

BOOK CLUB COLLECTION

What is the Book Club Collection?

The Book Club Collection provides copies of books, usually with a study guide, to local book clubs and to book clubs sponsored by branches. Most sets have 12 copies. Sets check out on one library card for six weeks, with no renewals.

How can I request a Book Club Set?

Book Club sets can be requested by calling 531-6333, extension 2030, preferably during weekdays between 8:30 to 5:00, Fridays until 1:00.

Can I request any book title for a Book Club Set?

No. Only the titles on the list are available as book club sets.

Where can I find a list of books in the Book Club Collection?

From the ppld.org webpage, click on Library Services, then Book Discussion Groups and scroll down to the Book Club Collection link. Or from the ppld.org webpage, click on Catalog, then on the right side of the page under Select Collections, click on Book Club Collection.

What if I want to pick all of the books for the year from the Book Club Collection?

If your book club wants to choose titles for the entire year, it is recommended that you select 15-20 titles and be flexible about when you get them. About half of the over 200 sets are checked out at any time. They cannot be held more than two weeks before they are picked up.

How far in advance does a patron need to make a request?

You can request a title no more than about two weeks from the time you would like to pick it up. It takes 1 or 2 days to get to a branch other than Penrose.

Where can a patron pick up a Book Club Set?

Sets can be picked up at any branch and returned to any branch.

How many sets can a patron have checked out?

You may have more than one set checked out at a time. Ideally, you will hand out the new set at the same meeting you pick up the old set.

BOOK CLUB COLLECTION – Updated February 2010

All annotations are from Baker & Taylor Title Source 3, unless otherwise stated.

When other formats are listed as also available, they are not part of the book club set, but part of the regular collection. You may call your branch or place holds for these other formats.

Recently added titles are highlighted in yellow.

Fiction

***The Accidental Tourist* – Anne Tyler**

329 pages, also available in large print, cd, DVD, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Macon Leary is a travel writer who hates both travel and anything out of the ordinary. He is grounded by loneliness and an unwillingness to compromise his creature comforts when he meets Muriel, a deliciously peculiar dog-obedience trainer who up-ends Macon's insular world—and thrusts him headlong into a remarkable engagement with life. (Random House)

***The Age of Innocence* – Edith Wharton**

265 pages, also available in large print, DVD, cd, Playaway, guide in penguin.com

Edith Wharton's most famous novel, written immediately after the end of the First World War, is a brilliantly realized anatomy of New York society in the 1870s. The charming Newland Archer is content to live within its constraints until he meets Ellen Olenska, whose arrival threatens his impending marriage as well as his comfortable future. (Gardners)

***The Alchemist* – Paulo Coelho**

177 pages, also available in large print, eBook, guide in readinggroupguides.com

The charming tale of Santiago, a shepherd boy, who dreams of seeing the world, is compelling in its own right, but gains resonance through the many lessons Santiago learns during his adventures. He journeys from Spain to Morocco in search of worldly success, and eventually to Egypt, where a fateful encounter with an alchemist brings him at last to self-understanding and spiritual enlightenment. The story has the comic charm, dramatic tension and psychological intensity of a fairy tale, but it's full of specific wisdom as well, about becoming self-empowered, overcoming depression, and believing in dreams. (PW)

***Alias Grace* – Margaret Atwood**

468 pages, also available in large print, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A finalist for the Booker Prize, a national best-seller by the author of *The Handmaid's Tale* tells the story of an enigmatic Victorian woman accused of a double murder and the psychologist who treats her.

***The Amateur Marriage* – Anne Tyler**

306 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Marrying quickly during World War II after falling in love at first sight, a mismatched couple discovers that their different personalities and approaches to life are taking a toll on their relationship and their family.

***Angry Housewives Eating Bonbons* – Lorna Landvik**

404 pages, also available in large print, guide in readinggroupguides.com

The Freesia Court Book Club, renamed "Angry Housewives Eating Bon-Bons" is the story of a group of women and their acceptance of one another just as they are, faults and all. Landvik has crafted a beautiful portrait of female friendship through the years.

***The Art of Racing in the Rain* – Garth Stein**

321 pages, also available on cd, eBook, Playaway, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Nearing the end of his life, Enzo, a dog with a philosopher's soul, tries to bring together the family, pulled apart by a three year custody battle between daughter Zoe's maternal grandparents and her father Denny, a race car driver.

***Astrid & Veronika* – Linda Olsson**

259 pages, also available on cd, Playaway, guide in book

A lyrical study of friendship, love, and loss chronicles the evolving relationship between Veronika, a young New Zealand writer struggling with a recent tragedy and trying to finish her novel, and Astrid, an older, reclusive neighbor who offers comfort in the form of companionship and home-cooked meals, in a debut novel set against the backdrop of small-town Sweden.

***Atonement* – Ian McEwan**

351 pages, also available in large print, cd, Playaway, guide in readinggroupguides.com

The Booker Prize-winning author of *Amsterdam* creates a richly textured novel, set in 1935 England that follows thirteen-year-old Briony Tallis, who witnesses an event involving her sister Cecilia and her childhood friend Robbie Turner, as she becomes the victim of her own imagination, which tears her family apart and leads her on a lifelong search of truth and absolution.

***Back When We Were Grownups* – Anne Tyler**

273 pages, also available in large print, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Beck Davitch looks back on her thirty-year marriage to Joe and her role as a mother and manager of the Open Arms, wondering if she is living the life she was meant to live and reconsidering her dedication to the family business.

***Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* – Sijie Dai**

197 pages, also available in large print, cd, DVD, guide in readinggroupguides.com

During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, two boys are sent to the country for reeducation, where their lives take an unexpected turn when they meet the beautiful daughter of a local tailor and stumble upon a forbidden stash of Western literature.

***Barefoot* – Elin Hilderbrand**

403 page, guide in book

Visiting Nantucket with their children during a summer vacation, three women befriend a local youth and share their struggles with such challenges as infidelity, the loss of a job under scandalous circumstances, and health problems.

***The Bean Trees* – Barbara Kingsolver**

246 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Taylor Greer leaves her poverty-stricken life in Kentucky and heads west, picking up an abandoned Native American baby girl whom she names Turtle and finds a new home in Tucson.

***Bee Season* – Myla Goldberg**

275 pages, also available in large print, cd, DVD, guide in readinggroupguides.com

An ordinary girl with an exceptional gift for spelling, young Eliza Naumann embarks on the rough-and-tumble "spelling bee" circuit, where her quirky family will collide with the harsh realities of life.

***Before You Know Kindness* – Chris Bohjalian**

422 pages, also available in large print, guide in book

After a decade of spending the delightful summer week at their country house in New Hampshire, the members of the extended Seton family are confronted by a terrible accident when a partially loaded hunting rifle in the wrong hands leads to tragedy, testing the values, convictions, and relationships that hold the family together.

***Bel Canto* – Ann Patchett**

318 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

When terrorists seize hostages at an embassy party, an unlikely assortment of people is thrown together, including American opera star Roxane Coss, and Mr. Hosokawa, a Japanese CEO and her biggest fan.

***Big Stone Gap* – Adriana Trigiani**

272 pages, also available in large print, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Town pharmacist and local spinster Ave Maria has been keeping the secrets of Stone Gap for a long time, but now a skeleton is about to tumble from her own family closet.

Overflowing with humor and compassion, *Big Stone Gap* is the enchanting story of a woman who thinks life has passed her by, only to learn that the best is yet to come. Set in Virginia's Appalachian mountains, the novel follows Ave Maria Mulligan on her quest to discover just who she is and what she wants out of life. (From a Book Page review)

***Bless Me, Ultima* – Rudolfo Anaya**

290 pages, also available on cd, guide in Novelist

A lyrical coming-of-age story that *The New York Times* called "probably the best-known and most-respected contemporary Chicano fiction," this novel explores the complex relationship between medicine and belief.

***Blessings* – Anna Quindlen**

226 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

When a teenage couple abandons their baby at the gate of the estate owned by Lydia Blessing, Skip Cuddy, the estate caretaker, decides to raise the child himself, a decision that has a profound effect on the lives of everyone in the community.

***Blue Diary* – Alice Hoffman**

303 pages, also available in large print, guide in book

The revelation of a dark secret about Ethan Ford's true identity and his past threatens to turn a small Massachusetts town upside down as the truth shatters Monroe's small-town peace and tests the bonds between family and friends.

***The Bonesetter's Daughter* – Amy Tan**

353 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in Novelist and readinggroupguides.com

Struggling to regain her voice and express her true feelings to her husband, ghostwriter Ruth Young discovers that her inability to speak closely parallels the story of her mother LuLing's early life in China, where Ruth finds the famous bonesetter, a woman whose mouth was sealed shut during a suicide attempt.

