

DANA HALL SCHOOL
SUMMER READING LIST 2014
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All students at Dana Hall are required to complete summer reading. The books you read will be used in your English class during the first few weeks of the first trimester. As you read, we urge you to remember that the art of reading is a creative act, a collaboration between reader and writer.

Hold a dialogue with these books: question, argue, disagree; underline those passages that exhilarate you as well as those that infuriate you. Keep a notebook to jot down your immediate responses to each of these works and write questions that you want to discuss in your English classes. Encourage your family and friends to join you in these reading experiences.

A number of the books on this list have been made into movies, many of them wonderful in their own right. Seeing a movie instead of reading the book, however, will not prepare you for your teacher's assignment related to that book, nor will it replace the unique experience of interacting with a specific text. A better idea is to read the book first, making note of your responses and completing the assigned work, and then see the movie, which as a result you will experience on two levels.

"From that time on, the world was hers for the reading. She would never be lonely again, never miss the lack of intimate friends. Books became her friends and there was one for every mood. There was poetry for quiet companionship. There was adventure when she tired of quiet hours. There would be love stories when she came to adolescence and when she wanted to feel a closeness to someone she could read a biography. On that day when she first knew she could read, she made a vow to read one book a day as long as she lived."

—Betty Smith, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*

"To sit alone . . . with a book spread out before you . . . such is a pleasure beyond compare."

—Yoshida Kinko, *Essays in Idleness*

"...I write because I want to make deposits, not withdrawals. For me, writing is more like having a savings account: it's where we go to when we've run out of checks. I like to think of writing as a kind of gift you give to others, something they can use . . . I'm a die-hard idealist, which is probably why I am compelled to write . . . So far, it's the easiest way I've found to be of some service to the world. More and more of us are realizing that when we open up a book, we are opening up a world."

—Terry McMillan

MIDDLE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

1. During the first few weeks in your English classes, you will be asked to discuss and to write about the books you read during the summer. Your first trimester grade will include work connected with your summer reading.
2. The free-choice books should be chosen from the appropriate reading list or the one from the grade above yours. For example, sixth graders must choose from “Recommended Books for Grades 6” and/or “Recommended Books for Grade 7.”
3. Most of the books we have selected are readily available in paperback, and some are also available in e-book format. Review the reading list early in the summer to make sure that you can obtain copies of your choices. Many of these books are also available at your local library; however, it would be best if you brought the books you read during the summer with you in September.

GRADE 6

- Required: *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*, Avi
- Two books from the reading lists “Recommended Books for Grade 6” or “Recommended Books for Grade 7.”

All rising sixth graders will receive an assignment for the required book and the two free-choice books. In addition, this document will be posted on the Helen Temple Cooke Library website at <http://library.danahall.org/reading-lists/summer-reading> by June 1.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR GRADE 6

GIRL POWER

Becoming Naomi León, Pam Muñoz Ryan

Naomi, Owen, and their great-grandmother take a life-changing trip to Mexico to find the children’s long-lost father.

Princess Academy, Shannon Hale

One of the girls in Miri’s mountain village will be chosen to be the prince’s bride. What will Miri do if the prince chooses her?

BOOKS TO MAKE YOU CRY

Bridge to Terabithia, Katherine Paterson

Jess has never had a friend like Leslie. Together they create and explore an imaginary world they call Terabithia—until tragedy strikes.

Ninth Ward, Jewell Parker Rhodes

Unable to leave New Orleans, Laneshia and her elderly caretaker, Mama Ya-Ya, stay to ride out Hurricane Katrina.

KIDS LIKE YOU

11 Birthdays, Wendy Mass

When Amanda's birthday goes wrong, she's stuck repeating it over and over until she gets it right.

The Egypt Game, Zilpha Keatley Snyder

Several friends create their own Egyptian temple in a desolate yard, attracting the attention of a criminal.

The Lemonade War, Jacqueline Davies

Get ready for summer with this story of a sister, a brother, and their high-stakes lemonade stand competition. First in a series.

OTHER WORLDS

The Giver, Lois Lowry

Jonas lives in a perfect society without pain or war. But when the Giver chooses him for "Special Instructions," his life is changed forever.

Jinx, Sage Blackwood

Jinx has never left his village until his father sells him to the cranky, secretive wizard Simon. As Simon's apprentice, Jinx is introduced to a world of witches, living trees, were-creatures...and the terrifying wizard known as the Bonemaster.

A Wrinkle in Time, Madeleine L'Engle

With their neighbor Calvin O'Keefe, Meg Murray and her brother Charles Wallace embark on a cosmic journey to find their lost father, a scientist studying time travel. First in a series.

