

**FORSYTH COUNTY SUMMER READING GUIDE**  
**Grades 9-12**

**FICTION**

**Achebe, Chinua**

*Things Fall Apart*

A proud village leader is driven to murder and suicide by European changes to his traditional Ibo society

**Alcott, Louisa May**

*Little Women*

Four teenage girls struggle with poverty and individual problems, but are sustained by their affection for one another

**Allende, Isabelle**

*House of the Spirits*

Ghosts and strange occurrences in the life an upper class family in South America

**Atwood, Margaret**

*The Handmaid's Tale*

Near the end of the twentieth century, birth control and the effects of nuclear fallout have caused fewer births. The biblical story of Rachel is invoked to counter the declining birthrate

**Austen, Jane**

*Emma*

Young Victorian woman with not much upstairs tries to play cupid for everyone but herself

**Brooks, Max**

*World War Z*

New York Times bestseller of the human survival of the zombie apocalypse told in the haunting and riveting voices of the men and women who witnessed the horror firsthand.

**Buck, Pearl S.,**

*The Good Earth*

Peasants' lives in China in times of war during the reign of the last Emperor, beautiful novel , won the Pulitzer Prize in 1932.

**Bums, Olive**

*Cold Sassy Tree*

Will Tweedy's enters into manhood in a small southern town at the turn of the century.

**Calvino, Italo**

*The Baron in the Trees*

Aristocratic heir refuses to climb down from his tree for dinner because of a quarrel with his father. Delightful fantasy of escape.

**Camus, Albert**

*The Stranger*

Existential novel about a pointless murder by Nobel Prize winning author

**Card, Orson Scott**

*Ender's Game*

A young boy is trained with military games to save the world from alien attack.

**Chandler, Raymond**

*The Big Sleep*

Famous detective story by important American writer of the genre. Philip Marlowe is the tough-guy detective with a strong sense of morality

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**Collins, Wilkie**  
*The Moonstone*

The first detective story ever, set in Victorian England. Who stole the mysterious moonstone from the country house by the sea?

**Craven, Margaret**  
*I Heard the Owl Call My Name*

Young minister spends his last year with the Kwakiutl Indian tribe in the Canadian wilderness; only the reader knows that he is dying and that this is his time to understand what life is for

**Crichton, Michael**  
*The Andromeda Strain*

Terrifying biological nightmare when sterilization procedures for returning space probes prove inadequate

**Dickens, Charles**  
*David Copperfield*

Dickens' most autobiographical novel (note the initials). Funny, sad, and complicated.

**Dostoevsky, Feodor**  
*The Brothers Karamazov*

The story of three Russian brothers and their father -- a sensualist, an intellectual, and a priest.

**Ellison, Ralph**  
*Invisible Man*

Published in 1952, this is one of the standard works of black American fiction. Young black man journeys from Deep South to Harlem

**Foer, Jonathan Safran**  
*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

A young boy deals with the loss of his father after 9/11

**Gruen, Sara**  
*Water for Elephants*

This novel recounts the time spent with a traveling circus the main character joined during the Great Depression. When 23-year-old Jankowski learns that his parents have been killed in a car crash, leaving him penniless, he drops out of Cornell veterinary school and parlays his expertise with animals into a job with the circus, where he cares for a menagerie of exotic creatures

**Gaines, Ernest**  
*The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*

In her 100 years as an African-American woman, Miss Jane Pittman experiences it all, from slavery to civil rights

*A Gathering of Old Men*

Aging African American men each claim to be the sole murderer of a Southern white farmer, confounding the law

**Guterson, David**  
*Snow Falling on Cedars*

The novel opens with the murder trial of Dabuo Miyamoto but takes forays into the pasts and presents of many central characters. Guterson deals with themes such as teen love, racism, war and confronting the past

**Hammett, Dashiell**  
*The Maltese Falcon*

First of the Sam Spade detective stories; hard-boiled characters in suspenseful plot

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**Heller, Joseph**

*Catch 22*

Absurd novel about World War II. Or is it a comic novel about life?

**Hemingway, Ernest**

*The Old Man and the Sea*

Old Cuban fisherman fights an agonizing battle with a giant marlin.

**Hersey, John**

*A Bell for Adano*

Pulitzer prize winning novel about an Italian-American major who searches for a replacement for the 700 year old town bell melted down by the Fascists

**Hesse, Herman**

*Siddhartha*

Siddhartha ascends to a state of peace and mystic holiness.

**Hosseini, Khaled**

*A Thousand Splendid Suns*

An in-depth exploration of Afghan society in the three decades of anti-Soviet Jihad, civil war and Taliban cruelty. He impels us to empathize with and admire those most victimized by Afghan history and culture—women.