***The Book Thief* – Markus Zusak**

552 pages, also available on cd, eAudio, guide in readinggroupguides.com

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.

***Bridget Jones's Diary* – Helen Fielding**

271 pages, also available on cd, DVD, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A hilarious journal chronicles a year in the life of Bridget Jones, a single, thirty-something woman on a perpetual quest for self-improvement, as she struggles to cope with relationships, weight control, and the other baffling complexities of modern life.

***Broken for You* – Stephanie Kallos**

371 pages, also available on cd, guide in book

Two very different women, each with her own dark secrets – wealthy, reclusive septuagenarian Margaret Hughes, living alone with her vast collection of priceless antiques, and Wanda Schultz, a brokenhearted young woman in search of her wayward boyfriend – find new meaning and redemption in their growing friendship with each other.

***Child of a Rainless Year* – Jane Lindskold**

400 pages, no guide

Middle-aged Mira Fenn knows she has an uncomfortably exotic past. As a small girl, she lived in an ornate old house in tiny Las Vegas, New Mexico, tended by oddly silent servant women and ruled by her coldly flamboyant mother Colette. When Mira was nine, Colette went on one of her unexplained trips, only this time she never returned. Placed with foster parents, Mira was raised in Ohio, normal save for her passion for color. On gaining adulthood, she learned that she still owned the New Mexico house. She also learned that, as a condition of being allowed to adopt her, Mira's foster parents had agreed to change their name, move to another state, and never ask why. Years later, going through family papers after the deaths of her elderly foster parents, Mira finds documents that pique her curiosity about her vanished mother and the reasons behind her strange childhood and adoption.

***The Color Purple* – Alice Walker**

288 pages, also available on DVD, guide in litlovers.com

The lives of two sisters--Nettie, a missionary in Africa, and Celie, a southern woman married to a man she hates--are revealed in a series of letters exchanged over thirty years.

***Comfort and Joy* – Kristin Hannah**

237 pages, also available on cd, no guide

Recently divorced and having no family of her own, Joy Candellaro is beginning to dream of a new life with widower Daniel O'Shea and his son, Bobby, until a fateful Christmas Eve forces her to make a painful choice.

***The Constant Princess* – Philippa Gregory**

393 pages, also available on cd, guide in book

A richly detailed fictional portrait of Henry VIII's first wife, Katherine of Aragon, the daughter of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain, follows her from her passionate youthful marriage to Henry's older brother, Arthur, her widowhood, her marriage to Henry and her denial of her true love for Arthur, and the divorce that led to Henry's second marriage to Anne Boleyn.

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

226 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

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.

***Daughter of Fortune* – Isabel Allende**

399 pages, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Raised in the British colony of Valparaiso, Chile, after being abandoned as a baby, a pregnant Eliza follows her lover, Joaquin Andieta, to California at the height of the Gold Rush and finds adventure and adversity on her road to independence and love.

***Dead Until Dark* – Charlaine Harris**

327 pages, also on cd, guide in bestsellers.about.com

Love blossoms between Sookie Stackhouse, a cocktail waitress who keeps to herself because of her ability to read minds, and Bill, a vampire with ties to a crowd that may be responsible for the death of one of Sookie's coworkers.

***Dearest Dorothy, Are We There Yet?* – Charlene Ann Baumbich**

233 pages, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Introduces the colorful inhabitants of Partonville, a small farming town in southern Illinois, including the senior citizens' softball team, the Wild Musketeers; the Happy Hookers, a group of women who used to hook rugs but switched to playing bunco; and the irrepressible eighty-seven-year-old Dorothy Jean Westra, who faces a choice that could change her town forever.

***The Diary of Mattie Spenser* – Sandra Dallas**

*229 pages, also available in large print, guide in *Novelist**

Mattie agrees to marry the town's eligible bachelor, and soon she and Luke have set off to build a home in Colorado, and as they cross the wilderness she learns the truth about her new husband and finds love at last, in a poignant saga of pioneer life.

The Dirty Girls Social Club - Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez

357 pages, also available on cd, guide in book

In the years after graduating from Boston University, six Latina friends from widely varied backgrounds meet every six months to dine, share the stories of their everyday lives, and offer advice to one another.

Doomsday Book – Connie Willis

578 pages, also available on cd; , guide in <http://www.lib.chattanooga.gov/doomsdayDiscQ.pdf>

Journeying back in time to the year 1320, twenty-first-century Oxford woman Kivrin arrives in the past during the outbreak of a deadly epidemic. Winner of the Hugo Award and the Nebula Award.

Eating Heaven – Jennie Shortridge

269 pages, guide in book

Eleanor Samuels, a large and lonely food magazine writer, has some big-time food "issues" of her own. Faced with her favorite uncle's terminal illness, Eleanor becomes his primary caretaker, feeding him all his favorite foods one last time. As she cooks and cleans and tends to Uncle Benny's increasing needs, she discovers long-buried secrets about her emotionally frayed family that tear her world apart. Through cooking, nurturing, and a delicious flirtation with a new chef in town, Eleanor comes to terms with eating and love, family and forgiveness, and becoming comfortable in her own skin. (readinggroupguides.com)

Ella Minnow Pea – Mark Dunn

208 pages, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A linguistic tour de force sure to delight word lovers playfully recounts what happens when the citizens of an island must rely on all their ingenuity to communicate in an increasingly limited language when the government progressively bans letters from the alphabet.

Evening – Susan Minot

264 pages, also available in large print, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Now ailing and surrounded by her children, sixty-five-year-old Ann Grant Lord reminisces about a glorious summer weekend some forty years earlier during which she met and lost the love of her life.

The Eyre Affair – Jasper Fforde

374 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

In a world where you can actually get lost (literally) in literature, Thursday Next, a notorious Special Operative in literary detection, races against time to stop the world's Third Most Wanted criminal from kidnapping characters, including Jane Eyre, from works of literature, forcing her to dive into the pages of a novel to stop literary homicide, in a wildly imaginative, mesmerizing thriller.

Fahrenheit 451 – Ray Bradbury

179 pages, also available in large print, cd, DVD, guide in readinggroupguides.com

This novel is a soothsayer, warning of a future populated by non-readers and non-thinkers, a lost people with no sense of their history. At the same time it salutes those who dedicate their lives to the preservation and passing on of knowledge, and testifies to the quiet or passionate courage of the rebel with a cause. Fahrenheit also poses questions about the role(s) of government: Should it reflect the will of the people? Should government do the people's thinking for them?

***Fall on Your Knees* – Anne-Marie MacDonald**

508 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A Canadian best seller follows the lives and secrets of four remarkable sisters, from Cape Breton Island, to the battlefields of World War I, and into New York City's jazz scene.

***Falling Angels* – Tracy Chevalier**

324 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

In a novel of manners and social divisions set against the backdrop of turn-of-the-century England, two girls from different classes become friends, and their families' lives become intertwined in the process.

***Family Tree* – Barbara Delinsky**

358 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

After a life of uncertainty, Dana Clarke has finally achieved the stability she has craved in her marriage to a man who can trace his lineage back to the Mayflower, but her world is shattered when her daughter is born with African American traits in her appearance, sending Dana on a poignant quest in search of a possible African-American lineage in her husband's family.

***Fingersmith* – Sarah Waters**

511 pages, also available on cd, DVD, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Growing up as a foster child among a family of thieves, orphan Sue Trinder hopes to pay back that kindness by playing a key role in a swindle scheme devised by their leader, Gentleman, who is planning to con a fortune out of the naive Maud Lily, but Sue's growing pity for their helpless victim could destroy the plot.

***Firefly Lane* - Kristin Hannah**

513 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide at readinggroupguides.com

Inseparable best friends Kate and Tully, two young women who, despite their very different lives, have vowed to be there for each other forever, have been true to their promise for thirty years, until events and choices in their lives tear them apart.

***Five People You Meet in Heaven* – Mitch Albom**

196 pages, also available in large print, DVD, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Killed in a tragic accident, Eddie, an elderly man who believes that he had an uninspired life, awakens in the afterlife, where he discovers that heaven consists of having five people explain the meaning of one's life.

***The Florabama Ladies' Auxiliary & Sewing Circle* – Lois Battle**

358 pages, also available in large print, tape, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A close-knit group of settled small-town ladies bands together to help each other through their most difficult life passage - middle age.