BOOKS TO MAKE YOU LAUGH

Holes, Louis Sachar

Stanley Yelnats and his family have never had anything but bad luck, so it's really no surprise to him when he is falsely accused and convicted of theft. This is a terrific, action-packed story, full of great characters with strong voices; exciting, funny scenes; and enough twists and turns to keep you reading nonstop.

Matilda, Roald Dahl

"Matilda applies her untapped mental powers to rid the school of the evil, child-hating headmistress, Miss Trunchbull, and restore her nice teacher, Miss Honey, to financial security." (Library of Congress)

A Tale Dark and Grimm, Adam Gidwitz

Hansel and Gretel and other fairy tale characters meet gruesome, hilarious fates on their way to a happy ending.

POEMS AND PICTURES

Inside Out & Back Again, Thanhha Lai

When the Vietnam War forces her family to escape to the U.S., Ha faces many challenges in adapting to her new life. An autobiographical story told in poems.

Smile, Raina Telgemeier

After an accident knocks out her front teeth, Raina embarks on an endless orthodontic adventure, while dealing with the more normal problems of middle school. An autobiographical graphic novel.

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon, Grace Lin

“Inspired by [her father’s] stories, Minli sets off on an extraordinary journey to find the Old Man on the Moon to ask him how she can change her family’s fortune.” (Publisher description)

OTHER TIMES

The Night Journey, Kathryn Lasky

Rachel dreads the time she spends with her great-grandmother, Nana Sashie, until Sashie begins to relate the story of her Jewish family’s daring escape from turn-of-the-20th-century Russia.

Number the Stars, Lois Lowry

When the Nazis come for the Danish Jews in 1943, Annemarie’s family hides her Jewish best friend.

One Crazy Summer, Rita Williams-Garcia

Delphine and her sisters are sent to spend the summer with their long-lost mother in California, where they get caught up in the Black Panther Party and the Civil Rights struggles of 1968.

MYSTERY AND SURVIVAL

From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler, E. L. Konigsburg

When Claudia and her little brother Jamie decide to run away, they do it in style: they spend their days and nights in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. But when Claudia’s favorite sculpture goes missing and they decide to solve the mystery, they end up with more than they bargained for!

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Scott O’Dell

When her Native Californian tribe flees their island to escape invaders, Karana and her little brother are accidentally left behind and must try to survive alone in the wilderness.

My Side of the Mountain, Jean Craighead George

Tired of living at home, Sam runs away to live off the land. He makes his home in a hollowed-out tree, trains a falcon named Frightful, and survives alone using only his wits.

The Westing Game, Ellen Raskin

Who killed Mr. Westing? His heirs (and you!) must solve the mystery to claim their inheritance.

GRADE 7

- Required: *Miles to Go for Freedom: Segregation and Civil Rights in the Jim Crow Years*, Linda Barrett Osborne
- Required: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, Mildred Taylor
- Two books from the reading lists “Recommended Books for Grade 7” or “Recommended Books for Grade 8.”

All rising seventh graders will receive a reading guide for the required books. This guide will include questions to answer as well as other activities to prepare you to do additional work on the required books when you begin school in September. In addition, this document will be posted on the Helen Temple Cooke Library website at <http://library.danahall.org/reading-lists/summer-reading> by June 1.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR GRADE 7

GIRL POWER

Bloody Jack, L. A. Meyer

Irrepressible orphan Jacky Faber disguises herself and is hired as ship’s boy on a 19th-century merchant ship, where she learns to sail, fights pirates, and all the while must keep her identity secret from her crewmates. Jacky’s adventures continue in an ongoing series.

The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate, Jacqueline Kelly

Callie is hopeless at the needlework and baking expected of her in 19th-century Texas; she wants to be a scientist! When she discovers that her mysterious grandfather shares her passion for observing nature, she joins him in his quest to discover a brand-new species.

Kiki Strike: Inside the Shadow City, Kirsten Miller

Remarkable, mysterious Kiki recruits a gang of renegade Girl Scouts to explore a forgotten city beneath Manhattan. Is she merely out for adventure, or does she have a bigger plan? First in a series.

Uglies, Scott Westerfeld

Tally longs for her 16th birthday. She’ll have an operation to make her a Pretty—perfectly beautiful, like all adults in her society. But when her friend Shay runs away to avoid the operation, the authorities give Tally a choice: find Shay or never turn Pretty at all. First in a series.

When You Reach Me, Rebecca Stead

Miranda's normal life is suddenly full of odd characters, like the crazy man who lives under the mailbox on her street and the kid who punches her best friend for no reason. And then she starts getting the notes...

