

APPENDIX C

English Language Arts Resources

Recommended Reading List for Catholic Schools in the United States

Catholic school students in the United States should be familiar with most of these core works and authors. The recommendations on this list are minimal by design so as to make it possible to introduce students to the “great conversation” of both Western and Catholic culture. These works provide for basic cultural literacy and offer examples of excellent writing and storytelling. Schools will no doubt add significant additional texts to their curricula drawn from the hundreds of excellent works not on this short list.

Grades K-4 Recommended Literature

Critical Bible Stories

Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes

Aesop’s Fables

Adapted Greek and Roman myths

Selected fairy tales from Grimm

Selected fairy tales from Hans Christian Andersen

Folk tales

Other stories that reflect classical Western archetypes, teach morality, and/or emphasize fantasy and creativity

Extensive age-appropriate poetry

Grades 5-8 Recommended Literature

A Christmas Carol (Dickens)

A Wrinkle in Time (L’Engle)

Adam of the Road (Gray)

Amos Fortune, Free Man (Yates)

Anne of Green Gables (Montgomery)

Around the World in Eighty Days (Verne)

Beowulf: A New Telling (Nye)
Black Ships Before Troy: The Story of the Iliad (Lee)
Charlotte's Web (White)
Cyrano de Bergerac (Rostand)
Death Comes for the Archbishop (Cather)
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Stevenson)
I, Juan de Pareja (de Trevino)
If All the Swords in England (Willard)
Johnny Tremain (Forbes)
Journey to the Center of the Earth (Verne)
King Arthur and His Knights (Green)
Legend of Sleepy Hollow (Irving)
Little House in the Big Woods (Wilder)
Little Women (Alcott)
My Antonia (Cather)
My Side of the Mountain (George)
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (Douglass)
Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea (Verne)
Our Town (Wilder)
Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry (Taylor)
Sarah Plain and Tall (Wilder)
Swallows and Amazons (Ransome)
The Adventures of Robin Hood (Green)
The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes (Doyle)
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (Twain)
The Bronze Bow (Speare)
The Call of the Wild (London)
The Chronicles of Narnia (Lewis)

The Crucible (Miller)

The Hobbit (Tolkien)

The Innocence of Father Brown [or others] (Chesterton)

The Jungle Book (Kipling)

The Lord of the Rings (Tolkien)

The Pearl (Steinbeck)

The Railway Children (Nesbit)

The Red Badge of Courage (Crane)

The Red Keep (French)

The Song at the Scaffold (Von le Fort)

The Story of Rolf and the Viking Bow (French)

The Swiss Family Robinson (Wyss)

The Trumpeter of Krakow (Kelly)

The Wanderings of Odysseus: The Story of the Odyssey (Lee)

The Witch of Blackbird Pond (Speare)

The Yearling (Rawlings)

Treasure Island (Stevenson)

Uncle Tom's Cabin (Stowe)

Wind in the Willows (Grahame)

Grades 9-12 Recommended Historical Documents (original or in translation)

Apology, Dialogues, Republic [excerpts] (Plato)

Democracy in America [selections] (de Tocqueville)

Funeral Oration (Pericles)

Gettysburg Address (Lincoln)

Harvard Commencement Address and/or *Nobel Lecture* (Solzhenitsyn)

Histories [selections] (Herodotus)

I Have a Dream (King)

Magna Carta

Poetics, Ethics [excerpts] (Aristotle)

Rights of Man (Paine)

“Self-Reliance” (Emerson)

Slave narratives (Douglass, Jacobs)

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin (Franklin)

The Communist Manifesto (Marx)

The Federalist [selections] (Hamilton, et. al)

The Prince (Machiavelli)

The Rule of St. Benedict (Benedict of Nursia)

The Social Contract (Rousseau)

Treatise on Law and excerpts from other works (Aquinas)

United States Constitution

United States Declaration of Independence

Grades 9-12 Recommended Literary Works

A Man for All Seasons (Bolt)

A Tale of Two Cities, David Copperfield, Great Expectations (Dickens)

