
ENGLISH 30-1 SCHOOL-AGE COURSE NOVEL CHOICES (choose one)

1984 by George Orwell

Published in 1949, this is the gripping story of a **dystopian** future set in the province of Airstrip One in the country of Oceania. The Inner Party, led by Big Brother, makes up an elite group that rules its citizens with such tyranny that even an individual's thoughts are policed. In Oceania, every aspect of life is under surveillance and control, from the words that people speak to the country's own history. While this truly is a cautionary tale about a frightening future, it is also the story of what happens when one man quietly dares to question, dares to think, and dares to love.

Dystopia is the opposite of a utopia, often characterized by dehumanization, totalitarian governments, and environmental disaster.

THE BOOK THIEF by Markus Zusak

Liesel Meminger is nine years old when her life changes forever. It is 1939, Germany is on the brink of World War II, and this is the year that marks more than one heart-breaking tragedy for Liesel. There is more tragedy to come, but there is time enough in between those tragedies for Liesel to fall in love with an accordion player, a dusty track star, a sharp-tongued foster mother, and a broken Jewish man living in her basement. She also falls in love with stealing, and it all begins with a rectangular black book partially hidden in the snow.

THE CELLIST OF SARAJEVO Steven Galloway

Arrow hides amongst the debris of a burned-out office tower and aims her rifle at the unsuspecting soldiers. She is certain they deserve to die. She is certain of a great many things, but this will change when her life intersects with the cellist. On an average day in Sarajevo, if any day during war can be average, the cellist sits at his window playing "Albinoni's Adagio," a moving and beautiful song of hope. It is at this very window that he witnesses the death of 22 people standing in line to buy bread. So shattered by this tragic moment, the cellist vows to play the beautiful "Adagio" for 22 days, one for each victim, on the hour of their death. This powerful tribute will serve as one man's way of enduring the unthinkable. Arrow has her own way, as do the other characters in this haunting **elegiac** novel.

Elegiac refers generally to compositions that are like elegies, or specifically, to Greek and Latin poetry, composed in couplets.

THE KITE RUNNER by Khaled Hosseini

The year is 2001, and Amir is a man living a comfortable existence with his family in San Francisco, but a phone call from his uncle in Pakistan, and one brief sentence, transports Amir back to the year 1975 when he betrayed his best friend and altered the course of both their lives. "There is a way to be good again," Amir's uncle had said, but Amir is not so sure. The Kite Runner is the story of Amir and Hassan, their richly-textured childhood in Afghanistan and their powerful friendship, but it is also the story of betrayal and redemption. Can we ever escape the ghosts of our past? Is forgiveness always possible? Can a person atone for any sin, no matter how great? These are the questions that drive this beautifully-woven tale.

Note: This novel contains scenes of a sexual and violent nature, and reader discretion is advised.

Film Choices (choose one)

- The Pursuit of Happyness(2006)
- Million Dollar Baby (2004)
- Life is Beautiful (1997)
- One Week (2008)