BOOKS TO MAKE YOU CRY

A Monster Calls, Patrick Ness

Ever since Conor's mother got sick, he's been having nightmares. One night, a monster comes to his window. The monster will tell Conor three stories—and in return, it wants the terrible truth about his nightmares.

Tuck Everlasting, Natalie Babbitt

An exciting, thought-provoking adventure of a young girl who stumbles upon the Tuck family's home in the wilderness and learns their strange and awesome secret.

KIDS LIKE YOU

Close to Famous, Joan Bauer

A warm, funny novel about Foster, her mom, a reclusive movie star, and the world's best cupcakes.

Freak, Marcella Pixley

Miriam, poet and seventh-grade outcast, is bullied through the worst year of her life... until she finds the strength to stand up for herself.

Mother-Daughter Book Club, Heather Vogel Frederick

Four very different girls, their four very different moms, and a brand-new book club. Can *Little Women* make sense out of middle school?

One for the Murphys, Lynda Mullaly Hunt

When Carley joins a new foster family, the lovable Murphys, she finally starts to feel at home. What will she do when her mother wants her back?

Rules, Cynthia Lord

Catherine creates a set of rules for her autistic brother to help him fit in: "it's ok to hug Mom but not the clerk in the video store," "knock before you come into the bathroom." But Catherine still worries about how people see her family, until she befriends another disabled boy.

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, Ann Brashares

Four best friends, four summer adventures, one pair of pants. First in a series.

The Skin I'm In, Sharon Flake

“Maleeka suffers every day from the taunts of the other kids in her class. If they’re not getting at her about her homemade clothes or her good grades, it’s about her dark, black skin. When a new teacher... starts at their school, Maleeka can see there is bound to be trouble for her too. But the new teacher’s attitude surprises Maleeka. Miss Saunders loves the skin she’s in. Can Maleeka learn to do the same?” (Publisher description)

Things Not Seen, Andrew Clements

What would you do if one day you woke up invisible?

Wonder, R. J. Palacio

“August Pullman was born with a facial deformity that, up until now, has prevented him from going to a mainstream school. ...[A]t Beecher Prep, he wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid—but his new classmates can’t get past Auggie’s extraordinary face.” (Publisher description)

OTHER WORLDS

The Amaranth Enchantment, Julie Berry

When Lucinda was small, her parents died in a terrible accident on their way to a royal ball. Now she lives a Cinderella existence in her grasping, abusive aunt’s jewelry shop—until an urchin thief named Peter and the mysterious Amaranth Witch change Lucinda’s life forever.

Breadcrumbs, Anne Ursu

Hazel and Jack used to be best friends. Then he stopped talking to her... and one day he disappeared. Hazel’s search for Jack takes her into a mysterious forest of ice, where fairy tales are not what they seem.

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, C. S. Lewis

Four siblings slip through a wardrobe in their new home and find themselves in a magical land ruled by the cruel White Witch. First in a series.

The Only Ones, Aaron Starmer

All the kids in the village of Xibalba have one thing in common: when everyone else in the world disappeared, they were left behind. As Martin gets to know his eccentric companions, he forms a plan to bring everyone back... but it may be harder than he expects. Weird, funny, and unique.

Plain Kate, Erin Bow

When Kate’s village tries to burn her as a witch, a mysterious stranger offers her escape and her heart’s wish—in exchange for her shadow.

The Roar, Emma Clayton

Mika has never gotten over the disappearance of his twin sister, Ellie; everyone says she's dead, but he can't believe it. When the Northern Government introduces a contest—fly simulated pod fighters and win fabulous prizes!—Mika just knows winning is his ticket to finding Ellie.

BOOKS TO MAKE YOU LAUGH

A Crooked Kind of Perfect, Linda Urban

Zoe longs to be a piano prodigy, but instead of a piano, she ends up with a Perfectone organ. Can the chance to play hits of the seventies in the Perfectone Perform-A-Rama ever compete with dreams of Carnegie Hall?

Dead End in Norvelt, Jack Gantos

After being “grounded for life,” Jack gets a wackier summer than he'd planned!

Hoot, Carl Hiaasen

“A hilarious Floridian adventure... involv[ing] new kids, bullies, alligators, eco-warriors, pancakes, and pint-sized owls.” (Publisher description)

The Princess Diaries, Meg Cabot

Mia has a perfectly normal life—until her father becomes the crown prince of Genovia, making her a princess.

The Strange Case of Origami Yoda, Tom Angleberger

Dorky Dwight speaks to his classmates through his origami Yoda finger puppet—which gives suspiciously good advice. A great choice if you loved *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*.

The True Meaning of Smekday, Adam Rex

When the alien Boov invade Earth and abduct her mom, Gratuity “Tip” Tucci, her cat Pig, and an outlaw Boov named J. Lo go on a road trip to save the planet.