***Friday Night Knitting Club* – Kate Jacobs**

345 pages, also available on cd, eBook, guide in book

Gathering for their weekly knitting club at a small yarn shop on Manhattan's Upper West Side, a group of friends shares such challenges as raising children, navigating the ups and downs of their careers, and pursuing uncertain relationships.

***The Full Cupboard of Life* – Alexander McCall Smith**

198 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Worrying about her upcoming marriage, Precious Ramotswe is confronted by the challenges of running her No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency and an investigation into the would-be suitors of a wealthy woman to determine if any are fortune hunters.

***Gap Creek* – Robert Morgan**

326 pages, also available in large print, tape, cd, guide in Novelist and readinggroupguides.com

During their first year of marriage, Julie and Hank move to Gap Creek, South Carolina, where a flood that nearly kills them tests the endurance of their relationship.

***Girl with a Pearl Earring* – Tracy Chevalier**

233 pages, also available in large print, tape, cd, DVD, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A poor seventeenth-century servant girl knows her place in the household of the painter Johannes Vermeer, but when he begins to paint her, nasty whispers and rumors circulate throughout the town.

***The Goddesses of Kitchen Avenue* – Barbara Samuel**

324 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in book

Struggling to pick up the pieces of her life in the wake of a troubled marriage, Trudy finds support from four eclectic friends including a divorced social worker, a grieving older widow, an aspiring writer, and a young photographer.

***The Good Earth* – Pearl Buck**

316 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in book

A Chinese peasant overcomes the forces of nature and the frailties of human nature to become a wealthy landowner.

***Good in Bed* – Jennifer Weiner**

376 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Humiliated to discover that her ex-boyfriend has been chronicling their former sex life in a series of articles called "Loving a Larger Woman" in a popular women's magazine, pop-culture journalist Cannie Shapiro embarks on an adventure-filled odyssey as she confronts her losses, makes peace with the past, and comes to terms with herself, her dreams, and her goals in life.

***The Grapes of Wrath* – John Steinbeck –2008 APPR title**

455 pages, also available on cd, tape, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Depicts the hardships and suffering endured by the Joads as they journey from Oklahoma to California during the Depression.

***The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* - Mary Ann Shaffer**

277 pages, also available in large print, on cd, eAudio, guide in readinggroupguides.com

In 1946, writer Juliet Ashton finds inspiration for her next book in her correspondence with a native of Guernsey, who tells her about the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, a book club born as an alibi during German occupation.

***Handmaid's Tale* – Margaret Atwood**

311 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A chilling look at the near future presents the story of Offred, a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead, once the United States, an oppressive world where women are no longer allowed to read and are valued only as long as they are viable for reproduction.

***The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* – Carson McCullers**

359 pages, also available in large print, cd, DVD, guide in readinggroupguides.com

With its profound sense of moral isolation and its compassionate glimpses into its characters' inner lives, the novel is considered McCullers' finest work. At its center is the deaf-mute John Singer, who becomes the confidant for all various types of misfits in a Georgia mill town during the 1930s. Each one yearns for escape from small town life. When Singer's mute companion goes insane, Singer moves into the Kelly house, where Mick Kelly, the book's heroine, finds solace in her music. Wonderfully attune to the spiritual isolation that underlies the human condition, and with a deft sense for racial tensions in the South, McCullers spins a haunting, unforgettable story that gives voice to the rejected, the forgotten, and the mistreated -- and, through Mick Kelly, gives voice to the quiet, intensely personal search for beauty. (Houghton Mifflin)

***The History of Love* – Nicole Krauss**

252 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A lost book reappears, drawing together the lives of the irrepressible Leo Gursky who has arrived at the end of his life, a locksmith searching for the son who's never known him, and young Alma Singer, desperate to find her namesake and a cure for her mother's loneliness. Gradually their stories merge into a single triumph of the imagination over loss. (readinggroupguides.com)

***The Hot Flash Club* – Nancy Thayer**

340 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in www.nancythayer.com/discussion.php

Faye, Marilyn, Alice, and Shirley--four middle-aged women who are all feeling over the hill and out of life--get together to form the Hot Flash Club, where they band together to help each other and get the most out of life.

***The House on Mango Street* – Sandra Cisneros**

144 pages, also available on cd, guide at randomhouse.com

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.

***I Capture the Castle* – Dodie Smith**

343 pages, also available on DVD, guide in book

The 1934 journal of seventeen-year-old Cassandra Mortmain reveals her perspective on six stormy months in the eccentric and poverty-stricken life of her family in a ruined Suffolk castle, ending with the revelation that Cassandra is deeply in love. J.K. Rowling says, "This book has one of the most charismatic narrators I've ever met."

***Icy Sparks* – Gwyn Hyman Rubio**

308 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

After years of living in a children's asylum for having spontaneous jerks and spasms, Icy returns home and is quickly befriended by Miss Emily, who cares for her and teaches her the ways of life, transforming Icy into a new person and forever changing her view of the world.

***Into the Forest* – Jean Hegland**

193 pages, guide in jeanhegland.com

A delicately wrought modern fable about values, both of individual and of society, tells the moving story of two sisters struggling to survive while too much technology and information overwhelms the world around them.

***Isabel's Daughter* – Judith Ryan Hendricks**

385 pages, guide in readinggroupguides.com

“The first time I saw my mother was the night she died. The second time was at a party in Santa Fe”. After a childhood spent in an institution and a series of foster homes, Avery James has trained herself not to wonder about the mother who gave her up. But her safe, predictable life changes one night when she stumbles upon the portrait of a woman who is the mirror image of herself. Slowly but inevitably, Avery is compelled to discover all she can about her mother, Isabel. Avery is drawn into complex relationships with the people who knew her mother. As she weaves together the threads of her mother's artistic heritage and her grandmother's skills as a healer, Avery learns that while discovering Isabel provides a certain resolution in her life, it's discovering herself that brings lasting happiness. (From the publisher)

***The Jane Austen Book Club* – Karen Joy Fowler**

288 pages, also available on cd, guide in book

As six Californians get together to form a book club to discuss the novels of Jane Austen, their lives are turned upside down by troubled marriages, illicit affairs, changing relationships, and love, in a comedy of contemporary manners.

***Jane Eyre* – Charlotte Bronte**

532 pages, also available on cd, DVD, guide in penguinputnam.com

In early nineteenth-century England, an orphaned young woman accepts employment as a governess at Thornfield Hall, a country estate owned by the mysteriously remote Mr. Rochester.

***The Joy Luck Club* – Amy Tan**

288 pages, also available in large print, Playaway, DVD, guide in Novelist

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.

***The Kite Runner* – Khaled Hosseini**

324 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Traces the unlikely friendship of a wealthy Afghan youth and a servant's son, in a tale that spans the final days of Afghanistan's monarchy through the atrocities of the present day.

***Land of A Hundred Wonders* – Lesley Kagen**

289 pages, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Left brain damaged after a car accident that had killed her parents, fledgling reporter Gibby McGraw is determined to prove that she can compete with everyone else when she stumbles upon the body of Buster Malloy, the future governor of Kentucky, and sets out to solve the murder, uncovering a web of corruption, family secrets, and racism in tiny Cray Ridge.

***The Last Time They Met* – Anita Shreve**

313 pages, also available in large print, guide in readinggroupguides.com

At a literary festival in Toronto, Linda Fallon is reunited with famous poet Thomas Janes, with whom she had an affair at age seventeen and then again at age twenty-seven, but her life is drastically different this time around.

***The Life of Pi* – Yann Martel**

319 pages, also available in large print, guide in book

Possessing encyclopedia-like intelligence, unusual zookeeper's son Pi Patel sets sail for America, but when the ship sinks, he escapes on a lifeboat and is lost at sea with a dwindling number of animals until only he and a hungry Bengal tiger remain.

***Like Water for Chocolate* – Laura Esquivel**

245 pages, also available on cd, no guide

Despite the fact that she has fallen in love with a young man, Tita, the youngest of three daughters born to a tyrannical rancher must obey tradition and remain single and at home to care for her mother.

***Little Earthquakes* – Jennifer Weiner**

417 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in book

A chef, an event planner, and a basketball player's wife find their marriages and careers in Philadelphia challenged by new motherhood, difficult schedules, and infidelity.

***Lord of the Flies* – William Golding**

256 pages, also available on Playaway, cd, guide in Novelist

The classic study of human nature which depicts the degeneration of a group of schoolboys marooned on a desert island.

