

Entire rule of law reading list

Teacher Foundation Readings:

Pericles' Funeral Oration, Thucydides:

(ca. 430 BCE) Recounted by Thucydides, this speech, while highly idealized, identifies not only the noble qualities Athenians admired, especially the idea that Athenian citizens would sacrifice all that they had for the good of the state, but also the Athenian dedication to the rule of law.

***Apology*, Plato:**

Plato's account of Socrates' trial in which Socrates advocates upholding the law and continues to demonstrate his personal integrity.

***Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes:**

Published in 1651, Hobbes argues that society resulted from a social contract in which the individual accepts his responsibility to others and theirs to him in order to maintain a peaceful and prosperous "commonwealth."

***Of Civil Government*, John Locke:**

(ca. 1690) Locke's two treatises lay the foundation for constitutional democracy in Eighteenth Century America and France. In the first treatise he attacks the concept of absolute monarchy, and in the second he argues that the basis of all government is the "natural rights" of the individual and the presence of the social contract.

"On Liberty," John Stuart Mill:

Written in 1859, this essay offers one of the most famous defenses of freedom in English and contends that democracy on its own doesn't necessarily guarantee freedom. Mills writes that the success of a democratic society is found in "the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual."

***The Prince*, Niccolò Machiavelli:**

Written in 1613, this classic essay on how to gain and maintain power presents one of the most succinct expressions of the political concept that the ends justify the means in creating a peaceful society out of naturally corrupt individuals.

***The Social Contract*, Jean Jacques Rousseau:**

Rousseau's 1762 treatise is perhaps one of the clearest expressions of the concept of the social contract as the foundation of government and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. For Rousseau, the individual is the very heart of the society and willingly submits to the state for the good of the whole.

Supplemental Texts for Teachers:

***American Visions: The Epic History of Art in America*, Robert Hughes (1997)**

Based on the PBS series by the same name, Hughes book is, as the title says, a history of American art from the pre-colonial days to the end of the 20th century. His focus on the events, artistic movements, and artists – famous and anonymous – captures the grand scope and importance of the visual arts in our nation's history. *American Visions* serves as an authoritative text for teachers looking for material to supplement their instruction of America's cultural history.

***The Birth of Freedom*, ed. Lewis (2006):**

“An anthology of the events, documents, and speeches that have shaped Western civilization,” *The Birth of Freedom* uses these sources to examine the ideals so important in shaping the American character and democratic society.

Decision in Philadelphia: The Constitutional Convention of 1787, Collier and Collier (1986):

A useful resource about the men and events that created the document that became America’s foundation and a model for emerging democracies around the world.

To Establish Justice, McKissack and Zarembka (2004):

To Establish Justice reflects America’s on-going struggle to preserve the ideal of liberty for all, an ideal not always achieved. By examining the legal struggles of Native Americans, African-Americans, women, Japanese-Americans during World War II, as well as the more contemporary struggles of people with disabilities, gays and lesbians, and students, the authors illustrate how the judicial system has paved the way for both justice and discrimination, and how this important arm of our government has impacted all of our lives

First Freedoms, A Documentary History of First Amendment Rights in America, Haynes, Charltain, and Glisson (2006):

Using primary documents, *First Freedoms* “demonstrates how liberty and justice...have been shaped by the five freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment....” Each primary document is accompanied by an essay that provides the relevant historical context.

Law in America: A Short History, Lawrence M. Friedman (2002):

Friedman traces the evolution of law in America from its earliest days in the colonies to the “Modern Administrative-Welfare State.” Along the way, he discusses the impact that such forces as the economy, family, and race have had on shaping our current laws.

Liberty and Freedom: A Visual History of America’s Founding Ideas, David Hackett Fischer (2005)

Hackett’s book provides a visual history of the ideas that have become the tapestry of American freedom and society. From the liberty tree and flags of revolution to more modern images, Hackett explains the origins and issues that gave rise to these iconic images and the way they depict Americans’ evolving concepts of freedom and liberty. This work is valuable resource for any teacher seeking to enrich and expand the study of American civic education.

On the Rule of Law: History, Politics, Theory, Brian Z. Tamanaha (2004)

“The rule of law is the most important political ideal today, yet there is much confusion about what it means and how it works.” With these words Tamanaha begins his historic examination of the rule of law from its classical origins to its use and abuse today. His short book examines the history, politics and theory of the rule of law and its impact on not only American history but the history of the world. *On the Rule of Law* is an excellent primer for teachers desiring to broaden and deepen their understanding of this often used and little understood concept.

