosts and curses when she reads Luling's writings of her dark backwoods childhood in 1920s China.</p>
<p align="center">The Color Purple by Alice Walker</p>	<p>Tells the story of two African-American sisters: Nettie, a missionary in Africa, and Celie, a child-wife living in the south.</p> <p><i>Violence/Discrimination/Drug-Alcohol reference/Sexual reference</i></p>
<p align="center">The God Themselves by Isaac Asimov</p>	<p>In the twenty-second century, Earth obtains limitless, free energy from an alien source.</p>
<p align="center">The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood</p>	<p>Set in the near future, America has become a puritanical theocracy and Offred tells her story as a handmaid under the new social order.</p>
<p align="center">The Brief History of the Dead by Kevin Brockmeier</p>	<p>The City, where the recently departed reside as long as they are remembered by the living, is home to Kuka Sims, Coleman Kinzler, and Marion and Philip Byrd, all of whom are remembered by Laura Byrd, whose own time is running out.</p>
<p align="center">Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card</p>	<p>This story follows six-year-old Ender Wiggin's odyssey from being the smartest, smallest boy in Battle School to savior of humankind.</p>

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Speaker for the Dead by Orson Scott Card	Sequel to Ender's game. Ender Wiggin has an opportunity to atone for his earlier failures through a second alien race discovered by Portuguese colonists on the planet Lusitania.
Xenocide by Orson Scott Card	Sequel to Ender's game and Speaker for the dead.; The Starways Congress decides that the deadly virus on Lusitania must be wiped out and sends a fleet to destroy it.
Children of the Corn by Stephen King	Children in the insular and religious farming town of Gatlin, Nebraska, murder their parents and take over. <i>Violence</i>
Anansi Boys by Neil Gaiman	Charlie Nancy was leading a comfortable life until his father died and discovered that dear old dad was a human form of Anansi, the African trickster god, and that he had a brother, Spider, who inherited some of his father's godlike abilities.
Dune by Frank Hubert	The story of a young prince, Paul Artreides, scion of a star-crossed dynasty, and his journey from boy to warrior to ruler of a dying planet destined to become a paradise regained.
Daggerspell by Katharine Kerr	Jill finds her past and future controlled by a selfish lord struggling to right a centuries-old wrong by bringing Jill into a land of fairies, magic, and mystery.
The Road by Cormac McCarthy	A nameless man and a boy wander through a decimated landscape searching for means of survival and a reason for hope as barbaric hordes of people roam the streets.
The Golden Compass by Philip Pullman	Accompanied by her daemon, Lyra Belacqua sets out to prevent her best friend and other kidnapped children from becoming the subject of gruesome experiments in the Far North.
The Gate to Women's Country by Sheri Tepper	After a nuclear holocaust, civilization evolves into two disparate parts of walled towns and warrior garrisons.
The Hobbit by J.R. R. Tolkien	The adventure of Bilbo Baggins, a hobbit, in a land inhabited by dwarfs, elves, goblins, dragons, and humans. He sets off to recover a stolen treasure from a dragon hidden in the Lonely Mountain.
Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang by Kate Wilhelm	Realizing that the world is facing destruction through pollution, famine, and disease, the Sumner family sets up an experimental institution that uses cloning to insure reproduction of humans and animals.
Wicked: The life and times of the Wicked Witch of the West by Gregory Maguire	Elphaba, born with emerald green skin, comes of age in the land of Oz, rooming with debutante Glinda at the university, and following a path in life that earns her the label of Wicked. <i>Sexual reference</i>
The Madonnas of Leningrad by Debra Dean	Eighty-two-year-old Marina Buriakov, preparing for her granddaughter's wedding in Seattle, finds it more and more difficult to hold onto memories in the present, retreating often to the 1940s when, living in the basement of the Hermitage Museum with other employees during the German siege of Leningrad, she created a memory room in her mind furnished with the museum's priceless masterpieces. <i>Violence</i>
The Memory Keeper's Daughter by Kim Edwards	Dr. David Henry, forced to deliver his own twins during a snowstorm in 1964 with only a nurse to help him, makes a decision that has far-reaching effects on his life, and the lives of his wife and son. <i>Drug-Alcohol reference</i>
White Oleander by Kim Edwards	Astrid, the only child of a single mother, struggles to find a place for herself in a world full of foster homes and impossible circumstances, after her mother is jailed for murder. <i>Violence/Drug-Alcohol reference</i>
The Other Boleyn Girl by Philippa Gregory	Mary Boleyn comes to the court of King Henry VIII, where she falls for the dashing king, and begins to enjoy her growing role as unofficial queen, however, she soon realizes she is merely a pawn in her family's ambitious plots as the king's interest begins to turn towards her best friend and rival, her sister, Anne. <i>Sexual reference</i>