***Love in the Time of Cholera* – Gabriel Garcia Marquez**

348 pages, also available in large print, guide in readinggroupguides.com

In this magnificent story of a romance, García Márquez beautifully and unflinchingly explores the nature of love in all its guises, small and large, passionate and serene. Love can emerge like a disease in these characters, but it can also outlast bleak decades of war and cholera, and the effects of time itself. (readinggroupguides.com)

***Lovely Bones* – Alice Sebold**

328 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in Novelist and readinggroupguides.com

The spirit of fourteen-year-old Susie Salmon describes her murder, her surprise at her new home in heaven, and her witness to her family's grief, efforts to find the killer, and attempts to come to terms with what has happened.

***Loving Frank* – Nancy Horan**

362 pages, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Fact and fiction blend in a historical novel that chronicles the relationship between seminal architect Frank Lloyd Wright and Mamah Cheney, from their meeting, when they were each married to another, to the clandestine affair that shocked Chicago society.

***March* – Geraldine Brooks**

280 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

In a story inspired by the father character in *Little Women* and drawn from the journals and letters of Louisa May Alcott's father Bronson, a man leaves behind his family to serve in the Civil War and finds his marriage and beliefs profoundly challenged by his experiences.

***Marrying Mozart* – Stephanie Cowell**

350 pages, guide sent to us by author, who says "I am happy to do brief phone book club visits if such is wanted."

The lives of the four Weber sisters, the daughters of a Mannheim musical family, are changed forever by the arrival of twenty-one-year-old Wolfgang Mozart, a young man struggling to find his place in the eighteenth-century musical world, as he is drawn to the beauty of Aloysia, is inspired by Josefa's bright voice, uses Sophie as his confidante, and marries Constanze.

***Memoirs of a Geisha* – Arthur Golden**

433 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

The "memoirs" of one of Japan's most celebrated geishas describes how, as a little girl in 1929, she is sold into slavery; her efforts to learn the arts of the geisha; the impact of World War II; and her struggle to reinvent herself to win the man she loves.

***Memory Keeper's Daughter* – Kim Edwards**

401 pages, also available on cd, guide in book

In a tale spanning twenty-five years, a doctor delivers his newborn twin daughter during a snowstorm and, rashly deciding to protect his wife from the baby's affliction with Down syndrome, turns her over to a nurse, who secretly raises the child.

***The Mermaid Chair* – Sue Monk Kidd**

335 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Jessie Sullivan's conventional life is transformed when she is summoned home to tiny Egret Island, where she meets Brother Thomas, a monk who is about to take his final vows, and encounters the legend of a beautiful and mysterious chair dedicated to a saint who had originally been a mermaid.

***Middlesex* – Jeffrey Eugenides**

529 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Calliope's friendship with a classmate and her sense of identity are compromised by the adolescent discovery that she is a hermaphrodite, a situation with roots in her grandparents' desperate struggle for survival in the 1920s.

***Milagro Beanfield War* – John Nichols**

445 pages, also available on DVD, guide in henryholt.com/readingguide/milagro

Violence erupts in the poor town of Milagro when one dirt farmer impulsively taps the main irrigation channel.

***My Ántonia* – Willa Cather**

272 pages, also available on cd, Playaway, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Perhaps the most popular of Cather's novels, *My Ántonia* is at once the intimate portrait of an American heroine, an elegy for a vanished frontier, and the story of an unconsummated love affair. (readinggroupguides.com)

***My Sister's Keeper* – Jodi Picoult**

423 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in book

Conceived to provide a bone marrow match for her leukemia-stricken sister, a teenage Kate begins to question her moral obligations in light of countless medical procedures and ultimately decides to fight for the right to make decisions about her own body.

***Myth of You and Me* – Leah Stewart**

276 pages, also available on cd, guide in book

A letter from a childhood best friend to whom she has not spoken in ten years and an odd legacy from her boss, elderly historian Oliver Doucet, sends thirty-year-old Cameron on a difficult mission to track down her old friend Sonia and hand-deliver a mysterious package to her, in a novel that celebrates the power, pain, and pleasure of friendship.

***The Namesake* – Jhumpa Lahiri**

291 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in *Novelist* and readinggroupguides.com

Jhumpa Lahiri, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for her story collection *Interpreter of Maladies*, examines the clash of culture and conflicts of assimilation when the Ganguli family moves from India to the United States.

***The Nanny Diaries* – Emma McLaughlin**

305 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A satirical glimpse into Manhattan's upper class follows Nanny, a struggling NYU student who takes a position caring for the son of the rich and glamorous X family, as she learns how to juggle a vast array of tasks so that a Park Avenue wife never has to lift a well-manicured finger.

***The Next Thing on my List* – Jill Smolinski**

288 pages, also available in large print, guide in book

Meet June Parker. She works for L.A. Rideshare, adores her rent-stabilized apartment in Santa Monica, and struggles with losing a few pesky pounds. But June's life is about to change. After a dark turn of events involving Weight Watchers, a chili recipe, and a car accident in which her passenger, Marissa, dies, June finds herself in possession of a list Marissa has written, "20 Things to Do by My 25th Birthday." Even though they barely knew each other, June is compelled by both guilt and a desire to set things right and finish the list for Marissa. The tasks before her range from inspiring (Run a 5K), to daring (Go braless), to near-impossible (Change someone's life), and as June races to achieve each goal before the deadline, she learns more about her own life than she ever bargained for. Funny, engaging, and heartwarming, *The Next Thing on My List* features a loveable, relatable heroine and a story with plenty of humor and heart. (From the publisher)

***The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* – Alexander McCall Smith**

235 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Working in Gaborone, Botswana, Precious Ramotswe investigates several local mysteries, including a search for a missing boy and the case of the clinic doctor with different personalities for different days of the week.

***No Place like Home* – Barbara Samuel**

298 pages, also available in large print, on tape, eAudio, eBook, no guide

After leaving home more than 20 years ago, Jewel Sabatino returns to Pueblo, Colorado. She's broke and traveling with her 17-year-old son, Shane, and best friend, Michael, who is dying from AIDS. Nervous, not knowing what to expect, Jewel is pleasantly surprised by the family welcome, although her father, who told her she was dead to him when she rode off with her musician boyfriend all those years ago, is missing, a sign that he still feels the same way. She settles into the house her aunt left her, but Shane is having difficulty adjusting to small-town life, while Michael, her rock, is slowly losing the battle for life. Jewel sends for Michael's younger brother, Malachi, whom she has never met. The two have an instant sexual chemistry that causes her family to speculate, but Malachi has family issues of his own, which makes the overtures of the Sabatino clan difficult to accept. Samuel tells a truly heartwarming story that proves that sometimes you can go home again. (Booklist Reviews)

***Olive Kitteridge* – Elizabeth Strout** 2009 Pulitzer Prize Winner

270 pages, also available in large print, guide in readinggroupguides.com

The world of Olive Kitteridge, a retired school teacher in a small coastal town in Maine, is revealed in stories that explore her diverse roles in many lives, including a lounge singer haunted by a past love, her stoic husband, and her own resentful son.

***One Thousand White Women: The Journals of May Dodd* – Jim Fergus**

304 pages, guide in Novelist and readinggroupguides.com

Based on actual historical events, this novel follows the indomitable May Dodd as she travels to the Cheyenne, becomes the bride of Little Wolf, chief of that tribe, and struggles with living in and being loyal to two different worlds.

***Orange Mint and Honey* – Carleen Brice**

324 pages, also available on cd, guide in apooobooks.com

Left broke and burned out after graduate school, Shay Dixon makes the decision to reunite with her alcoholic mother and discovers a changed woman, who is now sober, with a positive outlook on life, a love of gardening, and a darling toddler named Sunny, in a debut novel (from the Denver author) about the extraordinary power of healing, forgiveness, and redemption.

***The Other Boleyn Girl* – Philippa Gregory**

664 pages, guide in book

The daughters of a ruthlessly ambitious family, Mary and Anne Boleyn are sent to the court of Henry VIII to attract the attention of the king, who first takes Mary as his mistress, in which role she bears him an illegitimate son, and then Anne as his wife.

***Out Stealing Horses* – Per Petterson**

238 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Out Stealing Horses has been embraced across the world as a classic, a novel of universal relevance and power. Panoramic and gripping, it tells the story of Trond Sander, a sixty-seven-year-old man who has moved from the city to a remote, riverside cabin, only to have all the turbulence, grief, and overwhelming beauty of his youth come back to him one night while he's out on a walk. From the moment Trond sees a strange figure coming out of the dark behind his home, the reader is immersed in a decades-deep story of searching and loss, and in the precise, irresistible prose of a newly crowned master of fiction. (readinggroupguides.com)

***Painted Drum* – Louise Erdrich**

277 pages, also available on e-book, guide in harpercollins.com

Discovering a cache of valuable Native American artifacts while appraising an estate in New Hampshire, Faye Travers investigates the history of a ceremonial drum, which possesses spiritual powers and changes the lives of people who encounter it.