RHI Magazine, Volume 2, Issue No. 1, 2007:

This issue of *RHI Magazine* focuses on “Promoting Active Citizenship” through a series of scholarly and educational articles that address all aspects of what it means to be a citizen. Included in these articles are dozens of suggested readings for classroom use as well as sections that offer suggested activities to enhance instruction. Teachers may download the entire magazine or individual articles from www.randomhouse.com/highschool/RHI_magazine/active_citizens/.

Rosie the Riveter: Women Working on the Home Front in World War II, Coleman (1995):

Coleman’s book examines the invaluable service women provided during the war, the impact their contributions had on changing perceptions about their role in society, and their struggle to retain

the gains they had made after the war. Personal stories and extensive photographs supplement Coleman's award-winning narrative.

Shake Hands with the Devil, Lt. Col. Roméo Dallaire:

Published in 2003, Dallaire's book provides a narrative account of the genocide and lawlessness he witnessed in Rwanda as force commander of the UN Assistance Mission to Rwanda from 1993-1994. Dallaire's work speaks to the grim terror of a society in which the rule of law ceases to exist.

Wrestling with the Angel of Democracy: On Being an American Citizen, Griffith (2008)

The author suggests that democracy is evolutionary, and, as American citizens, we are deeply influenced by the continuing struggle between tyranny and liberty.

Resource Links for Teachers:

Bill of Rights Institute <http://www.billofrightsinitiative.org>
Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools <http://civicmissionofschools.org>
Center for Civic Education www.civiced.org
Center for the Teaching of American History <http://ctah.binghamton.edu>
CIRCLE (The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement)
www.civicyouth.org
Constitutional Rights Foundation www.crf-usa.org
Everyday Civics <http://civics.pwnet.org/resources.html>
The Five Freedoms Project <http://www.fivefreedoms.org>
Historical Thinking Matters <http://historicalthinkingmatters.org/>
iCivics www.icivics.org
Landmark Supreme Court Cases www.landmarkcases.org
Library of Congress www.loc.gov/index
Montpelier Center for the Constitution www.montpelier.org
Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility www.morningsidecenter.org
National Alliance for Civic Education <http://www.cived.net>
National Archives and Records Administration <http://www.archives.gov>
National Constitution Center <http://constitutioncenter.org>
Sunnylands Civics Games <http://games.sunnylandsclassroom.org>
The Taubman Museum of Art www.taubmanmuseum.org/main
The World Justice Project www.worldjusticeproject.org, www.worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index

Suggested Political Documents:

The Code of Hammurabi (ca. 1780 BCE)
"The Ten Commandments" (ca. 1290 BCE)
Magna Carta (1215)
"The Mayflower Compact" (1620)
"The Virginia Declaration of Rights" (1776)
The Original Virginia Constitution (1776)
"The Declaration of Independence" (1776)
"Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom" (1786)
The Constitution of the United States (1787, 1789)
The Bill of Rights (1791)
Constitutional Amendments 11-27
Declaration of Sentiments from the Seneca Falls Convention by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, et al. (1848)

“The Gettysburg Address” (1863)
Chief Joseph Speaks, selected speeches and excerpts (1870s)
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
“I Have a Dream,” (1963)

Student Readings

Poetry:

“Ballad of Birmingham,” Dudley Randall (1963)
“Cross,” Langston Hughes (1926)
“Dream Deferred - Harlem,” Langston Hughes (1951)
“Incident,” Countee Cullen (c. 1925)
“Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress-Toward,” Gwendolyn Brooks (N.D.)
“We Real Cool,” Gwendolyn Brooks (1960)
“Still I Rise,” Maya Angelou (1978)
“Women’s Studies,” Robin Morgan (Available at www.helium.com/items/508829-poetry-womens-rights)

Drama:

Antigone, Sophocles (c.442 BCE)*:

Sophocles’ tragedy pits the head-strong Antigone against the equally head-strong Creon, King of Thebes and her uncle, in the classic conflict between individual duty and the law of the land. (9-12)

The Crucible, Arthur Miller (1953):