**Lewis, Sinclair**

*Main Street*

Story of Carol Kennicutt who rejects the life of a small town as an intellectual wasteland

**Maclean, Norman**

*A River Runs Through It*

"In our family, there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing." Three beautifully written stories of the West, fly fishing, and family.

**Marquez, Gabriel Garcia**

*One Hundred Years of Solitude*

Brilliant Colombian writer's most famous novel; magical realism

**Marte, Yann**

*Life of Pi*

A young boy survives 227 days at sea

**Martin, Charles**

*When Crickets Cry*

A spirited seven-year-old has a brisk business at her lemonade stand. Her latest customer, a bearded stranger, drains his cup and heads to his car, his mind on a boat he's restoring at a nearby lake. Before it's over, they'll both know there are painful reasons why crickets cry...and that miracles lurk around unexpected corners.

**Matheson, Richard**

*I Am Legend and other stories*

Robert Neville is the last surviving man on Earth...but he is not alone. Every other man, woman, and child on Earth has become a vampire, and they are all hungry for Neville's blood.

**McCarthy, Cormac**

*No Country for Old Men*

In west Texas, a young Vietnam vet is hunting when he comes upon the carnage of a drug deal gone bad. Both heroin and a suitcase of cash remain at the site, along with a number of bodies. The main character decides to take the money although he knows he'll be hunted (and hunted he is) but believes he can outsmart the hunters.

**McCullers, Carson**

*The Member of the Wedding*

Fed up with her life in a Mississippi town, Frankie Adams changes her name and plans her escape to the world at large.

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*The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*

Young girl searches for beauty among lonely outcasts in small Southern town

McMurtry, Larry

*Lonesome Dove*

This is the ultimate cowboy novel; this Pulitzer Prize winner captures life on the frontier.

O'Brian, Patrick

*Master and Commander*

Dazzling story of the British Navy during the Napoleonic Wars, told from the vantage of Captain Jack Aubry and his mysterious friend Dr. Stephen Maturin, ship's surgeon, naturalist and British spy. If you like this one, you are in luck: there are 17 more!

Orwell, George

*Animal Farm*

Animals turn the tables on their masters

Paton, Alan

*Cry the Beloved Country*

The tragedy of South Africa under apartheid. A country Zulu pastor searches for his sick sister in Johannesburg only to find that she has become a prostitute and his son a murderer. Written in free verse, it rewards those who stay with it

Pearce, Donn

*Cool Hand Luke*

Out of his experiences working on a chain gang, Donn Pearce created Cool Hand Luke, war hero turned "pretty evil feller," whose refusal to "git his mind right" becomes part of his fellow convicts' mythology of survival.

Picoult, Jodi

*My Sister's Keeper*

Anna was genetically engineered to be a perfect match for her cancer-ridden older sister. Since birth, the 13-year-old has donated platelets, blood, her umbilical cord, and bone marrow as part of her family's struggle to lengthen Kate's life. Anna is now being considered as a kidney donor in a last-ditch attempt to save her 16-year-old sister. As this compelling story opens, Anna has hired a lawyer to represent her in a medical emancipation suit to allow her to have control over her own body.

Potok, Chaim

*The Chosen*

Masterfully written story of two boys growing up devoutly Jewish in New York City who explore questions of faith, family and identity both group and individual

*My Name is Asher Lev*

Jewish artist paints a crucifix and nearly destroys his family

Remarque, Erique Marie

*All Quiet On the Western Front*

Realistic novel of war in the trenches of World War I

Rhys, Jean

*The Wide Sargasso Sea*

How Rochester met and fell in love with a character who reappears in Jane Eyre.

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Shute, Nevil

*On the Beach*

After the war is over, a radioactive cloud begins to sweep southwards on the winds, gradually poisoning everything in its path. An American submarine captain is among the survivors left sheltering in Australia, preparing with the locals for the inevitable. Then a faint Morse code signal is picked up, transmitting from the United States and the submarine must set sail through the bleak ocean to search for signs of life.

Sinclair, Upton

*The Jungle*

Cruelty of unregulated industrialization and immigrant life in the early 20th Century.  
Popular indignation inspired by this work led to significant reforms

Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr

*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

Exposure of the Russian labor camps

Toole, John Kennedy

*A Confederacy of Dunces*

An American comic masterpiece featuring Ignatius J. Reilly, a “huge, obese, fractious, fastidious” latter-day Gargantua. This story bursts with wholly original characters, denizens of New Orleans' lower depths, incredibly true-to-life dialogue, and the zaniest series of high and low comic adventures.

Twain, Mark

*Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Two children whose identities are switched at birth--humorous and incisive satire of racism in 19th century America.

Wharton, Edith

*House of Mirth*

Tragic novel by a superb artist about a lonely woman without money in a society where there is no guarantee of security

White, Theodore H.

*The Once and Future King*

Beloved retelling of the story of King Arthur; source for both Disney movie, *Sword in the Stone* and musical *Camelot*.