***Paying the Price* – Madge Walls**

383 pages, guide sent by this local author, who accepts invitations to book club discussions in Colorado Springs.

“A real life heroine, finely drawn characters, and the cutthroat world of real estate set in a Hawaiian paradise make *Paying the Price* an impressive debut! Wells writes a compelling story about the challenges of parenting and the heartbreak of letting go.” (Kathy Brandt, author of *Under Pressure*).

***Peony in Love* – Lisa See**

284 pages, also available in large print, cd, eBook, guide in readinggroupguides.com

In seventeenth-century China, three women become emotionally involved with The Peony Pavilion, a famed opera rumored to cause lovesickness and even death, including Peony, the cloistered daughter of a wealthy scholar, who succumbs to its spell only to return after her death as a "hungry ghost" to haunt her former fiancé, who has married another.

***People of the Book* – Geraldine Brooks**

372 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

In 1996, Hanna Heath, an Australian rare-book expert, is offered the job of a lifetime: analysis and conservation of the famed Sarajevo Haggadah, which has been rescued from Serb shelling during the Bosnian war. Priceless and beautiful, the book is one of the earliest Jewish volumes ever to be illuminated with images. When Hanna, a caustic loner with a passion for her work, discovers a series of tiny artifacts in its ancient binding --- an insect wing fragment, wine stains, salt crystals, and a white hair --- she begins to unlock the book's mysteries. The reader is ushered into an exquisitely detailed and atmospheric past, tracing the book's journey from its salvation back to its creation. (readinggroupguides.com)

***Perfume: the Story of a Murderer* – Patrick Suskind**

255 pages, also available in large print, DVD, guide in readinggroupguides.com

An odorless baby orphaned in a Paris gutter in 1738 grows to become a monster obsessed with his perfect sense of smell, and a desire to capture, by any means, the ultimate scent which will make him human.

***Persian Pickle Club* – Sandra Dallas**

196 pages, available on cd, no guide

When a group of rural 1930s Kansas women, who gather each week to gossip and quilt, gains a new friend from the city who uncovers a long-kept secret about one of the members' husbands, the group bands together to support and protect one another.

***Pope Joan* – Donna Woolfolk Cross**

422 pages, guide in Novelist and readinggroupguides.com

Set against the turbulent events of the Dark Ages, a fictional account of the controversial figure of historical record profiles a spirited woman who, disguised as a man, rose to rule Christianity as the only woman ever to become pope.

***A Prayer for Owen Meany* – John Irving**

543 pages, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Owen Meany, the only child of a New Hampshire granite quarrier, believes he is God's instrument. He is. This is John Irving's most comic novel; yet Owen Meany is Mr. Irving's most heartbreaking character. (Random House)

***Pride and Prejudice* – Jane Austen**

435 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Elizabeth Bennet's chances of happiness are endangered by the foibles of human nature in this classic nineteenth-century novel.

***Prodigal Summer* – Barbara Kingsolver**

444 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in Novelist and readinggroupguides.com

Wildlife biologist Deanna is caught off guard by an intrusive young hunter, while bookish city wife Lusa finds herself facing a difficult identity choice, and elderly neighbors find attraction at the height of a long-standing feud.

***The Queen's Fool* – Philippa Gregory**

504 pages, also available on cd, guide in Simonandschuster.net

In 1553, fourteen-year-old Hannah Green, a young Jewish girl, flees to London to escape the Spanish Inquisition and catches the attention of Robert Dudley, who plans to use her talents for observation and second sight, as Hannah must choose between the intrigues of the English court and her secret life in the Jewish community, in the sequel to *The Other Boleyn Girl*.

***A Real Basket Case* – Beth Groundwater**

269 pages, also available in large print, guide at bethgroundwater.com

If your group would like to discuss A Real Basket Case with this local author, by phone or in person, contact her on her website.

Claire Hanover, a Colorado Springs housewife who has started a gift-basket business, is feeling lonely and unloved by her work-obsessed husband. Her best friend, Ellen, divorced and bitter, urges her to attend an aerobics class. When the handsome instructor, Enrique, flirts with Claire, Ellen tells her to have an affair with him. Claire agrees only to a massage. After Enrique is shot and killed while giving Claire the massage, the police arrest her husband, Roger. Claire realizes that she has jeopardized her marriage and her husband, whom she still loves. She is sure that someone has framed him and sets out to prove it. As she investigates, she learns that there are many people who could have killed Enrique, ex-girlfriends and drug-dealing cohorts among them. (Booklist)

The Red Tent – Anita Diamant

321 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

In a story based on the Book of Genesis, Jacob's only daughter, Dinah, shares her unique perspectives on the origins of many of our modern religious practices and sexual politics, eager to impart the lessons in endurance and humanity she has learned from her father's wives.

Remember Me? – Sophie Kinsella

389 pages, also available in large print, cd, eAudio, eBook, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Awakening in the hospital after a car crash believing that it is 2004 and that she is a twenty-five-year-old, disorganized, single sales associate, Lexi is stunned to find that she has lost three years in her life, she is the boss of her department, and she is married to a handsome millionaire, but her perfect new life begins to go awry, especially when a man shows up claiming to be her secret lover.

The Rest of her Life – Laura Moriarty

333 pages, also available in large print, guide in book

When her daughter accidentally hits and kills another high school girl with the family's car, Leigh, a troubled mother, is forced to confront her relationship with her daughter, her resentment toward her husband (who understands the daughter better) and her long-buried feelings towards her own neglectful mother. Presents a tale about the complicated interactions between mothers and daughters who unwittingly inflict harm on one another in spite of their best intentions.

River King – Alice Hoffman

324 pages, also available in large print, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A town divided by class lines is thrown into turmoil by a mysterious death, which begins to unravel the lives of a fifteen-year-old girl, a young boy, and a woman running from her own destiny.

The Road – Cormac McCarthy

241 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

In a novel set in an indefinite, futuristic, post-apocalyptic world, a father and his young son make their way through the ruins of a devastated American landscape, struggling to survive and preserve the last remnants of their own humanity.

The Rooftops of Tehran – Mahbod Seraji

345 pages, guide in book

"In his haunting debut novel, Mahbod Seraji brings humor and humanity to a story of secret love in the brutal last days of the Shah. Set against the background of repression that launched the Iranian revolution, Pasha's and Zari's story shows that love and hope among the young thrive even in the most oppressive of times. Seraji is a striking new talent."

- Sandra Dallas, author of *Tallgrass*, supplied by publisher

***The Samurai's Garden* – Gail Tsukuyama**

211 pages, guide in readinggroupguides.com

On the eve of the Second World War, a young Chinese man is sent to his family's summer home in Japan to recover from tuberculosis. He will rest, swim in the salubrious sea, and paint in the brilliant shoreside light. It will be quiet and solitary. But he meets four local residents - a lovely young Japanese girl and three older people. What then ensues is a tale that readers will find at once classical yet utterly unique. Young Stephen has his own adventure, but it is the unfolding story of Matsu, Sachi, and Kenzo that seizes your attention and will stay with you forever. (readinggroupguides.com)

***Savannah Blues* – Mary Kay Andrews**

404 pages, guide in book

A delightful novel of divorce, revenge, and really great antiques follows Eloise "Weezie" Foley, an antiques picker, as she deals with a huge estate sale, eccentric relatives, a sexy ex-boyfriend, and her ex-husband and his new girlfriend, unexpectedly discovering that love is much better the second time around.

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

302 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in Novelist and readinggroupguides.com

After her "stand-in mother," a bold black woman named Rosaleen, insults the biggest racists in town, Lily Owens joins Rosaleen on a journey to Tiburon, South Carolina, where they are taken in by three black beekeeping sisters.

***The Shack* – William P. Young**

246 pages, also available in large print, on cd, guide in bestsellers.about.com

Four years after his daughter is abducted and evidence of her murder is found in an abandoned shack, Mackenzie Allen Philips returns to the shack in response to a note claiming to be from God, and has a life-changing experience.

***The Shadow of the Wind* – Carlos Ruiz Zafon**

486 pages, also available in eAudio, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A great world city lies shrouded in secrets after the war, and a boy mourning the loss of his mother finds solace in his love for an extraordinary book called *The Shadow of the Wind*, by an author named Julian Carax. When the boy searches for Carax's other books, it begins to dawn on him, to his horror, that someone has been systematically destroying every copy of every book the man has ever written. Soon the boy realizes that *The Shadow of the Wind* is as dangerous to own as it is impossible to forget, for the mystery of its author's identity holds the key to an epic story of murder, madness, and doomed love that someone will go to any lengths to keep secret. (Penguin Putnam)

***Skipping Christmas* – John Grisham**

177 pages, also available in large print, tape, cd, no guide

Luther and Nora Krank decide to avoid the chaos and frenzy of Christmas by taking a Caribbean cruise during the holidays, but their plans have unexpected consequences.