Miller’s retelling of the 1692 Salem witch trials captures the horror of this tragic period in American history and raises universal questions about individual freedom of conscience that are still with us. (9-12, 9.0)

Inherit the Wind, Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee (1950):

Inherit the Wind is the classic fictionalized account of the infamous Scopes trial, and like its historical inspiration, the play reflects the opposing cultural attitudes of North and South, the clash of science and religion, and the universal struggle between individual conscience and the demands of the state. (7-12)

A Man for All Seasons, Robert Bolt (1960):

Through his story of the dramatic relationship between Sir Thomas More, the Lord Chancellor who refused to compromise his beliefs, and Henry VIII who had his one-time friend executed, Bolt examines personal integrity, freedom of conscience, and the consequences of justice perverted for personal gain. (9-12)

The Oresteia, Aeschylus (ca.4458 BCE)*:

This trilogy recounts the bloody curse on the House of Atreus: Agamemnon’s return from the Trojan War and his subsequent assassination by his wife Clytemnestra, Clytemnestra’s death at the hands of her son Orestes, the Furies’ pursuit of Orestes, and Athena’s intervention to end the curse and save Orestes. *The Oresteia*, certainly at one level, serves as a metaphor for humanity’s concept of justice – from the blood vengeance that led a wife to kill her husband and a son to kill his

mother to the redemption and reconciliation that results when Athena intervenes to create trial by jury. (9-12)

A Raisin in the Sun, Lorraine Hansberry (1958):

This play follows the Youngers, a working-class African-American family, as they struggle against mid-Twentieth Century racism to achieve their individual and family dreams. (9-12, 6.8)

Novels:

Absent, Betoool Khedairi (2007):

Set in Baghdad during the 1990s, *Absent* is the story of Dalal, a young Iraqi woman, her family and neighbors as the struggle to survive the crippling bombings and international sanctions that make a normal life nearly impossible. Through Dalal, the author examines the devastating affects the absence of civil order can have on the human spirit. (Adapted from the front flap of the first English translation, 2005.)

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Chap. 21 & 22, Mark Twain (1885):

One of America's greatest and most frequently banned novels, Twain's famous story of youthful Huck and his friend Jim, the run-away slave, addresses so many universal themes that it should be required reading for all freedom-loving Americans. For teachers pressed for time, Chapters 21 and 22 allow the reader to see, through Huck's eyes, the consequences of a world in which the rule of law is defined by individual will and mob justice. (9-12, 5.2)

Animal Farm, George Orwell (1945):

Orwell's classic fable about farm animals rebelling against their human keepers, shows how a revolution with good intentions quickly falls victim to the despotic pigs who pervert the revolution's goals and original motto that "All animals are created equal" to "All animals are created equal, but some animals are more equal than others." Inspired by the Russian Revolution, Orwell expands his tale to attack the evils of all "pig-headed" totalitarian regimes. (9-12, 9.0)

Before We Were Free, Julia Alvarez (2004):

Set in the Dominican Republic of the early 1960s, Alvarez's award-winning novel tells the story of a failed revolution against the infamous dictator Trujillo. Seen through the eyes of Anita de la Torre, the novel's 12 year old narrator, the story captures the personal and collective fear and sense of confusion that living under a dictator and his secret police create. Sharing many similarities with Anne Frank's experiences in Nazi Germany, Anita provides a child's insight to the horror and frustration of freedom denied and demonstrates the strength of the human spirit to survive under such conditions. (6-8, 6.5)

Benito Cereno, Herman Melville (1856):

A perfect companion to the film *Amistad*, Melville bases his gripping story on a slave mutiny on board an eighteenth century Spanish ship transporting 300 slaves to South America. Told from the perspective of Captain Amasa Delano, a New Englander, we learn how Benito Cereno, the young commander of the ship, and his crew suddenly found themselves "slaves" to their human cargo as a result of destructive storms, disease, and subsequent rebellion. Distraught and dying, Cereno manages to escape his ship and enlist Delano's assistance in subduing the rebellious slaves and Babo, their leader. In the end, Babo is executed, the remaining slaves returned to bondage, and Cereno enters a monastery where he dies soon after. Blinded by his own Protestant beliefs and unspoken Catholic prejudice, and seeing only the visible tragedy of Cereno and his white crewmen, Delano fails to see the greater tragedy of the situation – the very real horror of slavery and the social and moral disease it represents. (9-12)