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<p>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time by Mark Hadden</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Violence</i></p>
<p>High Fidelity by Nick Hornby</p>	<p>Recently dumped by his wealthy girlfriend, record store owner Rob Fleming finds himself in financial trouble and sets out on a pilgrimage to ask his former girlfriends where their relationships went wrong and to learn where his life went off track.</p>
<p>The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini</p>	<p>Amir, haunted by his betrayal of Hassan, the son of his father's servant and a childhood friend, returns to Kabul as an adult after he learns Hassan has been killed, and attempts to redeem himself by rescuing Hassan's son from a life of slavery to a Taliban official.</p> <p><i>Violence/Sexual reference</i></p>
<p>Land Girls by Angela Huth</p>	<p>Three young women, Prue, Ag, and Stella, form a lifelong friendship with each other when they go to work on the Lawrence farm as land girls during World War II.</p>
<p>The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver</p>	<p>Taylor, a poor Kentuckian, makes her way west with an abandoned baby girl and stops in Tucson. There she finds friends and discovers resources in apparently empty places.</p>
<p>The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver</p>	<p>A novel in which the wife and four daughters of an evangelical Baptist missionary chronicle their family's struggles in the Belgian Congo over three decades, beginning in 1959.</p>
<p>Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro</p> <p>Award 2009 ALA Books for the College Bound</p>	<p>Thirty-one-year-old Kathy, along with old friends from Hailsham, a private school in England, are forced to face the truth about their childhood when they all come together again.</p>
<p>War Trash by Ha Jin</p>	<p>This novel casts a searchlight into a forgotten corner of modern history, the experience of Chinese soldiers held in U.S. POW camps during the Korean War.</p>
<p>The Life of Pi by Yann Martel</p>	<p>Pi Patel, having spent an idyllic childhood in Pondicherry, India, as the son of zookeeper, sets off with his family at the age of sixteen to start new in Canada, but his life takes a turn when their ship sinks in the Pacific, leaving him adrift on a raft with a 450-pound Bengal tiger for company.</p>
<p>All the Pretty Horses by Cormac McCarthy</p>	<p>The story of young John Grady Cole, the last of a long line of Texas ranchers, who, along with two companions, sets off on an idyllic, sometimes comic adventure, to a place where dreams are paid for in blood.</p>
<p>Bright Lights, Big City by Jay McInerney</p>	<p>While living in Manhattan, a young man makes a relentless flight through nightclubs, fashion shows, and parties but is finally forced to rediscover his better instincts.</p> <p><i>Drug-Alcohol reference</i></p>
<p>Going After Cacciato by Tim O'Brien</p>	<p>An American soldier in Vietnam decides to leave the war and simply walks out of the jungle, with the intent of going to Paris.</p>
<p>In the Lake of the Woods by Tim O'Brien</p>	<p>After John and Kathy realize that their marriage has been built on deception, Kathy mysteriously disappears in the Minnesota north woods.</p> <p><i>Violence</i></p>
<p>The Vanishing Act of Esme Lennox by Maggie O'Farrell</p>	<p>Iris Lockhart is shocked when she receives a phone call informing her that her great-aunt Esme, whom Iris never knew about, is being released from the mental hospital where she has spent the last sixty-one years, and wonders what long-buried family secrets the woman will bring with her when Iris takes her in.</p>

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<p>We were the Mulvaney's by Joyce Oates</p>	<p>Tells of a seemingly ordinary, successful family who is nearly torn apart when tragedy strikes but finds a way to remain happy and loyal despite rumors, secrets and strife.</p> <p><i>Violence/Sexual reference</i></p>
<p>Fight Club by Chuck Palahniuk</p>	<p>An insomniac, unhappy with his life, befriends a soap salesman who starts clubs designed to help its members relieve frustration by beating each other up.</p> <p><i>Violence/Language/Sexual reference</i></p>
<p>The Tenth Circle by Jodi Picoult</p>	<p>Comic book artist Daniel Stone, a stay-at-home dad with a fourteen-year-old daughter Trixie, and an unfaithful wife, turns a blind eye to Trixie's first broken heart and wife Laura's affair, but the feelings of rage he has buried for years come to the surface when he tries to protect his daughter.</p> <p><i>Drug-Alcohol reference/Sexual content</i></p>
<p>My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult</p> <p>Award 2008 Garden State Teen Book Award: Fiction</p>	<p>Thirteen-year-old Anna, conceived specifically 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 to Kate.</p>
<p>The Rapture of Canaan by Sheri Reynolds</p>	<p>Explores the experience of miracles in everyday life through the eyes of a fourteen-year-old girl, the granddaughter of a fundamentalist minister.</p> <p><i>Drug-Alcohol reference/Sexual reference</i></p>
<p>The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold</p>	<p>Fourteen-year-old Susie Salmon, the victim of a sexual assault and murder, looks on from the afterlife as her family deals with their grief, and waits for her killer to be brought to some type of justice.</p> <p><i>Language/Sexual reference/ Drug-Alcohol reference</i></p>
<p>Prep by Curtis Sitterfield</p>	<p>Midwesterner Lee Fiora is sent by her father to a prestigious boarding school in Massachusetts where she manages to survive in spite of the social differences between her and her classmates.</p>
<p>The Thirteenth Tale by Diane Setterfield</p>	<p>Aging, reclusive author Vida Winter, having given out multiple versions of her life story over the years, decides to finally set the record straight and engages Margaret Lea, a London bookseller's daughter, to write her biography.</p>
<p>Rabbit, Run by John Updike</p>	<p>Twenty-six-year-old man, unhappy with his life, deserts his pregnant wife and young son and becomes involved with another woman, but when his wife gives birth, he returns home, only to be met by tragedy.</p> <p><i>Language</i></p>
<p>The Book Thief by Markus Zusak</p> <p>Awards Book Sense Book of the Year: Children's Literature; Booklist Editors' Choice – books for Youth-Older Readers; 2006 Garden State Teen Book Awards (New Jersey); Kathleen Mitchell Award (Australia); 2007 Michael L. Printz Honor Books; 2006 Parents' Choice Awards; 2006 School Library Journal Best Books; Sydney Taylor book Award; 2007 Texas Tayshas Reading Lists; 2007 USBBY Outstanding International Books; 2007 YALSA Best Books for Young Adults; 2009 YALSA Outstanding Books for the College Bound; 2009 YALSA Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Violence/Language</i></p>