***Snow Falling on Cedars* – David Guterson**

345 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A Japanese-American fisherman's 1954 murder trial becomes the backdrop of a story that follows a doomed love affair between a white boy and a Japanese girl, a simmering land dispute, and the wartime internment of San Piedro's Japanese residents.

***Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* – Lisa See**

258 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

An evocative story of friendship set against the backdrop of a nineteenth-century China in which women suffered from foot binding, isolation, and illiteracy follows an elderly woman and her companion as they communicate their hopes, dreams, joys, and tragedies through a unique secret language.

***Special Topics in Calamity Physics* – Marisha Pessl**

514 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Having moved from one academic outpost to another throughout her childhood at the side of her aphorism-prone father, Blue van Meer attends the elite St. Gallway School in her senior year, where she falls in with a charismatic group of friends before the deaths of a teacher and student awaken her analytical instincts.

***Standing in the Rainbow* – Fannie Flagg**

493 pages, also available on cd, guide in book

Captures the humorous and complex realities of ordinary people living in Elmwood Springs, Missouri, including Neighbor Dorothy, a radio hostess, her son Bobby, the Oatman Family Gospel Singers, and hotshot salesman Hamm Sparks.

***Stone Diaries* – Carol Shields**

361 pages, also available in large print, guide in book

From her birth in rural Manitoba, to her journey with her father to southern Indiana, to her years as a wife, mother, and widow, to her old age, Daisy Stone Goodwill struggles to find a place for herself in her own life.

***The Street of a Thousand Blossoms* – Gail Tsukiyama**

422 pages, also available in large print, guide in book

Raised by loving and traditionally minded grandparents, Japanese youths Hiroshi and Kenji are forced to put their dreams on hold in the wake of World War II and find their destinies intertwining with those of a famous sumo master's daughters.

***The Sugar Queen* – Sarah Addison Allen**

276 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Quiet Josey Cirrini's peaceful life caring for her elderly mother is turned upside down when Della Lee Baker, a confident and bold waitress fleeing an abusive boyfriend, decides to hide out in Josey's home.

***Suite Francaise* – Irene Nemirovsky**

431 pages, also available as eBook, Playaway, guide in [bookbrowse.com](#)

Published more than sixty years following the author's death at Auschwitz, a remarkable story of life under the Nazi occupation includes two parts--"A Storm in June, " set amid the chaotic 1940 exodus from Paris on the eve of the Nazi invasion, and "Dolce," set in a German-occupied provincial village rife with jealousy, resentment, resistance, and collaboration.

***Sula* – Toni Morrison**

174 pages, also available on cd, guide in [Novelist](#)

The intense friendship shared by two black women raised in an Ohio town changes when one of them leaves to roam the countryside and returns ten years later.

***Sweeping Up Glass* – Carolyn Wall**

327 pages, also available in large print, guide in [bookbrowse.com](#)

Living behind Harker's Grocery with a young boy named Will'm in 1938 Kentucky, Olivia is stunned when members of the exclusive Hunt Club suddenly turn their sights on the two of them, a dangerous situation complicated by the return of Will'm's mother and the exposure of the Rowe Street community's horrifying secrets.

***Tallgrass* – Sandra Dallas**

303 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in [readinggroupguides.com](#)

Her life turned upside-down when a Japanese internment camp is opened in their small Colorado town, Rennie witnesses the way her community places suspicion on the newcomers when a young girl is murdered, an event that prompts Rennie's own perspective change and the discovery of dangerous secrets.

***Their Eyes Were Watching God* – Zora Neale Hurston**

193 pages, also available on cd and DVD, guide in [readinggroupguides.com](#)

One of the most important works of twentieth-century American literature, Zora Neale Hurston's beloved 1937 classic, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, is an enduring Southern love story sparkling with wit, beauty, and heartfelt wisdom. Told in the captivating voice of a woman who refuses to live in sorrow, bitterness, fear, or foolish romantic dreams, it is the story of fair-skinned, fiercely independent Janie Crawford, and her evolving selfhood through three marriages and a life marked by poverty, trials, and purpose. A true literary wonder, Hurston's masterwork remains as relevant and affecting today as when it was first published -- perhaps the most widely read and highly regarded novel in the entire canon of African American literature. (Harper Perennial)

***Then She Found Me* – Elinor Lipman**

307 pages, also available on cd, DVD, Playaway, no guide

Meet April Epner, the serious, scholarly, adopted daughter of two equally staid parents. They die, but April finds that she's far from orphaned when her birth mother, Bernice Graverman, comes to claim April's heart and improve her wardrobe and love life, too. April is a Latin teacher, given to wearing flannel jumpers. Bernice is hostess of a third-rate daytime talk show and wears designer labels and toad-sized earrings. She descends upon April's quiet life with the

tact of a size-six locust, and the delightful and surprising results of this unlikely reunion will keep you turning pages long after bedtime. (Amazon.com)

These is My Words – Nancy Turner

384 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in book

In a novel based on the author's ancestress, Sarah Prine, a child of the westward expansion, records her dreams, marriage, adventures, joys, and sorrows in her diary.

The Thirteenth Tale – Diane Setterfield

406 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in book

When her health begins failing, the mysterious author Vida Winter decides to let Margaret Lea, a biographer, write the truth about her life, but Margaret needs to verify the facts since Vida has a history of telling outlandish tales.

A Thousand Splendid Suns – Khaled Hosseini

372 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate. As they endure the ever escalating dangers around them --- in their home as well as in the streets of Kabul --- they come to form a bond that makes them both sisters and mother-daughter to each other and that will ultimately alter the course not just of their own lives but of the next generation. With heart-wrenching power and suspense, Hosseini shows how a woman's love for her family can move her to shocking and heroic acts of self-sacrifice, and that in the end it is love, or even the memory of love, that is often the key to survival. (*readinggroupguides.com*)

Three Junes – Julia Glass

353 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

The interconnected lives, loves, and relationships of different generations of the McLeod family are revealed over the course of three crucial summers, in a debut novel about love, death, and birth in a Scottish family.

Time of My Life – Allison Winn Scotch

291 pages, also available in large print, guide in book

Despite her perfect family, Jillian Westfield cannot help but wonder about the life she has left behind and what might have happened if she had not married Henry or quit her job to be a stay-at-home mom, and gets the chance to find out when she wakes up in the middle of her life as it was seven years before.

The Time Traveler's Wife – Audrey Niffenegger

518 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Passionately in love, Clare and Henry vow to hold onto each other and their marriage as they struggle with the effects of Chrono-Displacement Disorder, a condition that casts Henry involuntarily into the world of time travel.

To Kill a Mockingbird – Harper Lee

296 pages, also available in large print, cd, DVD, guide in Novelist and readinggroupguides.com

A little girl whose father defends a black man accused of rape views the explosion of racial hate and violence in a small Alabama town.

***The Tortilla Curtain* – T. Coraghessan Boyle**

355 pages, also available on cd, eAudio, guide in readinggroupguides.com

While leading their lives in their gated hilltop community in Los Angeles, Delaney and Kyra Mossbacher accidentally meet Mexican illegal aliens Candido and America Rincon, and their encounter brings them together in a relationship of error and misunderstanding.

***A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* – Betty Smith**

493 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Through it is often categorized as a coming-of-age novel, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* is much more than that. Its richly plotted narrative of three generations in a poor but proud American family offers a detailed and unsentimental portrait of urban life at the beginning of the century. The story begins in 1912, in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, where eleven-year-old Francie Nolan and her younger brother, Neeley, are spending a blissful Saturday collecting rags, paper, metal, rubber, and other scrap to sell to the junk man for a few pennies. (readinggroupguides.com)

***Waiting to Exhale* – Terry McMillan**

432 pages, also available on DVD, no guide

Four thirty-something African-American women console and support one another in a complex friendship that helps each of them face the middle of her life as a single woman.

***Water for Elephants* – Sara Gruen**

350 pages, also available on Playaway, cd, guide in book

Ninety-something-year-old Jacob Jankowski remembers his time in the circus as a young man during the Great Depression, and his friendship with Marlena, the star of the equestrian act, and Rosie, the elephant, who gave them hope.