Billy Budd, Herman Melville (1891)*:

Melville's last testament to what he called "the dark necessity of evil," this complex novella, set on an 18th century British war ship, is simply the story of naturally innocent Billy Budd's fatal conflict

with the “innately depraved” John Claggart. Provoked by Claggart’s false charge of mutiny, Billy accidentally kills the diabolic master-at-arms in front of Captain Vere, the ship’s commander. Left defenseless by a speech impediment, Billy cannot defend himself and is summarily hanged. Billy, Claggart, and Vere become symbols through which Melville raises questions about the nature of good and evil, duty to the law and duty to one’s moral scruples, and life’s ambiguities and injustices. (9-12, 12.0)

Brave New World, Aldous Huxley (1932):

Many readers in 1932 found Huxley’s portrait of an Edenesque future where personal freedom is sacrificed for “COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY” terrifying and apocalyptic. Today, however, his world of social conditioning, mind controlling drugs, eugenics, and a caste system has been realized – a mass media market that shapes everything from how we vote to what we buy; medications to alter body, mind, and personality to our liking; genetic science that clones animals; robotic engineering that reduces the labor force; nano-technology that makes communication faster than we can process; and a widening gap between haves and have-nots. Now, as in 1932, *Brave New World* reminds us, as Huxley said in *Brave New World Revisited*, “The subject of freedom and its enemies is enormous...” (Huxley, 1958). (9-12, 9.0)

The Chocolate War, Robert Cormier (1986):

“This novel recounts the experiences of a boy...who refuses to sell chocolate bars for a fundraiser. With the tacit support of a teacher, he is subjected to bullying in and out of the classroom. This novel raises vital issues about the duty of a society to protect nonconformists, and examines the consequences to an individual who does not receive that support” (Frey and Fisher, 2007). (9-12, 10.8)

The Confessions of Nat Turner, William Styron (1967)*:

Set in 1831, Styron’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel tells the story of the only effective slave rebellion in American history. Nat Turner, an educated slave preacher, leads the bloody revolt that results in his capture and subsequent execution. His story, recounted from his prison cell as he awaits his execution, reveals in harsh detail his life as a slave and the suffering, inhumanity, and hope that led him and his followers on the tragic and futile uprising to gain their freedom. (9-12, 8.5)

Fahrenheit 451, Ray Bradbury (1953)*:

Fahrenheit 451, the temperature at which books burn. What happens when the government bans books and makes all the decisions for the people? This classic story of a dystopian society continues to raise important questions about the relationship between the individual and government, censorship, intellectual and personal freedom, and the power of the human spirit to find ways to keep freedom alive. (9-12, 10.0)

The Giver, Lois Lowry (1993):

“In a world with no poverty, no crime, no sickness and no unemployment, and where every family is happy, 12-year-old Jonas is chosen to be the community’s Receiver of Memories. Under the tutelage of the Elders and an old man known as the Giver, he discovers the disturbing truth about his utopian world and struggles against the weight of its hypocrisy. ...Lowry examines the idea that people might freely choose to give up their humanity in order to create a more stable society. Gradually Jonas learns just how costly this ordered and pain-free society can be, and boldly decides he cannot pay the price” (www.amazon.com/Giver-Lois-Lowry/dp/0440237688) (7-12)

The Grapes of Wrath, John Steinbeck (1939):

Set during the Great Depression, Steinbeck’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel recounts the odyssey of the Joad family from their dust-bowl Oklahoma farm to the migrants’ promise land of California. Along the way they encounter a series of hardships and family tragedies that leave them defeated but strong in their belief that life goes on, illustrated when Rose of Sharon offers her body’s milk to save a starving man. Through the diverse characters and their unending hardships, Steinbeck

examines, sometimes scathingly, American justice, personal property rights, the role of the government in protecting those who can't protect themselves, and the efficacy of a capitalistic economy. (9-12)

The Handmaid's Tale, Margaret Atwood (1985)*:

“Set in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the novel presents a totalitarian theocracy that has forced a certain class of fertile women to produce babies for elite barren couples. These "handmaids," who are denied all rights and are severely beaten if they are uncooperative, are reduced to state property. Through the voice of Offred, a handmaid who mingles memories of her life before the revolution with her rebellious activities under the new regime, Atwood has created a terrifying future based on actual events.”

