

Oregon Episcopal School 9th-Grade Summer Reading 2010

Each 9th-grader should choose one of the following six books, read it over the summer, and be prepared to discuss it when we start school in the fall. Students are on their own to get their chosen book—from a library, bookstore, or friend.

Please note: All incoming ESL students will read *The House on Mango Street*, by Sandra Cisneros.

1. *Gates of Fire: An Epic Novel of the Battle of Thermopylae*, by Steven Pressfield (Bantam, 2005), 386 pages, ISBN 9780553383683

The battle of Thermopylae—the subject of the graphic novel and film *300*-- here receives a fuller treatment. *Publishers Weekly* wrote: "Rich with historical detail, hot action and crafty storytelling, Pressfield's riveting story reveals the social and political framework of Spartan life."

2. *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*, by Jack Weatherford (Three Rivers Press, 2005), 312 pages, ISBN 9780609809648

Weatherford, a professor of anthropology at Macalester College, tells the riveting true story behind the legend of Khan. Rising to power through the brutal tribal warfare of his native Mongols, Khan conquered vast swathes of land, then ruled with surprising progressiveness, stimulating the spread of civilization. The *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* wrote: "Weatherford is a fantastic storyteller. . . . [His] portrait of Khan is drawn with sufficiently self-complicating depth."

3. *Lavinia*, by Ursula K. Le Guin (Mariner, 2009), 288 pages, ISBN 9780156033688

Science-fiction titan Le Guin gives voice to Lavinia, a non-speaking character in Vergil's *The Aeneid*. *Booklist* magazine writes: "Here, as Le Guin reworks the story, Lavinia evolves into a true woman of destiny, eventually forging a strong partnership with the legendary founder of Rome. The compulsively readable Le Guin earns kudos for fashioning a winning combination of history and mythology featuring an unlikely heroine imaginatively plucked from literary obscurity."

4. *The Old Way: A Story of the First People*, by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas (Picador, 2007), 348 pages, ISBN 9780312427283

From publisher comments: "Elizabeth Marshall Thomas was 19 when her father took his family to live among the Bushmen of the Kalahari. Fifty years later, after a life of writing and study, Thomas returns to her experiences with the Bushmen, one of the last hunter-gatherer societies on earth, and discovers among them an essential link to the origins of all human society. Humans lived for 1,500 centuries as roving clans, adapting daily to changes in environment and food supply. Those origins are not so easily abandoned, Thomas suggests, and our modern society has plenty still to learn from the Bushmen."

5. *The Sand-Reckoner*, by Gillian Bradshaw (Forge, 2001), 351 pages, ISBN 9780312875817

Nancy Pearl of NPR writes: "Around the few facts that are known about Archimedes (c. 287-212 B.C.), well-regarded historical novelist Bradshaw has fashioned an interesting and informative tale of love, war, and family responsibilities. When the young Archimedes is called back to Syracuse after three years in Alexandria, " he puts his mathematical and engineering ability to work to help defend the city against Roman attack. *Publisher's Weekly* writes: "Bradshaw is skilled at bringing historical figures to life, and this intriguing and entertaining novel of the boyish dreamer who possessed one of the ancient world's most brilliant minds demonstrates her vivid imagination."

6. *Siddhartha*, by Herman Hesse [trans. Joachim Neugroschel] (Penguin, 1999; originally published 1922), 132 pages, ISBN 9780141181233

From *Benet's Reader's Encyclopedia*: "Set in India, this novel is the story of a young Brahmin's search for ultimate reality....Siddhartha's search, which takes him through both profligacy and asceticism, reinforces the idea that wisdom cannot be taught; it must come from one's own inner struggle. The story contains parallels to Buddha's life, but it is not a fictionalized life of Buddha; Hesse uses the Buddha parallels instead to give his work a legendary and symbolic quality."

BONUS: Summer Reading Challenge

In addition to reading one of the books above, 9th-graders are invited and encouraged to take part in the **OES Summer Reading Challenge**, in which you are challenged to read 2,010 pages, or 10 separate books, or for 30 total hours over the summer. This is entirely voluntary. Students who meet this challenge and accurately record their reading will receive a custom-designed OES Summer Reading T-shirt. Students may record their reading in any way they wish, or they may request an official recording booklet when submitting the form below.

Various reading lists, including the summer-reading list for rising 10th-, 11th-, and 12th-graders, are available online at <http://www.oes.edu/us/library/reading.html>

OES 9th-Grade Summer Reading Selection Form

Directions: Please complete this form, then detach and return it to the Upper School office by **June 1, 2010** or mail to Chris Myers, Upper School Librarian, Oregon Episcopal School, 6300 SW Nicol Road, Portland, OR 97223. You may also email your summer-reading choice to Chris at myersc@oes.edu.

Name: _____ Email address: _____
First Last

I will read the following book for summer reading (please place a "1" next to your first choice and a "2" next to your second choice):

___ *Gates of Fire* ___ *Genghis Khan* ___ *Lavinia* ___ *The Old Way* ___ *Sand-Reckoner* ___ *Siddhartha*

___ I would like to participate in the **Summer Reading Challenge**. Please send me a recording booklet.