***While I Was Gone* – Sue Miller**

265 pages, also available in large print, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Having moved on with her life after a friend was brutally murdered, Jo Becker is now married with a grown family, but when an old housemate moves into the neighborhood, Jo rekindles a relationship that takes her back to the past and threatens her future.

***The White* – Deborah Larsen**

219 pages, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A novel based on the story of Mary Jemison, who, in 1758, was taken by a Shawnee raiding party from her home near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, describes her life among the Seneca and reveals how she became an integral part of their tribe.

***White Ghost Girls* – Alice Greenway**

168 pages, guide in book

The children of a war-photographer father and beautiful but remote mother, Frankie and Kate, two American sisters, grow up in Hong Kong during the turmoil of the Maoist revolution of the late 1960s.

***Wicked: the Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* – Gregory Maguire**

406 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in book

Set in an Oz where a morose Wizard battles suicidal thoughts, the story of the green-skinned Elphaba, otherwise known as the Wicked Witch of the West, profiles her as an animal rights activist striving to avenge her dear sister's death.

***The World Below* – Sue Miller**

275 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupchoices.com

After being diagnosed at nineteen with tuberculosis in 1919, a young woman is sent to a sanitarium, where she rediscovers the pleasures of unfettered youth and falls in love with a doomed man.

***Year of Pleasures* – Elizabeth Berg**

206 pages, also available in large print, cd, eAudio, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Following the death of her husband, Betta Nolan fulfills her promise to him to move to a small town and build a new life for herself, following her as she strives to cope with her grief and find pleasure and solace in the ordinary things of everyday life - a warm bath, good food, the beauty of nature, art, and her garden.

***Year of Wonders: a Novel of the Plague* – Geraldine Brooks**

308 pages, also available in large print, tape, cd, guide in book

Young Anna Frith, a vicar's maid, is faced with the loss of her family, the disintegration of her local community, and a passionate, illicit love as she and her village confront the horrors of the plague, in a historical novel based on real-life events in seventeenth-century England.

Nonfiction

***Affluenza: the All Consuming Epidemic* – John De Graaf**

268 pages, guide in <http://www.bkconnection.com/static/Affluenza-Study-Guide.pdf>

A fascinating guide reveals the personal, social, economic, and environmental costs associated with overconsumption and examines how to put an end to this epidemic by promoting frugality, restructuring families and communities, and taking care of our planet.

***Almost French* – Sarah Turnbull**

304 pages, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A Sydney journalist recounts her unexpected move to Paris, during which she fell in love and came to cherish the city's charm, fashion, food, paradoxes, and dinner parties.

***Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* – Barbara Kingsolver**

370 pages, also available in large print, on cd, eBook, eAudio, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Follows the author's family's efforts to live on locally- and home-grown foods, an endeavor through which they learned lighthearted truths about food production and the connection between health and diet.

***Blink: the Power of Thinking Without Thinking* – Malcolm Gladwell**

265 pages, also available in large print, cd, eBook, eAudio, guide in gladwell.com/blink/guide

In this best-seller, a staff writer for The New Yorker weighs the factors that determine good decision-making. Drawing on recent cognitive research, Gladwell concludes that those who

quickly filter out extraneous information generally make better decisions than those who discount their first impressions.

Charlie Wilson's War: the Extraordinary Story of How the Wildest Man in Congress and a Rogue CIA Agent Changed the History of our Times – George Crile

535 pages, also available on cd, no guide

Describes how, after the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, maverick Texas congressman Charlie Wilson persuaded his colleagues to fund the CIA's efforts to arm the mujahideen and recounts the repercussions of that covert operation.

The Children's Blizzard – David Laskin

307 pages, guide at bookbrowse.com

Describes the deadly 1888 snowstorm in the Great Plains that killed more than five hundred people including numerous schoolchildren, describing how the storm devastated immigrant families and dramatically affected pioneer advancement.

City of Falling Angels – John Berendt

412 pages, also available in large print, cd, eAudio, guide in penguin.com

Traces the aftermath of the 1996 Venice opera house fire, an event that devastated Venetian society and was investigated by the author, who through interviews with local figures learned about the region's rich cultural history.

The Color of Water: a Black Man's Tribute to his White Mother – James McBride

228 pages, also available in large print, Playaway, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A young African-American man describes growing up in an all-black Brooklyn housing project, one of twelve children of a white mother and black father, and discusses his mother's contributions to his life and coming to terms with his confusion over his own identity.

Devil in the White City – Erik Larson

447 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A compelling account of the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 brings together the divergent stories of two very different men who played a key role in shaping the history of the event--visionary architect Daniel H. Burnham, who coordinated its construction, and Dr. Henry H. Holmes, an insatiable and charming serial killer.

Doctor at Timberline: True Tales, Travails, and Triumphs of a Pioneer Colorado Physician - Charles Fox Gardiner

245 pages, also available on eBook, guide provided by a group

Lavishly illustrated with etchings, engravings and drawings from Pikes Peak Library District Special Collections, *Doctor at Timberline* is a collection of Gardiner's first-hand experiences as a physician in the new state of Colorado. "Some folks accuse me of stretching truth to the breaking point in my autobiography, but the fact is I omitted many things because I believed they would be looked upon as fabrications. I had to hold a tight rein on truth, for fear it would not be believed. And even then I seem to have strained the credulity of some readers." Charles Fox Gardiner, Colorado Springs Gazette, January 25, 1939. (PPLD Special Collections)

***Eat, Pray, Love* – Elizabeth Gilbert**

334 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Traces the author's decision to quit her job and travel the world for a year after suffering a midlife crisis and divorce, a journey that took her to three places [Italy, India, Bali] in her quest to explore her own nature and learn the art of spiritual balance.

***Galileo's Daughter* – Dava Sobel**

420 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Presents a biography of the scientist through the surviving letters of his illegitimate daughter Maria Celeste, who wrote him from the Florence convent where she lived from the age of thirteen.

***A Girl Named Zippy* – Haven Kimmel**

275 pages, also available in Playaway, guide in readinggroupguides.com

The author offers a chronicle of growing up in a small town in America's heartland, offering portraits of her family and her encounters with the complexities of the adult world, romance, and small-town life during the 1960s and 1970s.

***Glass Castle* – Jeanette Walls**

288 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in reading groupguides.com

The second child of a scholarly, alcoholic father and an eccentric artist mother discusses her family's nomadic upbringing from the Arizona desert, to Las Vegas, to an Appalachian mining town, during which her siblings and she fended for themselves while their parents outmaneuvered bill collectors and the authorities.

***I Feel Bad About my Neck: and Other Thoughts on Being a Woman* - Nora Ephron**

137 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A new collection of witty essays by the author of *Wallflower at the Orgy* offers a hilarious look at the ups and downs of being a woman of a certain age, discussing the tribulations of maintenance and trying to stop the clock, menopause, empty nests, her experiences of being a White House intern during the JFK years, and more.

***Into the Wild* – Jon Krakauer**

207 pages, also available in large print, cd, DVD, guide in manchester.edu/OAA/registrar/Files/09FYsumreadBeingThere.htm

The dramatic story of Chris McCandless, 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.

***Kabul Beauty School: an American Woman Goes Behind the Veil* – Deborah Rodriguez**

283 pages, also available on cd, DVD, guide in book

Soon after the fall of the Taliban, in 2001, Deborah Rodriguez went to Afghanistan as part of a humanitarian aid group. Surrounded by people whose skills--as doctors, nurses, and therapists--seemed eminently more practical than her own, Rodriguez, a hairdresser and mother from Michigan, despaired of being of any real use. Yet she found she had a gift for befriending Afghans, and once her profession became known she was eagerly sought out by Westerners desperate for a good haircut and by Afghan women, who have a long and proud tradition of running their own beauty salons. Thus the idea for the Kabul Beauty School was born. Within that small haven, the line between teacher and student quickly blurred as these vibrant women

shared with Rodriguez their stories and their hearts, ultimately giving her the strength to leave her own unhealthy marriage and allow herself to love again. (readinggroupguides.com)

The Last Lecture – Randy Pausch

206 pages, also available on cd, guide at litlovers.com

The (late) author, a computer science professor diagnosed with terminal cancer, explores his life, the lessons that he has learned, how he has worked to achieve his childhood dreams, and the effect of his diagnosis on him and his family.

Leap of Faith – Queen Noor

467 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

In an eloquent and candid memoir, the Queen of Jordan describes her youth in a privileged Arab-American family, her Princeton education, and her marriage to King Hussein of Jordan, providing an intimate portrait of the late monarch and his quest for peace in the Middle East, their private life together, her work as a queen and activist, and the message of Islam in the wake of September 11.