www.randomhouse.com/resources/bookgroup/handmaidstale_bgc.html) (9-12, 5.4)

How I Live Now, Meg Rosoff (2004):

Set in an England of the future, Rosoff's story follows teenage protagonist Daisy as she struggles to survive an invasion of her country that destroys all personal freedoms. “Her struggle to define what she expects of herself can provide students with insights into the responsibilities of personal freedom when it exists at the expense of others” (Frey and Fisher, 2007). (6-8, 8.5)

Intruder in the Dust, William Faulkner (1948):

Lucas Beauchamp, an elderly black man, is falsely accused of murdering a white store owner. Defiant and too proud to offer a defense, Lucas faces vigilante justice until Chick Mallison, a white teenager; his lawyer uncle; and Miss Habersham, a 70-year old white lady; take up his cause and uncover the real murderer, the dead man's brother. Suggestive of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *To Kill A Mockingbird*, Faulkner examines the loss of innocence, the near deadly affects of racism, and the courage to defend the rights of others in the face of bigotry and ignorance. (9-12)

The Jungle, Upton Sinclair (1906):

Young immigrant Jurgis Rudkus has come to America to create a new and better life for himself and his family. Working in one of Chicago's infamous factory slaughter houses, he finds only inhumane working conditions, oppressive poverty, disease, and despair. Sinclair's tragic story of his young protagonist's fate and the public indignation it created paved the way for the Pure Food and Drug Act, about which Theodore Roosevelt commented, “The latter [the meat processors] are better off under the law than they were without it.” *The Jungle* reflects the power of a dedicated social crusader to impact the government to create laws for the common good of all citizens. (9-12, 8.8)

The Last Town on Earth, Thomas Mullen (2006):

Set against the background of America's 1918 flu epidemic, Mullen's novel is a tale of morality in a time of upheaval and a challenge to the assumptions behind the usual critiques of capitalism and democracy. (*RHI Magazine*, Vol. 2, Issue No. 1, 2007)

Lay that Trumpet in Our Hands, Susan Carol McCarthy (2002):

“This novel is a glimpse into the world of 12-year-old Reesa and her family, a Northern family living in Central Florida during the early '50s. Based on actual events, the story covers some of the atrocities committed by the KKK in Florida in 1951, beginning with the brutal slaying of Marvin, a dear friend of Reesa's family, who is African-American, and who was in the wrong place at the wrong time. ...Determined to bring Marvin's murderers to justice, Reesa's family sets off a string of events that eventually lead to a federal investigation and federal trial of many of the town's KKK members” (Elaine S. Reitz, 2002). (9-12, 6.0)

Left for Dead, Peter Nelson (2002):

“This book recalls the sinking of the *U.S.S. Indianapolis* at the end of World War II, the U.S. Navy cover-up and unfair court martial of the ship's captain, and how a young boy helped the survivors set the record straight fifty-five years later.” (www.arbookfind.com/bookdetail.aspx?q=59211&l=EN&slid=87031771) (9-12, 8.3)

***A Lesson Before Dying*, Ernest J. Gaines (1993):**

Set in a small Cajun community, this national award winning novel focuses on the relationship forged between Jefferson, a young black man unjustly sentenced to hang for a murder he did not commit, and Grant Wiggins, a black teacher who struggles to impart his learning and pride to Jefferson before his death. *A Lesson Before Dying* is a somber yet hopeful story about patience, individual dignity, courage, and personal belief. As Grant Wiggins questions his own belief in the system that sentenced Jefferson to die, he realizes as the hour of execution passes that only in belief is the mind truly free; and “Only when the mind is free has the body a chance to be free.” (6-12, 4.4)

***Lord of the Flies*, William Golding (1955):**

A group of boys, survivors of a plane crash, must establish order out of chaos. As natural leaders emerge and try to create social stability, the group slowly replaces civilization's rules and orderliness with tribal ritual and finally primitive savagery. A popular adventure story for teenagers, *Lord of the Flies* is highly suggestive in its characters' loss of innocence, the question of good and evil, and the consequences of living in a world with no controls. (7-12, 5.0)

