The books you need to read before you go to prom

Your guide to blogs

Famous last words

Sneak peeks of hot reads for summer

For teens who need to feed their appetites for reading, Brain Candy is a tasty feast of satisfying books by today’s best new writers.

Plus, you’ll find quizzes, questionnaires, and behind-the-scenes author info that’ll give you food for thought about what to read this summer!
THE FIRST DRESS
I was handed something from somebody named Stacey Wiggens, who was described...
24 GIRLS IN 7 DAYS
BY ALEX BRADLEY

JACK GRAMMAR, average American senior, has no date to the prom. Or so he thinks. Percy and Natalie, Jack’s so-called best friends, posted an ad in the online classifieds in his school newspaper. They figured it couldn’t hurt—after all, there’s not much in this world sadder than Jack’s love life.

Now Jack must take 24 girls out on dates within 7 days to pick the lucky one to take to prom.

It is with deep gratitude that I thank you, benevolent anonymous benefactor, for the intelligent and humane personal ad, which I’m sure will prove to be a pivotal event in the narrative of my maturation.

Your humble servant,

Jack Grammar

P.S. I will poke your eyes out with a coat hanger.

TO: MyNewPromDate@yahoo.com
CC: Jack Grammar
SUBJECT: INTERESTING PROM TRADITIONS

Do any of these things go on at YOUR prom?

After you attend this year’s prom, send us your story, good, bad, or ugly. The best ones will be featured on our website!

1. Scary Prom movie: Carrie
2. 80’s Prom movie: Pretty in Pink
3. Best Dance at Prom movie: She’s All That
4. Best Shakespearean Prom movie: 10 Things I Hate About You
5. Most Hysterical Prom movie: American Pie

BEFORE the dance, all couples going to prom must be announced and promenade before the previous year’s King and Queen.

GIRLS wear garters and the guys remove them (sometimes with their teeth!).

FINDING a prom dress approaches wedding dress proportions. Girls spend hours searching, money, and emotions, often through most hapless within a 200-mile radius and hope frantically that no other seniors will also be there.

AFTER prom, everyone piles into cars and caravan to the Jersey Shore, blasting Bruce Springsteen the whole way.

AFTER each couple is announced, the new king and queen are crowned, followed by the rest of the court. Then the old king and queen lead the new prom court in the first dance. After a little bit, the rest of the couples join.

Guys’ prom to-do list:
1. SET A BUDGET
Prom ain’t cheap, but you don’t have to spend a fortune to have a good time. Maximize your money by making sure you’re only spending for the things that really matter to you.

2. PLAN EARLY
We’re talking 3 to 4 months ahead of time—pick out the best shoes for everything and won’t be stressing about where to rent a tux at the last minute.

3. EXPRESS YOURSELF
Tuxes are standard fare, but that doesn’t mean you need to look like a mannequin. Add your own flair with cuffslinks, a cool hat, retro sneakers, or a vintage tie. But remember: confidence is your best accessory for the prom.

4. GET A CORSAGE FOR YOUR DATE
—and be sure to find out what color dress she’s wearing. This is critical because you don’t want the flowers to clash with the dress!

5. HAVE A GREAT TIME!
If you date turns out to be a dud, ditch her!

Guys’ Prom Traditions

PROM BOYS... Get Ready, Find a Date, PROM!
**Best Foot Forward**

JENNA BOLLER is back from her life-altering trip to Texas and dripping with maturity. She’s got a new job as assistant to Madeline Gladstone, Director of Quality Control for Gladstone Shoes, and a handsome protégé named Tanner Cobb.

But balancing all these responsibilities with the angst of junior year and her needy family isn’t easy, especially when she’s uncovering nefarious dealings at a mysterious show factory called Plant 417 and her protégé happens to be a shoplifter. Jenna finds it difficult to trust Tanner, although his street smarts might be just what she needs when the going gets tough—filling so many shoes is a tall order! Thankfully, Jenna’s sense of humor keeps her grounded and helps her understand that maturity is a work-in-progress. Once again, Joan Bauer has written a sure-footed, funny, and poignant novel about honesty, self-esteem, the demands of loyalty, and the redemptive power of sole.

Seems like everything cool these days comes from across the pond: Harry Potter, David Beckham, Simon Cowell of “American Idol” fame, the list goes on . . .

Up your “BRIT” FACTOR by checking out some of these great books.

