

2. Read one Victorian novel from the following list. Choose a book you have not read before. The books on this list vary in content, length, and reading difficulty: choose wisely! Be forewarned that some books include sensitive content that may be offensive to some readers. If you have read all of these books, email rpults@lexingtoncatholic.com to get another option.

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

The romantic clash of two opinionated young people provides the theme. Vivacious Elizabeth Bennet is fascinated and repelled by the arrogant Mr. Darcy, whose condescending airs and acrid tongue have alienated her entire family. Their spirited courtship is conducted against a background of ballroom flirtations and drawing-room intrigues.

Jane Eyre by Bronte, Charlotte

This is a stormy, intense, introspective novel of the mid 19th century which probes the psychology of passion. The heroine is a governess, an orphan, penniless and plain but full of courage and spirit. The hero is a brooding, melancholy figure, a stranger given to rough outbursts of temper.

Great Expectations by Dickens, Charles

In what may be Dickens's best novel, humble, orphaned Pip is apprenticed to the dirty work of the forge but dares to dream of becoming a gentleman—and one day, under sudden and enigmatic circumstances, he finds himself in possession of “great expectations.” In this gripping tale of crime and guilt, revenge and reward, the compelling characters include Magwitch, the fearful and fearsome convict; Estella, whose beauty is excelled only by her haughtiness; and the embittered Miss Havisham, an eccentric jilted bride.

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes by Arthur Conan Doyle

This series of short stories made the fortunes of the *Strand* magazine in which they were first published, and won immense popularity for Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. The detective is at the height of his powers and the volume is full of famous cases. Although Holmes gained a reputation for infallibility, Conan Doyle showed his own realism and feminism by having the great detective defeated by Irene Adler – *the woman* – in the very first story, “A Scandal in Bohemia”.

The Beekeeper's Apprentice by Laurie R. King

The retired Sherlock Holmes meets his match in Miss Mary Russell, a very modern 15-year-old. Mary's mental acuity is equaled only by her audacity, tenacity, and penchant for trousers and cloth caps. Under Holmes sardonic tutelage, Russell hones her talent for deduction, disguises, and danger. But her ultimate challenge is yet to come. A near fatal bomb on her doorstep—and another on Holmes's—sends the two sleuths on the trail of a murderer whose machinations scatter meaningless clues and seem utterly without motives. The villain's objective, however, is quite unequivocal: to end Russell and Holmes's partnership—and then their lives.