***Monster*, Walter Dean Myers (1999):**

The prosecutor calls Steve Harmon, the sixteen-year old protagonist, a monster for committing murder. Steve realizes his own defense attorney thinks he's guilty, but Steve insists that he is innocent. Myers presents *Monster* in the form of Steve's handwritten journal with alternating sections of the screen play Steve writes in his head about his incarceration and trial. This technique creates enough ambiguity that the reader is left to wonder if Steve is an innocent victim of circumstance or truly a monster. (9-12, 7.1)

***Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell (1949):**

Like *Brave New World*, Orwell's novel depicts a dystopian society in which Winston Smith and Julia, his lover, struggle desperately to evade the “Thought Police” and the “Party” that seeks to destroy all human feelings of love, individuality, and personal freedom. While seemingly a hopeless story, Orwell suggests that “hope can be realized only by recognizing...the danger of a society of automatons who will have lost every trace of individuality, of love, of critical thought, and yet who will not be aware of it because of ‘doublethink’” (Erich Fromm, 1961). (9-12, 8.2)

***One day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, (1962):**

Based on Solzhenitsyn's experiences in a Russian gulag, this novel fictionalizes that experience through the character of Ivan Denisovich, who is wrongfully convicted of treason and sentenced to ten years of hard labor. Covering a single day in his prison life, we see the daily monotony and tedium of Ivan's existence, an existence that demeans and dehumanizes every prisoner and the men who guard them. More than a simple attack against Soviet oppression, Solzhenitsyn's story embraces the very essence of what it means to be human and the lengths to which people will go to maintain their personal dignity and sense of self. (9-12, 9.0)

***The Ox-Bow Incident*, Walter Van Tilburg Clark (1940):**

A classic western tale of mob justice, *The Ox-Bow Incident* describes the events surrounding the capture and lynching of three wranglers falsely accused of stealing cattle. Against all their protests and a few objections from some members of the posse who want to wait for more evidence and a proper trial, stronger, more violent voices prevail; and, in the end, the three men are hanged. Too late, the posse discovers that the men were innocent. Clark's novel goes far beyond the typical western tale of good vs. evil. In this situation good and evil are ambiguous concepts and the very nature of justice as attainable is questioned. (9-12, 7.0)

***The Poisonwood Bible*, Barbara Kingsolver (1998):**

The Poisonwood Bible tells the story of Nathan Price, an egocentric, evangelical Baptist, who takes his wife and four daughters to the Belgian Congo in 1959 to establish a mission. Narrated by his wife and daughters, the story reflects the tragic consequences of an abusive husband and father, the clash of fundamentalist Christianity and the native faith of the Congolese villagers, and the political, economic, and social conflict between colonialism and an emerging spirit of democratic nationalism. (9-12, 7.9)

***To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee (1960):**

Seen through the eyes of young Scout Finch, Harper Lee's Pulitzer-Prize winning novel tells the powerful story of her father's defense of Tom Robinson, a Black man falsely accused of assaulting a white girl in a small southern town. Atticus Finch realizes Tom's innocence, but faced by the town's heritage of racial prejudice, his defense proves futile and fatal for his client. As Scout, Jem, her brother, and their friend Dill watch events unfold, they learn that there is more to Atticus than they ever suspected. Not only do they learn to appreciate the depths of his fatherly love, they also see their father become the protector of society from itself as he faces down a lynch mob and, with calm dignity become the guardian of the rule of law. His closing argument to the jury shakes our collective conscience by reminding us that the rule of law and the protection it affords all citizens, while flawed, as is any human institution, is vital to society's survival. (9-12, 8.1)

***The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne (1850):**

On the surface, Nathaniel Hawthorne's story of Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale, and Roger Chillingworth would seem to be a simple tale of crime and punishment. However, the story is much more than this as generations of readers have learned, for Hawthorne explores not just a crime of passion and the public punishment that brands Hester with her scarlet *A*, but questions the very nature of the law that imposes the punishment. He also raises questions about the dichotomy between the public and private self, internal passion and external convention, vengeance, and hidden guilt. (9-12, 11.7)

***Seven Days in May*, Fletcher Knebel and Charles Waldo Bailey (1962)*:**

At the height of the Cold War, an American President more concerned with conscience than popularity, negotiates a controversial treaty with the Soviet Union. As the beleaguered president's approval rating plummets, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and other senior officers, convinced that the president's actions threaten national security, plan a *coup d'etat* to seize the government. *Seven Days in May* serves as a cautionary tale for all citizens who assume that the rule of law will never allow such events to happen in America. (9-12)