**RULES OF THE ROAD**
0-14-240425-X
$7.99 ($11.99 CAN)

**HOPE WAS HERE**
0-14-240424-1
$7.99 ($11.99 CAN)

**STAND TALL**
0-14-240427-6
$7.99 ($11.99 CAN)

**BACKWATER**
0-14-240426-8
$7.99 ($11.99 CAN)

**SQUASHED**
0-14-240429-2
$7.99 ($11.99 CAN)

**THWONK**
0-14-240428-4
$7.99 ($11.99 CAN)

**STICKS**
0-14-240428-4
$7.99 ($11.99 CAN)

**THE WERELING** by Stephen Cole
Werewolves, romance, mystery, thrills . . . all packed into one spine-tingling series.

**BOOK 1: WOUNDED** (1-59514-041-7)

**BOOK 2: PREY** (1-59514-042-5)

**BOOK 3: RESSURECTION** (1-59514-043-3)
$5.99 each

**SCORPIA** by Anthony Horowitz
Sensational spying for the younger set, this is the fifth book in Horowitz’s Alex Rider series about a teenage agent for the top secret British intelligence agency, MI6.

(0-399-24151-5) • $17.99

**GUITAR GIRL** by Sarra Manning
Molly Montgomery and her best mates thought they were just having fun when they formed their band, The Hormones. But when success hits, the hazards of fame force the newly crowned teen queen of girl angst close to the edge.

(0-14-240318-0) • $6.99

**LBD: IT’S A GIRL THING** by Grace Dent
Ronnie, Fleur, and Claude are the Les Bambinos Dangereuses, hence LBD. When their parents won’t let them go to the Astlebury Music Festival, the LBD plan their own concert, even if it means dealing with their enemy, Panama Goodyear.

(0-14-240182-X) • $6.99

A fresh new look for all of your favorite JOAN BAUER books in paperback!
THE MYSTICISM OF ANCIENT ASIA comes alive in an epic and elegant tale of warriors, romance, and loyalty in Liam Hearn’s Tales of the Otori. In the first two episodes, we follow Takeo, a country boy who discovers hidden powers and becomes entangled in a plot to assassinate the evil Lord Iida. In his quest, Takeo meets and falls in love with the beautiful heiress Kaede, a young woman with a deadly reputation. Love, revenge and honor motivate Takeo and Kaede in the struggle to fulfill their destinies.

Published in two parts in a floppy, glossy package. Coming to a bookstore near you in Summer 2005.

Kenji sat cross-legged, eyes narrowed, one arm resting on his knee. “I think I know who he is. Lord Shigeru sighed, his face became still and wary. “Then, you had better tell us.”

“He has all the signs of being Kikuta: the long fingers, the straight line across the palm, the acute hearing. It comes on suddenly, around puberty, sometimes accompanied by loss of speech, usually temporary, sometimes permanent…”

“You’re making this up!” I said, unable to keep silent any longer. In fact, a sort of horror was creeping over me. I know nothing of the Tribe, except that the assassin had been one of them, but I felt as if Muto Kenji were opening a dark door before me that I dreaded entering.

“You were in two places at once,” I said. “The guards saw you outside, while I saw you in the garden.”

Kenji bowed ironically to me. “We can split ourselves and leave the second self behind. We can become invisible and move faster than the eye can follow. Acuteness of vision and hearing are other traits. The Tribe has retained these abilities through dedication and hard training. And they are abilities that others in this warring country find useful, and pay highly for. Most members of the Tribe become spies or assassins at some stage in their lives.”

I was concentrating on trying not to shiver. My blood seemed to have drained out of me. I remembered how I had seemed to split in half beneath Iida’s sword. And all the sounds of the house, the garden, and the city beyond rang with increasing intensity in my ears.

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HERE’S YOUR SNEAK PEEK…

RAISIN RODRIGUEZ has been uprooted from her life in California to live with her mom and their new blended family in Philadelphia. So she decides to record every detail in a secret blog she keeps for her friends from home, spilling every humiliating incident she has while trying to make new friends. But humiliation doesn’t begin to cover what Raisin experiences when someone at school discovers her blog and prints it out for the world to see.

Hilarious and heartbreakingly hysterical, THE SECRET BLOG OF RAISIN RODRIGUEZ offers a glimpse into the mind and heart of a truly unique character with an unforgettable voice.

Raisin on philosophy: Life is full of little surprises. For example, today I learned that when mothers say things like “Today will be better than yesterday,” they don’t necessarily know what they’re talking about.

Raisin on awkward social situations: I stood alone in the corner, trying to figure out what face to make. I finally landed on the perfect one (plain, but with the corners of my mouth slightly upturned to indicate that I was glad to be standing alone in the corner).

Log onto www.raisinrodriguez.com for more Raisin Rodriguez!
Looking for Alaska

by John Green

Famous Last Words: How were the receipts today at Madison Square Garden?—P. T. Barnum, Entrepreneur

I can’t sleep... Get my swan costume ready.—Anna Pavlova, ballerina

Either that wallpaper goes, or I do.—Oscar Wilde, writer

Living and loving unconditionally.

