



Soon to be Capstone Senior Writers and Readers,

I look forward to meeting all of you and discussing our summer reading when you return as full-fledged seniors in August. I thought I'd provide an introduction to each of the books on the summer list and share the merits of each of your choices.

First, let me impress on you the value of actually reading this summer. You may have previously seen reading as work or drudgery, but research shows that the most successful people read broadly and regularly.

Some of you may argue that you don't have time to read, but we all waste a portion of time that could be spent in reading.

- *You're stuck in a car on a family trip?* Don't forget your book. You will forget to ask, "Are we there yet?"
- *You have to wait 30 minutes at an appointment?* Instead of scrolling through social media, read a book on your phone.
- *You're bored and stuck at home?* Turn off the television and the Xbox and get lost in another world and another life beyond your own.
- *You have a friend who is also reading the same book?* Make a pact to discuss your summer reading after a certain amount of chapters. Meet at the coffee shop with your books and notebooks. You'll look cool, have a latte, and "get a latte" done in preparation for my class.

I want you...

- to read good literature for information and entertainment.
- to develop empathy for others, fictional or real.
- to seek insight into the human experience and consider beliefs and cultures beyond your own.
- to develop your own voice as a writer, by first recognizing and imitating the vocabulary and style of great thinkers and authors.
- to develop the reading stamina required in college and beyond.
- to delve deeply into all reading and especially into God's best seller, *The Holy Bible*, which contains the wisdom of our Creator, and the Word incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Oh, and I want you to begin the first quarter of your senior year with a good grade on summer reading assignments. (Of course there will be assignments and tests!)

My advice: Read and reflect on **one book in June** (and take notes on characters, events, and themes). Then **read another in July** (and take notes on characters, events, and themes), and you will confidently enter my classroom next August ready to succeed!

God bless your summer!

Your soon-to-be English teacher (Lord willing),

Mrs. Janelle Phipps

Summer Required Text:***Things Fall Apart* Chinua Achebe**

This classic novel written by Chinua Achebe depicts the story of Okonkwo, a proud and successful Igbo man who struggles with the arrival of European colonialism and Christian missionaries. The first part of the novel highlights Okonkwo's personal history amid longstanding Igbo culture and traditions. The second and third parts introduce the personal and societal changes caused by the influx of European culture and beliefs. **Attached is a list of characters to slip in your book to help you remember the foreign names of characters.**

AND choose 1: (or more—They are all good!)

***Same Kind of Different as Me* Ron Hall and Denver Moore**

This *New York Times* (NYT) best seller tells the true story of a modern day slave and subsequent homeless man Denver and a multi-millionaire art dealer Ron whose lives intersect in my hometown of Fort Worth. It is a story of grief and redemption and deep spiritual truths. The first time I completed the novel I was on a plane to Louisville, KY to read for AP Lit, and I embarrassed myself in public by crying all over my copy.

***Sing, Unburied Sing* Jesmyn Ward**

In this National Book Award winning novel, JoJo and his sister Kayla live on a Mississippi farm with their grandparents and occasionally their drug-addicted mother Leonie. Jesmyn Ward's story includes ghosts and visions and the growth of a young black boy on a journey fraught with danger and hope.

***A Man Called Ove* Fredrick Backman**

Have you ever known a grumpy old man who appears critical of everyone and everything? This novel by Swedish writer Backman portrays Ove, a crochety retiree who has finally given up on life. Backman shares Ove's past, including the tragedies that have led him to his ill temper and choices, and his present and future filled with relationships that change his life. Ove will make you mad, sad, laugh, and sigh.

***All the Light We Cannot See* Anthony Doerr**

This Pulitzer Prize winning novel is written in short chapters alternating between the parallel lives of Marie-Laure Blanc, a blind French girl who must survive WW2 in Saint-Malo, and Werner Pfennig, an orphaned young German engineering protégé who is trained by the Nazis to intercept and destroy enemy radio broadcasts. The novel at times moves from present tense to flashbacks, and, beyond the war that the two characters must navigate and survive, the novel's central conflict is a search for a fabulous, cursed diamond.

***Jane Eyre* Charlotte Brontë**

Jane Eyre is a *bildungsroman*, a coming-of-age story of the title character, an orphan who searches for her place in the world. Though she faces cruelty, mistreatment, and deceit, she is the

ultimate female heroine. Though she lives in the Victorian Era when women had few options outside of marriage, she perseveres in the face of adversity and chooses her own path.