***A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens (1859):**

Dickens' tale of life in London and Paris during the French Revolution examines the irony of rebelling against one form of tyranny only to have it replaced by tyranny in the guise of freedom. (9-12, 9.0)

***The Tequila Worm*, Viola Canales (2005):**

Sofia, an adolescent Latina, "wins a scholarship to a prestigious boarding school in another city. Her experiences with her classmates are colored by differences in social class, language, and culture. ...Her story mirrors the experiences of so many young people in the U.S. who must redefine personal freedom and identity as they move between worlds" (Frey and Fisher, 2007). (6-8, 5.4)

***Un Lun Dun*, China Miéville (2007):**

Miéville creates a magical world in which her main characters, Zanna and Deeba face surrealistic

creatures as they seek to overcome economic and environmental problems that have timely references to the world of today. The characters, setting, and action raise important and relevant questions about the nature of personal and social progress. ([Publishers Weekly vol. 254 issue 7 p. 87 \(c\) 02/12/2007](#)) (6-8)

Uncle Tom's Cabin, Harriet Beecher Stowe (1852):

Abraham Lincoln described Stowe's novel as "the book that made" the Civil War. While historians may question its accurate picture of the antebellum South and literary critics may debate its artistic qualities, no one can deny the novel's contributions to the abolitionist movement of its day or the lasting impact on American culture: Uncle Tom's name has become both a reminder of the cruelty the oppressed Black race has faced for generations and, simultaneously and ironically, a denigrating label for those members of the race who obsequiously accept a role as second-class citizens; Simon LeGree, on the other hand, has come to symbolize not just the stereotypical cruel overseer of the southern plantation system, but the very embodiment of human depravity and injustice. (9-12, 7.5)

Veil of Roses, Laura Fitzgerald (2007):

This compelling novel follows Tamila Soroush, a spirited young woman from the confines of Iran to the intoxicating freedom of America – where she discovers not only an enticing new country but the roots of her own independence. (*RHI Magazine*, Vol. 2, Issue No. 1, 2007)

We, Yevgeny Zamyatin (1921):

Set in a dystopian society of the future in which all personal freedoms have been eliminated, *We* explores "the individual vs. the social order, a celebration of the importance of imagination, and ultimately, a warning regarding the dehumanizing consequences of imagination's destruction" (www.greemanreview.com/book/book_zamyatin_we.html). In his treatment of these themes, Zamyatin's novel precedes the work of Huxley, Orwell, and Bradbury and serves as the perfect complement to these authors' works.

Short Fiction:

"A Modest Proposal," Jonathan Swift (1729)*

"Battle Royal" from *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison (1952)*

"The Child by Tiger," Thomas Wolfe (1937)*

"The Guest," Albert Camus (1957)

"The Lottery," Shirley Jackson (1949):

(9-12, 5.9)

Non-fiction:

Abigail Adams' Letters to John Adams: March 31, 1776; May 7, 1776:

John and Abigail Adams' historic correspondence reflect their personal sacrifices and abiding affection for one another as well as insight to the turbulent events surrounding the founding of the new nation. These letters address Abigail's concern for the failure of the "Founding Fathers" to address the status of women in the *Declaration of Independence*.

Behind Barbed Wire: The Imprisonment of Japanese Americans During World War II, Daniel S. Davis (1982):

Davis discusses the forced internment of Japanese-Americans in camps following the attack on Pearl Harbor, their way of life there, and their eventual assimilation into society following the war.

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, Dee Brown (1970):

Dee Brown's history of America's policy toward Native Americans reveals the dark side of a government committed to expansion at all costs. "Beginning with the Long Walk of the Navajos in 1860 and ending 30 years later with the massacre of Sioux men, women, and children at Wounded Knee in South Dakota, it tells how the American Indians lost their land and lives to a dynamically expanding white society. ... Again and again, promises made to the Indians fell victim to the ruthlessness and greed of settlers pushing westward... (John Stevenson, n.d.). Relying on extensive primary sources and period photographs, Brown attacks the traditional stereotypes of Native Americans and reveals the genocidal fate of an indigenous people victimized by a society and its government that perverted the law to its own ends. (9-12, 7.9)

"Civil Disobedience," Henry David Thoreau, (1849):

Thoreau's famous essay on the relationship between individual conscience and duty to the government influenced both Mohandas Gandhi's and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s doctrine of non-violent passive resistance.