The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid – Bill Bryson

270 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide at bestsellers.about.com

The best-selling author of *A Walk in the Woods* and *I'm a Stranger Here Myself* describes his all-American childhood growing up as a member of the baby boom generation in the heart of Iowa, detailing his rich fantasy life as a superhero known as the Thunderbolt Kid and his remarkably normal 1950s family life.

Little Heathens: Hard Times and High Spirits on an Iowa Farm During the Great Depression – Mildred Armstrong Kalish

also available in large print, cd, Playaway, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A memoir from a schoolteacher of growing up in the heart of the Midwest during the Great Depression describes life on an Iowa farm during a time of endless work, resourcefulness, no tolerance for idleness or waste, family, and kinship.

Marley & Me – John Grogan

291 pages, also available in large print, cd, eBook, guide in bestsellers.about.com

Follows the life story of an exuberant Labrador retriever who gets into perpetual trouble and experiences a range of inspiring adventures, from shutting down an entire beach to guarding a seventeen-year-old neighbor after a stabbing attack.

The Measure of a Man: a Spiritual Autobiography – Sidney Poitier

243 pages, also available in large print, cd, eBook, eAudio, guide at oprah.com

The acclaimed actor reveals the depth, passion, and intellectual fervor that have driven his life and career, citing the elements of his childhood that gave him his sense of worth, family, and ethics and how these qualities are essential to spiritual development.

Mere Christianity – C.S. Lewis

227 pages, also available on tape, cd, eAudio, guide in readinggroupguides.com

In 1943 England, when all hope was threatened by the inhumanity of war, C.S. Lewis was invited to give a series of radio lectures addressing the central issues of Christianity. More than half a century after the original lectures, they continue to retain their poignancy. First

heard as informal radio broadcasts, the lectures were then published as three books and subsequently combined as *Mere Christianity*. C.S. Lewis proves that "at the center of each there is something, or a Someone, who against all divergences of belief, all differences of temperament, all memories of mutual persecution, speaks with the same voice," rejecting the boundaries that divide Christianity's many denominations. This twentieth-century masterpiece provides an unequalled opportunity for believers and nonbelievers alike to hear a powerful, rational case for the Christian faith. (readinggroupguides.com)

***Night* – Elie Wiesel**

120 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

The narrative of a boy who lived through Auschwitz and Buchenwald provides a short and terrible indictment of modern humanity.

***Outliers* – Malcolm Gladwell**

285 pages, also available in large print, cd, eBook, eAudio, guide in bestsellers.about.com

Identifies the qualities of successful people, posing theories about the cultural, family, and idiosyncratic factors that shape high achievers, in a resource that covers such topics as the secrets of software billionaires and why the Beatles earned their fame.

***Reading Lolita in Tehran : a Memoir in Books* – Azar Nafisi**

347 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

The author describes growing up in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the group of young women who came together at her home in secret every Thursday to read and discuss great books of Western literature.

***Rocket Boys: a Memoir* – Homer H. Hickam – 2009 APPR title**

368 pages, also available in large print, cd, Playaway, guide in readinggroupguides.com

The #1 New York Times bestselling memoir *Rocket Boys* is the true story of Homer "Sonny" Hickam, Jr., a boy from the mining town of Coalwood, West Virginia. In 1957, when Sonny was just 14 years old, Sputnik raced across the Appalachian sky. It left in its wake one boy's desire to join the space race, a dream that he ardently pursued with the help (and sometimes hindrance) of the people in the unique little town of his youth.

***Running with Scissors* – Augustin Burroughs**

304 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in bookbrowse.com

The author describes his bizarre coming-of-age years after his adoption by his mother's psychiatrist, during which he witnessed such misadventures as a fake suicide attempt, a pedophile's life in a barn, and front-lawn family/patient sleepovers.

***Stolen Innocence: My Story of Growing Up in a Polygamous Sect, Becoming a Teenage Bride, and Breaking Free of Warren Jeffs* – Elissa Wall**

438 pages, also available in large print, Playaway, eBook, no guide

Describes the author's childhood in the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints, her forced marriage to her abusive cousin at fourteen, how she managed to break free, and her testimony against the sect's leader, Warren Jeffs.

Stolen Lives: Twenty Years in a Desert Jail – Malika Oufkir

293 pages, also available in large print, guide in readinggroupguides.com

The daughter of a former aide to the king of Morocco, who was executed after a failed assassination attempt on the ruler, describes how she, her five siblings, and her mother were imprisoned in a desert penal colony for twenty years.

The Tender Bar: a Memoir – J.R. Moehringer

368 pages, also available on cd, eBook, guide in bookbrowse.com

A vivid memoir of growing up and coming of age with a single mother describes how the author received valuable life lessons and friendship at the neighborhood bar, an old-time New York saloon populated by a colorful assortment of characters who provided him with a kind of fatherhood by committee.

Thin is the New Happy – Valerie Frankel

256 pages, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Like most women, Valerie spent most of her conscious life on a diet, thinking about a diet, ignoring a diet, or failing on a diet. Not wanting to pass this legacy on to her own daughters, Valerie set out to cleanse herself of her obsession. *Thin Is the New Happy* is the true story of one woman's quest to exorcise her bad body-image demons, to uncover the truths behind what put them there, and to learn how to truly love herself.(publisher)

Three Cups of Tea – Greg Mortenson

338 pages, also available on cd, guide at penguingroup.com

Traces how the author, having been rescued and resuscitated by Himalayan villagers after a failed attempt to climb K2, worked to build schools that would particularly benefit the young girls who were forbidden an education by Taliban restrictions, an endeavor for which his life has been repeatedly threatened.

Tipping Point - Malcolm Gladwell

279 pages, also available on Playaway, cd, guide in gladwell.com

An introduction to the Tipping Point theory explains how minor changes in ideas and products can increase their popularity and how small adjustments in an individual's immediate environment can alter group behavior.

Truth and Beauty – Ann Patchett

257 pages, also available on cd and eBook, guide in bookbrowse.com

The author describes her twenty-year friendship with Lucy Grealy, tracing their introduction at a writer's workshop, the integral part their friendship played in their writing careers, and her witness to Grealy's medical deterioration, by the author of *Bel Canto*.

Tuesdays with Morrie – Mitch Albom

192 pages, also available in large print, cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

A sportswriter conveys the wisdom of his late mentor, college professor Morrie Schwartz, recounting their weekly conversations as Schwartz lay dying.

***Under the Banner of Heaven* – John Krakauer**

372 pages, also available on cd, guide in readinggroupguides.com

Traces the 1984 murder of a woman and her child by fundamentalist Mormons, exploring the belief systems and traditions that mark the faith's most extreme factions and what their practices reflect about the nature of religion in America.

***Under the Tuscan Sun: at Home in Italy* – Frances Mayes**

289 pages, also available in large print, cd, DVD, guide in readinggroupguides.com

An enchanting and lyrical look at the life, the traditions, and the cuisine of Tuscany, in the spirit of Peter Mayle's *A Year in Provence*. Frances Mayes entered a wondrous new world when she began restoring an abandoned villa in the spectacular Tuscan countryside. There were unexpected treasures at every turn: faded frescos beneath the whitewash in her dining room, a vineyard under wildly overgrown brambles in the garden, and, in the nearby hill towns, vibrant markets and delightful people. (publisher)

***An Unquiet Mind* – Kay Redfield Jamison**

223 pages, guide in readinggroupguides.com

The personal story of a manic-depressive and an authority on the subject describes the onset of the illness during her teenage years and her determined journey through the realm of available treatments.

***A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail* – Bill Bryson**

397 pages, also available on cd, guide available from a class

The Appalachian Trail stretches from Georgia to Maine and covers some of the most breathtaking terrain in America—majestic mountains, silent forests, sparkling lakes. If you're going to take a hike, it's probably the place to go. And Bill Bryson is surely the most entertaining guide you'll find. (Amazon.com)

***Worst Hard Time* – Timothy Egan – 2008 APPR title**

340 pages, also available on cd, no guide

Presents an oral history of the dust storms that devastated the Great Plains during the Depression, following several families and their communities in their struggle to persevere despite the devastation. 2006 National Book Award Winner, Nonfiction.

***Year of Magical Thinking* – Joan Didion**

227 pages, also available on Playaway, guide in readinggroupguides.com

An autobiographical portrait of marriage and motherhood details the critical illness of her daughter, Quintana Roo, followed by the fatal coronary of her husband, John Gregory Dunne, and her daughter's second bout with a life-threatening ailment, and her struggle to come to terms with life and death, illness, sanity, personal upheaval, and grief.