***Cry, the Beloved Country* Alan Paton**

Set during the time of apartheid and social upheaval in South Africa, this novel follows the parallel stories of a black Zulu priest Stephen Kumalo and a wealthy white landowner James Jarvis whose search for their sons intersects in difficult and moving ways. Throughout his journey Stephen Kumalo's character displays the pain and beauty in a faithful life and the power and generosity of a faithful God. *A note about style:* Since the book contains the use of Afrikaans words, there is a glossary at the end to check for meaning. Paton also uses dashes rather than quotation marks to identify characters' speech.

***The Botanist's Daughter* Kayte Nunn (NEHS common reader)**

From the publisher's summary of this historical novel: In Victorian England, headstrong adventuress Elizabeth takes up her late father's quest for a rare, miraculous plant. She faces a perilous sea voyage, unforeseen dangers, and treachery that threatens her entire family. In present-day Australia, Anna finds a mysterious metal box containing a sketchbook of dazzling watercolours, a photograph inscribed 'Spring 1886' and a small bag of seeds. It sets her on a path far from her safe, carefully ordered life and on a journey that will force her to face her own demons. In this spellbinding botanical odyssey of discovery, desire, and deception, Kayte Nunn has so exquisitely researched 19th-century Cornwall and Chile you can almost smell the fragrance of the flowers, the touch of the flora on your fingertips.

Note: Seniors who are members of the National English Honor Society are invited to read this novel so that they might enter an essay contest in the second quarter.

Things Fall Apart Major Character List

Add names and details to this list as you read.

Okonkwo, proud, hardworking main character and wrestling champion in fictional Umuofia

Unoka, Okonkwo's irresponsible father, interested more in music than farming

Nwoye, Okonkwo's oldest son, a sensitive young man who is a disappointment to Okonkwo

Ikemefuna, a clever young man given to Umuofia to avoid war, lives in Okonkwo's household

Ekwefi, Okonkwo's second wife and mother of Ezinma, her only surviving child

Ezinma, Okonkwo's favorite daughter

Obierika, Okonkwo's best friend who often represents a voice of reason

Chielo, a village priestess who is also the priestess of Agbala

Agbala, the Oracle of the Hills and Caves, whose pronouncements influence all of Umuofia. She is based on the real Oracle at Awka, who controlled Igbo life for centuries.

Mr. Brown, the first white Christian missionary in Umuofia and neighboring Mbanta. He is understanding and open-minded.

Mr. Kiaga, native interpreter for the missionaries, a teacher and a leader of the new church in Mbanta.

Rev. James Smith, a strict stereotypical white Christian missionary, who takes over the church after Mr. Brown

Ezeudu, the oldest clan member and wise concerning knowledge of his and neighboring clans

Egwugwu, a masquerader who represents the ancestral spirits of the village

Chi, an individual's personal god or spirit whose merit determines either good or bad fortune

District Commissioner, a stern, stereotypical white administrator who knows and cares little of the people whom he attempts to govern

The Most Successful People Are Usually High-Volume Readers

Thomas Oppong

April 7, 2022

<https://hive.com/blog/successful-people-reading-habits/>

Many people think of success as a result of luck, circumstance, or good fortune. While luck plays a role in success, the people considered the most successful have many habits in common.

For many of the most successful people alive, reading is not just a hobby; it's a way of life. From business leaders and political figures to celebrities and regular Joes, the world's most successful people are high-volume readers.

Warren Buffet spends about almost 8 hours a day reading. The Intelligent Investor by Benjamin Graham is one of his favorite books.

Mark Cuban reads for more than three hours almost every day.

[He said in his book](#), How to Win at the Sport of Business: If I Can Do It, You Can Do It, "To this day, I feel like if I put in enough time consuming all the information available, particularly with the internet making it so readily accessible, I can get an advantage in any technology business."

Albert Einstein read books on maths and physics for hours every day. Abraham Lincoln was a self-learner. "All I have learned, I learned from books, he once said.

Jane Austen, Theodore Roosevelt, and Queen Elizabeth I are a few of the most famous readers of all time.

Today Barack Obama, Richard Branson, Bill Gates, Brené Brown, Sheryl Sandberg, Oprah, Mark Zuckerberg, Reese Witherspoon, J.K. Rowling and many successful people share what they read in public. You can find some of their recommended books [here](#).

When you think about it, reading a lot makes sense. It can be hard to become successful if you don't know anything about other successful people.

A growing body of research shows the importance of reading for knowledge, improvement, and personal growth.

