PRONGHORN READS
WYOMING HUMANITIES

Feburary 2026 Reading List

Theme: Read a Book Where the First Sentence is Eight Words or Less

We discourge judging a book by the cover, but why not the first 8 words? In February we are asking you to look for a book that has 8 words or less in the first sentence. No matter how the sentence ends--good luck.

Book Title (A-Z)	Author	Reader Reflection
		Prompt: In a sentence or two, tell us what you think about the book and/or why you chose this title.
The Fire of the Covenant	Gerald N. Lund	It's a nearly 800 page book about the Martin and Willie Mormon handcart companies that came across Wyoming too late in the season unprepared and under supplied and had mass casualties. A great read about Wyoming history. -*Bethany, Meeteetse*

Alchemised	SenLinYu	"Helena wondered sometimes if she still had eyes." The first eight words to a tale that spans over a thousand pages; each one of them gripping and devastating. It's an incredible novel that brutally critiques our world as only great sci-fi and fantasy can. *-Justin, Cheyenne*
Exiles	Mason Coile	"The beeping won't stop." This is how our main character wakes from a long intergalactic sleep in time to land on Mars, ready to begin setting up a colony for human settlement. But she and her colleagues fine the robots that landed first have gone rogue. Not my usual genre, but I really enjoyed this sci-fi, mystery, thriller, really fun, fast-paced read! *-Kristen, Cheyenne*
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings	Maya Angelou	"What you looking at me for?" is the first sentence in Maya Angelou's autobiography of her early years. Marguerite, along with her older brother, Bailey were raised by their grandmother, Momma in rural Arkansas, until Bailey witnesses what happens to young black men in 1940's Arkansas. That's when they are sent to California to live with their mother, and then the two of them really grow up fast. It's amazing to read how Maya and the strong women who raised her, faced the challenges in their lives. I appreciate her even more after reading her story. *-Karin, Gillette*

Isola	Allegra Goodman	"I still dream of birds." This is the first sentence of a historical novel about Marguerite de la Roquel, a 16th century orphaned heiress whose guardian stole all her money and then, years later, forced her to accompany him on an expedition to New France where he left her, her lover, and her maid on a desolate and uninhabited island in retribution for her shipboard affair. The other two died on the island, but she survived for two years before being rescued by passing fisherman and returned to France. It's a wonderful book. -*Mary, Sheridan*
Moby Dick	Herman Melville	I've been reading at least one piece of classic literature a year and this was a book I had heard about my entire life, but had never actually read. It provided a lot of insight into life on a whaling ship and viewpoints about various topics in the pre-Civil War United States. I enjoyed learning about whales as I read the book, as well. It definitely didn't end the way I thought it would! -*Christi, Cheyenne*
Mr. and Mrs. American Pie	Juliet McDaniel	"All I can think about is escape." No, this is not a thriller, or murder mystery. It's 1969, Palm Springs, CA. The socialites rule the country club scene and former pageant queen Maxine Hortense Simmons is aiming to get her next crown as the new queen of Palm Springs society. This book, while funny and quirky is also filled with warmth and determination and realizing, that family is what you create, it may not look like what everyone is used to, but it's what works for you. *Lisa, Newcastle*

People We Meet On Vacation	Emily Henry	I chose this book because I love the author and this particular book was recently made into a movie. I love to compare books to the on screen adaptations. The book was better (it always is). This was not my favorite Emily Henry book. With both the book & movie versions I struggled with the past & present scenes being to similar. My daughter had watched the movie on her own and found it very confusing for the same reason. -*Serena, Moorcroft*
Rocky Mountain High: A Tale of Boom and Bust in the New Wild West	Finn Murphy	"The view was spectacular." A tale of the year the author tried to make it in the newly-emerging "Hemp Space" near Boulder, Colorado. An interesting look inside a business startup, especially one where the rules and regulations were murky, business agreements were nebulous, the weather could disrupt the whole plan, and spending $10,000 a day was no big deal.-*Nicholle, Clark*
The Anthony Bourdain Reader	Anthony Bourdain	Collection of fiction and nonfiction by Bourdain, gathered by his publisher after his death. *Molly, West Yellowstone*

The Crow Road (1993)	Iain Banks	"It was the day my grandmother exploded." Then Aunt Fiona was killed flying through the windscreen, drunken atheist dad Kenneth killed by lightning when climbing a church downspout to prove something. Is writer Uncle Rory dead or alive and do his papers reveal something terrible about someone. All this interwoven with family histories, conflicts, a bit of class structure; throw in religion, Thatcher, Israel, the Gulf War. A good read, lovely descriptions of Scotland, new vocabulary. "Not for sale in the USA" printed on the back cover. - *RoseMarie, Laramie*
The Vaster Wilds	Lauren Groff	"The moon hid itself behind the clouds." The servant girls leaves the Jamestown fort where the people are starving and dying and runs into the unknown forest. The author reveals something about the girl's past in each chapter as the servant girl goes on her journey to survive. - *Dolores, Laramie*
The Winter Garden	Kristan Hannah	Winter Garden is a quiet but emotionally powerful novel about two sisters uncovering their mother's heartbreaking past in wartime Leningrad. Kristin Hannah blends family drama with historical tragedy, building toward a moving, unforgettable ending. It's a story about resilience, forgiveness, and the weight of untold stories. -*Cathy, Buffalo*
Universality	Natasha Brown	Fitting that a book about a journalist investagating an attack on a young man is about words. Most importantly, words as a source of power. This isn't mystical, but the everyday use of how words are used and abused.-*Lucas, Laramie*