Arts of pranking and evading school rules. But when tragedy and self-destructive Alaska Young, who has perfected the thing but safe and boring. Their nucleus is razor sharp, sexy

Pudge becomes encircled by friends whose lives are every-

"GREAT PERHAPS."

For boarding school to seek what a dying Rabelais called the and tired of his safe—okay, boring—life at home. He leaves

"PUDGE"

Halter is fascinated by famous last words

"Ward Beecher's last words were

"LAST WORDS"

FIRST GIRL...

FIRST FRIEND.

FIRST PRANK.

FIRST DRINK.

"O'Neill: my favorite playwright was Eugene

"RECORD,"

"I'VE HAD EIGHTEEN STRAIGHT

"WHISKEYS. I DO BELIEVE THAT'S A

"said,

"THEY'VE GOT TO SEE US,

"I'VE HAD EIGHTEEN STRAIGHT

"HAPPENED?"

"And—GOD DAMN IT—DIED IN A HOTEL

"ROOM."

"AND—GOD DAMN IT—DIED IN A HOTEL

"O'Neill:

"BORN IN A HOTEL ROOM

"AND GOD DAMN IT—DIED IN A HOTEL

"Q: Have you started working on next book?

"A: I graduated from college, my parents were a little

"A: Well, see, if I answer this question honestly, I'm

"A: Any advice for aspiring writers? A: After I

"A: What would you be if you weren't a writer?

"Q: What was your favorite book growing up?

"A: I'm going to lie. My favorite book growing up was

"A: The career counselor was unimpressed, but as it

"Q: Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it says on your website that you were a finalist for "Chicago's most fabulous 20somethings."

"Did you win? A: I did, oddly enough. My girlfriend

"Q: What are you reading now? A: Right now, I'm reading Shelby Foote's three-volume history of the Civil War. I've been reading it off and on for

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THE HOLLYWOOD CONNECTION . . .

If you liked these MOVIES, you’ll LOVE THESE BOOKS! Read on for some great reads that will complement your favorite flicks.

If you like 28 DAYS LATER (zombies, Apocalypse, deadly viruses, etc.) . . .
… you’ll love
THE BIG EMPTY by J.B. Stephens, a gripping quartet set five minutes in the future of a world both unimaginably transformed—and all too believable!
One year ago, a devastating plague called Strain 7 killed three quarters of the human race. The surviving population of the United States has been relocated to the coasts; the heartland is now a wasteland called THE BIG EMPTY. But seven teens trying to put their lives back together will learn that the abandoned zone holds danger, secrets, and above all, hope.

If you like BRING IT ON (cheerleaders, Kirsten Dunst, and “spirit fingers”) . . .
… you’ll love
I WAS A NON-BLONDE CHEERLEADER by Kieran Scott, a book that proves that blondes don’t always have all the fun!
New Jersey transplant and natural brunette Annisa Gobrowski has a problem—she’s not blonde and everyone at her new Florida high school is. But no lack of golden highlights is going to stop Annisa from making the cheerleading squad. She may be a little different, but Sand Dune High had better watch out—this non-blonde is here to stay!

If you like ROCK STAR (Mark Wahlberg, clad in leather pants, living out his Rock & Roll fantasy) . . .
… you’ll love
GUITAR GIRL by Same Manning, which follows a high school outcast as she reaches the über-heights of Avril Lavigne-esque fame!
Seventeen-year-old Molly Montgomery never planned on becoming famous. Molly’s band, The Hormones, was just supposed to be about mucking around with her best mates. But when their debut album rockets up the charts, the newly crowned teen queen of grrl angst learns that fame never comes for free.

If you like PRINCESS DIARIES (Chad Michael Murray + Mandy Moore + Anne Hathaway = The ultimate geek turned chic teen movie) . . .
… you’ll love
SO SUPER STARRY by Rose Wilkins, the first book in a new series about a girl who has it all and could not care less.
Octavia Clairbrook-Cleeve has a famous TV star for a mom and a very posh-sounding last name but she’s extraordinarily protective of her outsider status. So why is her closet suddenly full of ultra trendy clothing? How come the A-list girls are actually smiling at her? Can this not-so-ugly duckling transform into a total swan without sacrificing her identity?

If you like SKULLS (secret societies, murder, Yale and a Dawson’s Creek alman) . . .
… you’ll love
INVENTING ELLIOT by Graham Gardner, a suspense novel by a powerful new talent.
When Elliot Sutton arrives at Holminster High, he is determined not to become a target like he was at his old school. He invents a new Elliot: tough and impenetrable. Enter the Guardians, a group of upperclassmen who secretly rule over the school with a quiet and anonymous terror. Now they want Elliot. Not to terrorize him . . . but to become one of them.