Reading helps you develop new perspectives and exposes you to new ideas and ways of thinking. It also allows you to build your skills, improve yourself and accelerate your growth.

Not everyone has the time or the motivation to read every day, but reading regularly is one of the best habits you can develop.

Many successful people have time to read because they choose to.

They don't have to; they are voracious readers because that's what they want to do. They love to read, and they make time for books.

They may be interested in specific topics or industries, but they tend to be avid readers in almost every area.

They know that reading good books and [developing a broad knowledge base](#) is one of the most effective ways to improve their lives and careers.

Becoming a voracious reader doesn't just make you more intelligent. It also makes you more empathetic, curious, and better able to see the world from other people's perspectives.

Many of the most successful people you know are lifelong learners — they are cross-domain readers interested in finding knowledge that connects better. Many of them are particularly interested in improving their skills to stay ahead of stay competitive.

“The rich are voracious readers on how to improve themselves. They're reading self-improvement books, biographies, books about successful people, things like that, says Tom Corley, the author of “Change Your Habits, Change Your Life: Strategies That Transformed 177 Average People Into Self-Made Millionaires.”

Many successful people learn from people who have come before them. They may not always remember everything they read, but they still read as much as possible to expand their knowledge and broaden their worldviews.

“Am reading a great biography of Ben Franklin by Isaacson. Highly recommended,” Elon Musk once tweeted.

Successful people are constantly learning from the masters, reading and absorbing nuggets of wisdom from the likes of Leonardo Da Vinci, Thomas Alva Edison, and Warren Buffett.

You see, it's not that you don't have any ideas about what successful people are doing or how they're doing it.

Be intentional about building a reading habit.

Successful people read books differently, says expert: An ‘underused and incredibly powerful...way to develop ourselves’

Published Tue, Jan 10 2023 11:33 AM EST Updated Tue, Jan 10 2023 11:53 AM EST
Natasha Piñon

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/01/10/how-successful-people-read-books-northwestern-expert-brooke-vuckovic.html>

The best leadership advice you’ll ever receive may already sit on your bookshelf — once you learn to read like a leader.

From [Bill Gates](#) to [Barack Obama](#), successful leaders are often [diligent readers](#). And there’s a good chance they’re reading differently than you, intentionally scanning every page for hidden lessons and leadership solutions, says [Northwestern](#) management professor [Brooke Vuckovic](#).

In Vuckovic’s MBA class on moral leadership, students read and analyze novels and short stories to determine how power and empathy manifest in the workplace.

“Our best leaders are looking for ways to develop themselves, and fiction represents an often underused and incredibly powerful, low cost, ongoing, pleasurable way to develop ourselves — if read correctly,” Vuckovic tells CNBC Make It.

Here’s her advice for reading books like highly successful people do.

Ask the right questions

When you start a new novel, pause after the first chapter or so and try to describe the central characters: What forces impact them? What drives them?

By answering those questions, you develop a “crucial skill” for leaders, Vuckovic says: interpersonal awareness and empathy, which [has been shown](#) to foster welcoming and thriving workplaces.

Next, think about which character or elements of the story you relate to the most. What do you have in common? Why do you find that particular character so appealing? Do you have the same strengths or flaws?

Now, you’re practicing self-awareness, another [critical skill for successful leadership](#), Vuckovic says.

As you keep reading, identify any conflicts that arise. Try to succinctly describe the actual moral quandary behind them: Is it individual versus community? Loyalty versus truth-telling?

Chances are, it's a universal, relatable conflict — and you'd be well-served knowing how to solve it. Think of how you'd advise the characters in the novel: What would you tell them to do? How would you advise them to move forward?

Doing so allows you to practice analyzing — and solving — a problem without getting bogged down by real-life details, Vuckovic says. It also helps you practice approaching issues from a “neutral entry point,” which is helpful when your real-life dilemmas are polarizing, she adds.

Draw workplace parallels

After analyzing the characters' conflicts, consider how the story relates to your own life's quandaries. Maybe you're considering leaving a job. Perhaps you're struggling with balancing your family and your career.

Ask yourself what the book can teach you about it, and don't panic when there's no clear answer. “A lot of times your first answer is going to be ‘nothing’ or ‘I have no idea,’” Vuckovic says.

Her suggestion: Make it up. Invent a fictional parallel between the novel's conflicts and your own workplace dilemma. Even if it feels like a stretch, it can help you analyze a familiar problem from a new point of view.

For example, say you're concerned about juggling work and family life, and you're currently in the middle of reading F. Scott Fitzgerald's “The Great Gatsby.”