Wright, Richard

*Native Son*

Set in Chicago, this first major novel by the author of *Black Boy* tells of a young man's victimization by racism and his inevitable lashing out.

### AUTOBIOGRAPHY and NON-FICTION

Brown, Dee

*Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*

The Native American point of view on the old West and Westward expansion

Capuzzo, Michael

*Close to Shore: The Terrifying Shark Attacks of 1916*

In 1916, a rogue shark traveled inland along a New Jersey creek, terrorizing residents of nearby towns. Capuzzo reconstructs events with a novelist's flair and a scientist's attention to detail, and his pacing is relentless as the story moves from cultural history and shark physiology to close-ups of the crazed, disoriented beast slicing through the water.

Covington, Dennis

*Salvation on Sand Mountain: Snake-Handling and Redemption in Southern Appalachia*

After Covington covered the trial of a preacher convicted of attempting to murder his wife with rattlesnakes, he was invited to attend a snake-handling service in Scottsville, Ala. He found the service exhilarating and unsettling; he felt a kinship with the people, ultimately joining the snake handlers.

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**Darwin, Charles**

*Voyage of the Beagle*

Readable account of Darwin's voyage on the Beagle. His observations on the voyage later led him to formulate his revolutionary theory of natural selection

**Davis, Sampson, et al**

*The Pact*

Growing up in broken homes in a crime-ridden area of Newark, N.J., these three authors could easily have followed their childhood friends into lives of drug-dealing, gangs and prison. They tell harrowing stories of being arrested for assault and mugging drug dealers, and of the lack of options they saw as black teenagers. But when their high school was visited by a recruiter from a college aimed at preparing minority students for medical school, the three friends decided to make something of their lives.

**Durrell, Gerald**

*My Family and Other Animals*

Hysterically funny stories about the four children in the Durrell family as they move to Corfu with their comical mother

**Edelman, Bernard**

*Dear America: Letters Home from the Vietnam War*

More than twenty-five years after the official end of the Vietnam War, *Dear America* allows us to witness the war firsthand through the eyes of the men and women who served in Vietnam. In this collection of more than 200 letters, they share their first impressions of the rigors of life in the bush, their longing for home and family, their emotions over the conduct of the war, and their ache at the loss of a friend in battle.

**Green, Hannah**

*I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*

With the help of an understanding doctor, a teenage girl struggles to overcome Schizophrenia

**Haley, Alex**

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

Malcolm X's story from street hustler to religious leader

**Helfer, Ralph**

*Modoc*

True story of a boy and an elephant caught up in the swirl of 20th century history. The story spans 70 years and takes the reader from a small German circus town to the teak forests of India and eventually to New York City in the 1940s.

**Herriot, James**

*All Creatures Great and Small*

Amusing and moving vignettes of a Yorkshire veterinarian's rural practice

**Hersey, John**

*Hiroshima*

Six survivors reflect on the aftermath of the first atomic bomb

**Hyerdahl, Thor**

*Kon Tiki*

Six men on a small log raft sail 4,000 miles across the Pacific Ocean to test a theory, based in folklore, as to where the Polynesian people came from. If you like *Kon Tiki* try *Aku Aku* by the same author

**Krakauer, Jon**

*Into Thin Air*

Gripping story of Mount Everest expedition that went tragically wrong

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**Kuper, Jack**

*Child of the Holocaust: A True Story*

Set in Poland during World War II; an eight year old Jewish boy comes home to find that all of his family and friends have been rounded up by the Nazis, leaving him entirely on his own to survive

**Lewis, Michael**

*Coach*

Lewis remembers his high school baseball coach, Coach Fitz, a man so intense a room felt "more pressurized simply because he was in it." At the New Orleans private school Lewis attended in the late 1970s, Coach Fitz taught kids to fight "the natural instinct to run away from adversity" and to battle their way through all the easy excuses life offers for giving up.

**Luttrell , Marcus**

*Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of SEAL Team 10*

Four US Navy SEALs departed one clear night in early July 2005 for the mountainous Afghanistan-Pakistan border for a reconnaissance mission. Five days later, only one of those Navy SEALs made it out alive.

**Marx, Jeffrey**

*Season of Life*

True story of a former NFL football star and volunteer coach for the Gilman High School football team. A moving story that will resonate with athletes, coaches, parents – anyone struggling to make the right choices in life.

**Robbins, Alexandra**

*The Overachievers: The Secret Lives of Driven Kids*

Robbins follows the lives of students from a Bethesda, Md., high school as they navigate the SAT and college application process. These students are obsessed with success, contending with illness, physical deterioration (senior Julie is losing hair over the pressure to get into Stanford), cheating, obsessed parents and emotional breakdowns.

**Shirer, William L.**

*The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*

Massive study based on Nazi files and personal observation by foreign correspondent and historian