Aeneid [excerpts] (Virgil)

Andromache or Medea (Euripides)

Animal Farm and/or *1984* (Orwell)

Antigone, Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus (Sophocles)

Beowulf (trans. Tolkien)

Billy Budd, Bartleby the Scrivener, and other short stories (Melville)

Brideshead Revisited (Waugh)

Brothers Karamazov or *Crime and Punishment* (Dostoyevsky)

Canterbury Tales [excerpts] (Chaucer)

Doctor Faustus (Marlow)

Frankenstein (Shelley)

Hamlet, Macbeth, and if possible *King Lear* and others (Shakespeare)

Huckleberry Finn (Twain)

Jane Eyre (Bronte)

Le Morte D'Arthur (Malory)

Metamorphoses [excerpts] (Ovid)

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich or *The Gulag Archipelago* [abridged] (Solzhenitsyn)

Oresteia (Aeschylus)

Paradise Lost [excerpts] (Milton)

Pride and Prejudice (Austen)

Short stories (Poe)

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (anonymous)

The Betrothed (Manzoni)

The Divine Comedy [excerpts] (Dante)

The Epic of Gilgamesh (anonymous)

The Great Gatsby (Fitzgerald)

The Heart of Darkness (Conrad)

The Iliad [excerpts] (Homer)

The Man Who Was Thursday (Chesterton)

The Odyssey [excerpts or full] (Homer)

The Scarlet Letter (Hawthorne)

The Song of Roland (anonymous)

Recommended Catholic authors: Georges Bernanos, G.K. Chesterton, Shusaku Endo, Graham Greene, Victor Hugo, Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy, Sigrid Undset, Evelyn Waugh

Recommended poets: Matthew Arnold, W. H. Auden, Hilaire Belloc, William Blake, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning, Lord Byron, G.K. Chesterton, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Richard Crashaw, Emily Dickinson, John Donne, T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, George Herbert, Gerard Manley Hopkins, A. E. Housman, John Keats, Joyce Kilmer, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Andrew Marvell, Alexander Pope, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Siegfried Sassoon, William Shakespeare, Percy Shelley, Robert Southwell, Edmund Spenser, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Dylan Thomas, Francis Thompson, William Wordsworth, William Butler Yeats

Recommended Spiritual Classics

Bible

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Confessions [excerpts] (St. Augustine of Hippo)

Desert Fathers [excerpts]

Documents of Vatican II [selections]

Humanae Vitae

Introduction to the Devout Life [excerpts] (St. Francis de Sales)

Mere Christianity, *Screwtape Letters*, or *The Abolition of Man* (Lewis)

Summa Theologica [excerpts] (St. Thomas Aquinas)

The Imitation of Christ [excerpts] (Thomas a Kempis)

The Story of a Soul (St. Therese of Lisieux)

Veritatis Splendor

Best Practice Suggestions for English Language Arts in Catholic Schools, Grades K-6

- ◆ Choose a majority of readings from the Good Books List found in the appendix of *The Death of Christian Culture* (see Senior, J. in *English Language Arts K-6 Resources*) or recommended classics.
- ◆ Avoid an overemphasis on informational texts. Great books engage higher order thinking skills and enhance student personal development, creativity, and engagement.
- ◆ Especially with younger children, beware of stories of darkness, despair, or the occult or that confuse archetypes. Beware of stories that pursue a cultural agenda at odds with a Catholic understanding of human dignity, marriage, or sexuality.
- ◆ Use multiple literary approaches beyond “close reading,” such as moral analysis, to examine a text. Do more with the text than clinically dissect and disaggregate it. Link it with life, context, and transcendent meaning.
- ◆ Move into authentic “chapter books” and grade level adaptations of classics when possible. Avoid anthologies and readers. Tailor questions and assignments to the real-world experiences and natural questions of the readers in the class.
- ◆ Situate the study of literature within an interdisciplinary approach so that the theology, history, philosophy, beliefs, and practices of the time develop the “story” and inform the discussion of historical events.