Diary of a Young Girl, Anne Frank (1947):

Discovered in 1947 and published in English in 1952, *Diary of a Young Girl* recounts the life of Anne Frank and her family as they seek refuge from the Nazis in an Amsterdam warehouse. Anne's diary provides a highly detailed and intimate account of this horrific period and "epitomizes the madness of the Holocaust" (Wendy Smith, n.d.). *Diary of a Young Girl* also reminds us that the evil that killed Anne in 1944 at Bergen-Belsen is still with us in the genocidal wars that exterminate thousands annually. (6-8, 5.1)

My Bondage and My Freedom, Frederick Douglass (1855):

"Frederick Douglass originally penned his book as a response to people's accusations that someone as articulate and composed as he couldn't possibly be a former slave. With that goal in mind, Douglass wrote his memoirs, in a straight forward, powerful way. In the book, he painfully and honestly documents the path his early life took; the memories of being owned, how slaves coped during these times, and how he managed to pull himself out of it all." (James Hiller, 2004) (9-12)

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (1845):

Escaping bondage in 1838, Douglass gives a detailed and moving account of his life as a slave and how he learned to read and write, the dehumanizing effects of slavery, and his own triumph over it to become one of his era's most influential and out-spoken critics of America's "peculiar institution." (9-12, 7.9)

Night, Elie Wiesel (1960):

This gripping memoir describes Wiesel's firsthand experience with the horror of the Holocaust and the genocidal campaign that consumed his family. His memories of the nightmare world of the death camps probe the universal themes of guilt, survival, and human injustice and cruelty. His memoir speaks for those whose voices were silenced by the atrocities of the Nazi concentration camps and for all who continue to suffer the injustices of tyrannical regimes. (9-12, 8.7)

Nisei Daughter, Monica Sone (1953):

"*Nisei Daughter* describes the loss of property and the personal insults, the barbed wire and armed guards, the dust storms, horrible food, unfinished barracks, and barren land - and the efforts of the Japanese-Americans to maintain their ethics, family life, and belief in the United States. Monica Sone is furious at the blatant disregard of her civil rights, and yet ironically, it is during her time in the camps and afterwards in the Midwest that she finally brings together the various aspects of her heritage. Straightforward, searching, often funny, this is a highly readable account of one woman's experience living in many worlds." (Erica Bauermeister, n.d.)

Survival in Auschwitz, Primo Levi (1958):

Primo Levi provides a personal narrative of his capture and deportation from his native Italy to Auschwitz in 1943. His memoir recounts the 10 months of horror he witnessed and the enduring strength of the human spirit to survive even the most desperate and dehumanizing conditions.

We Are Witnesses, Jacob Boas (1995):

Boas, a Holocaust survivor, provides excerpts from five teenagers, among them Anne Frank, from different parts of Europe who shared a common experience: All were Jewish and all died at the hands of the Nazis. Accompanied by Boas' commentaries, *We Are Witnesses* reflects the impact of the Holocaust on young people and "bears powerful witness to what happened to ordinary families as they were crowded into the ghettos, persecuted, and murdered" (*Booklist*, n.d.). (9-12, 7.0)

"What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" Frederick Douglass (1852):

"If *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is the fictional masterpiece of American abolitionism...then Douglass's Fourth of July address is abolition's rhetorical masterpiece. In style and substance, no 19th century American ever offered a more poignant critique of America's racial condition than Douglass did on July 5, 1852.... He had used language to move people and mountains; he had explained a nation's condition, and through the pain of his indictment, illuminated a path to a better day. ...The meaning of slavery and freedom in America had never found such a voice at once so terrible and so truthful." (David W. Blight, 2005)

The Witchcraft of Salem Village, Shirley Jackson (1956):

Author Shirley Jackson examines in careful detail the horrifyingly true story of accusations, trials, and executions that shook tiny Salem Village to its foundations. Jackson's book serves as the perfect companion to *The Crucible*. (6-8, 5.9)

NOTE: (*) Teachers should use discretion in selecting these works for middle school students because of the complex literary style, advanced reading level, and/or age-appropriateness of the content. Remember, only teach what you have read.