The book is about the pursuit of unattainable dreams, so force a connection. When it comes to juggling work and family, maybe you're holding yourself to an impossible standard without realizing it. Could that be your metaphorical “green light?”

Again, it might feel like a stretch, but it's a helpful starting point for analyzing your own dilemmas.

“It's just a way to think creatively and differently from a different standpoint about problems you're facing.

10 Reasons Why People Who Read A Lot Are More Likely To Be Successful

Written by [Matt Duczeminski](#)

<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/10-reasons-people-read-lot-likely-successful.html>

We're taught from a very young age that reading as much as possible is the pathway to success and fulfillment. Picture the smartest, hardest-working person you know, and chances are you picture them in a library poring over a variety of texts for hours on end. While simply being an avid reader does not ensure success, successful people are assuredly avid readers. And all of them have the following traits in common.

1. They have increased focus

Successful people are able to focus on one task for an elongated period of time. Anyone who's read *Atlas Shrugged* can tell you reading isn't a quick process. It's also not a singular process. Readers take breaks, naturally, but the most avid reader simply cannot put a book down for longer than a day after they've dove into it. Successful people feel the same way about any task they set out to do.

2. They set goals

Along with focus, readers set goals for themselves whenever they sit down with a good book. Whether setting out to read a specific amount of pages before moving on to another activity, or deciding to read until a certain concept is solidified in their mind, readers actively try to accomplish something whenever they open a text. Successful people set goals for just about every moment of their life, and continue working toward the goal until they surpass it.

3. They spend time wisely

They might only have 20 minutes before they have to be somewhere, but instead of seeing "only 20 minutes" as not enough time to get anything done, they see it as 20 minutes that can be spent reading. Successful people view their time as incredibly valuable, and seize every opportunity they have to learn something new, or accomplish a goal. Readers realize that 5 wasted minutes every day over the course of a year is more than an entire 24 hours wasted that could have been spent reading.

4. They have perspective

Successful people are able to see all angles of an issue, because they have read a variety of literature from various perspectives. Two of [Bill Clinton's favorite novels](#) are Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man* and Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. The insight gained from reading these novels undoubtedly shaped his perspective in dealing with race relations as a politician. Being an avid reader allows you to put yourself in someone else's shoes, if only for a moment; but once that moment's over, you remember the experience for the rest of your life.

5. They are reflective

In addition to gaining perspective, readers are reflective about what they have read. While gaining perspective allows a person to see from the other side of the fence, being reflective allows them the opportunity to understand how they can be productive with their new-found perspective. Successful people see reading not as the simple act of staring at words on a page. They understand the profound effect that consuming a text can have on the mind, and how books can change a person's life.

6. They have incredible writing and speaking skills

It's no surprise that the greatest orators in human history have all been enthusiastic about reading. Successful people draw inspiration from their role models, and utilize this inspiration to further their cause. From [Demosthenes](#), to [Lincoln](#), to [Nelson Mandela](#), people who remain cemented in history became such passionate and well-spoken lecturers by studying the great minds before them.

7. They have increased memory

Readers understand just how powerful the brain really is. It can hold almost an unlimited capacity of information. The more you read and learn, the easier it becomes to retain information. Successful people don't prescribe to Homer Simpson's belief that learning something new pushes something old out. They simply continue to learn, and commit an incredible expanse of knowledge to memory, sometimes without even realising it.

8. They stay fresh

Great readers also see the brain as a muscle that needs to be worked. Just like going to the gym every day keeps your arms and legs in shape, reading keeps your mind sharp and able to easily retain knowledge. Successful people exercise their mind on a daily basis through reading and other methods such as crossword puzzles and brain teasers. Successful people habitually create challenges to overcome, which in turn improves their minds' capability to solve increasingly larger problems every day.

9. They are educated and informed

Successful people rise to the top because they have spent their time on earth learning. When they pick up a book, they don't do so just to finish it, but to take something away from it. Reading textbooks was never just a school assignment to be completed, but was a chance to expand their knowledge even further. Even while reading fictional novels, successful people take with them life lessons that they carry with them forever.

10. They read to relax

Even the most successful people need to tune out the world every once in a while. But this doesn't mean they turn their minds off completely. There is nothing wrong with reading a "trashy magazine" or graphic novel to unwind. Reading just about anything is more beneficial than watching television or wasting a Friday night at a bar. Again, successful people value every minute of their time, and even in their most idle moments they still strive to improve. And there's no better way to chill out while keeping yourself fresh than with a good book.