- ◆ Develop a separate grammar course that begins to focus students on the structure of English writing and speaking in the 4th grade.
- ◆ Include the study of a foreign language, taught in a systematic (not conversational) style to help with English grammar and logic of thinking.
- ◆ Integrate writing exercises and instruction with reading of sound literature written by expert craftsmen and women. Use imitation of author structure, tone, and craft to develop writing style.

Best Practice Suggestions for English Language Arts in Catholic Schools, Grades 7-12

- ◆ Introduce students to the great conversations of humanity—especially as those conversations are advanced in literary classics. Choose a majority of readings from the Great Books or recommended classics. Avoid simply selecting currently popular, scandalous, or titillating texts in the hopes of getting the students to read. Authentic engagement and lasting human and intellectual development can arise from authentic and impassioned study of the things that matter most from the greatest minds who have walked the earth.
- ◆ Read the greatest works by the greatest authors with an appropriate degree of humility and almost reverence, acknowledging that the great minds and artists have something to teach us, so as to grow in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.
- ◆ Avoid an overemphasis on informational texts. Great Books better engage higher order thinking skills and enhance student personal development, creativity, and engagement.
- ◆ Whenever possible use a seminar format to discuss literature. Avoid canned materials, questions, or text units.
- ◆ Use multiple literary approaches beyond “close reading” to examine a text, such as moral analysis, or analyzing the text as an expression of the author’s philosophical and theological beliefs. Do more with the text than clinically dissect and disaggregate it. Link it with life, context, and transcendent meaning.
- ◆ Situate the study of literature within an interdisciplinary approach so that the theology, history, philosophy, beliefs, and practices of the time develop the “story” and inform the discussion of historical events.
- ◆ Writing is thinking. Exploring great literature on weighty transcendent topics invites rich opportunity for writing assignments: reflective, creative, and analytical. Take advantage of this opportunity.
- ◆ Good writing comes from good reading and good example. Use the beauty and skill evident in the works of the best writers to model and teach effective writing skills.

English Language Arts Resources, Grades K-6

Donohue, D., & Guernsey, D. (2015). *Disconnect between Common Core's literary approach and Catholic education's pursuit of truth*. Retrieved from <https://s3.amazonaws.com/cardinalnewmansociety/wp-content/uploads/Disconnect-between-Common-Cores-Literary-Approach-and-Catholic-Educations-Pursuit-of-Truth.pdf>

Markey, S. (2014). *The moral imagination: The heart and soul's best guide achieving the goals of a Catholic education through the good, true, and beautiful in literature*. Retrieved from <http://www.spcatholic.org/uploads/mce/3bb18d9ab531def40a51e637a236689460f8d373/The%20Moral%20Imagination.pdf>

McKenzie, J. (2007). *Reading the Saints: Lists of Catholic books for children plus book collecting tips for the home and school library*. Bessemer, MI: Biblio Resource Publications, Inc. This book categorizes by geographical location stories about saints.

Senior, J. (2008). *The death of Christian culture*. Norfolk, VA: IHS Press.

English Language Arts Resources, Grades 7-12

How to Teach a Socratic Seminar. National Paideia Center. See <http://www.paideia.org/about-paideia/socratic-seminar/>

Ignatius Press Critical Editions. Classical texts with curriculum suggestions, study guides, commentary and helpful resources. See <http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/ignatiuscriticaleditions/>

Pearce, J. *How to Read Shakespeare (or Anyone Else)*. See <https://s3.amazonaws.com/cardinalnewmansociety/wp-content/uploads/HowTo-Read-Joseph-Pearce.pdf>

Socratic Teaching: Stimulating Life-long Learning. See <http://www.catholicliberaleducation.org/beyond-the-test-newsletter/socratic-teaching-stimulating-life-long-learning>

English Language Arts K-12 Curriculum

Stotsky, S. (2013). *An English language arts curriculum framework for American public schools: A model*. See http://alscw.org/news/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2013_ELA_Curriculum_Framework.pdf for an example of a solid secular English language arts curriculum.