POEMS AND PICTURES

Drama, Raina Telgemeier

For Callie, the school play is full of drama on stage and behind the scenes! A graphic novel.

One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies, Sonya Sones

In poetic e-mails to her best friend, her boyfriend, and her recently deceased mother (“in heaven”), Ruby records her grief and bitterness in her new life with her movie-star father. How can she learn how to be happy again?

OTHER TIMES

Anne of Green Gables, L. M. Montgomery

Red-headed orphan Anne Shirley is far too dramatic and imaginative for the likes of her prim, proper new family! Discover her classic adventures with green hair dye, red currant wine, and Gilbert, the dreadful (but cute) boy down the road. Set in 1908 Prince Edward Island, Canada.

Black Beauty, Anna Sewell

The beloved story of a horse in early 20th-century London.

Lions of Little Rock, Kristin Levine

When Marlee's best friend Liz is kicked out of school for passing as white, "Marlee decides that doesn't matter. She just wants her friend back. And to stay friends, Marlee and Liz are even willing to take on segregation and the dangers their friendship could bring to both their families." (Publisher description) Set in 1958 Arkansas.

SURVIVAL AND ADVENTURE

Endangered, Eliot Schrefer

Sophie, whose mother runs a sanctuary for bonobo apes in Congo, becomes a foster mother to an orphan baby bonobo, Otto. When Congo breaks out in civil war, Sophie and Otto must survive alone in the jungle and make it to safety.

Hatchet, Gary Paulsen

Brian, the only survivor of a plane crash, has only his hatchet to keep him alive in the Canadian wilderness.

Tangerine, Edward Bloor

"Twelve-year-old Paul, who lives in the shadow of his football hero brother Erik, fights for the right to play soccer despite his near blindness and slowly begins to remember the incident that damaged his eyesight." (Library of Congress)

Trash, Andy Mulligan

Raphael and his friends are "dumpsite boys," living in and making a living from a city's trash heaps. One day Raphael finds something in the dump—something mysterious, valuable, and very dangerous.

War Horse, Michael Morpurgo

The unforgettable story of a brave farm horse sold into battle in World War I.

GRADE 8

- Required: *The Secret Life of Bees*, Sue Monk Kidd
- Two books from the reading lists “Recommended Books for Grade 8” or “Recommended Books for Grade 9.”

All rising eighth graders will receive a reading guide for the required book. This guide will include questions to answer as well as other activities to prepare you to do additional work on the required book when you begin school in September. In addition, this document will be posted on the Helen Temple Cooke Library website at <http://library.danahall.org/reading-lists/summer-reading> by June 1.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR GRADE 8**GIRL POWER**

Beneath My Mother’s Feet, Amjed Qamar

An absorbing story of a brave girl growing up in modern Pakistan who has to leave school to help her mother earn money to support the family.

Climbing the Stairs, Padma Venkatraman

Vidya’s family is part of Gandhi’s movement, and she has more freedom than most girls in 1940s India. When her father is seriously injured in a non-violent protest, Vidya is forced to move in with her father’s family, which lives a much more traditional life.

Five Flavors of Dumb, Antony John

Who would expect a deaf girl to manage a rock band? Good thing Piper’s up to the challenge!

Graceling, Kristin Cashore

Katsa was born with an unstoppable fighting ability which causes her to be feared by everyone in her life—until she meets Po, a prince with the same gift. Their investigation of the kidnapping of Po’s grandfather puts them in danger as they discover the horrible secret behind a distant king’s rule.

KIDS LIKE YOU

Dairy Queen, Catherine Gilbert Murdock

D.J. Schwenk is overworked enough as she tries to keep the family farm running—then she also agrees to secretly train the rival high school’s quarterback. First in a trilogy.

A Mango-Shaped Space, Wendy Mass

Mia has a condition called synesthesia—she sees colors in numbers and letters, making school sometimes hopelessly confusing. Between this, a fight with her best friend, and a sick cat, Mia has a lot to deal with in 8th grade.

Teenie, Christopher Grant

Ninth-grader Teenie has always been straight-laced and studious, but when a few new clothes get her the attention of hot, dangerous senior Greg, she is instantly head-over-heels ... and in serious trouble.

Tell Us We're Home, Marina Budhos

Best friends Jaya, Maria, and Lola are the daughters of maids who work for their classmates' wealthy families. That's hard enough — and then Jaya's mother is accused of theft.

What Happened to Goodbye, Sarah Dessen

McLean has moved around a lot with her dad since her parents' divorce. In every new town she tries a new personality. Now McLean wants to stay put and learn who she really is — with some help from Dave, the boy next door.

OTHER WORLDS

Cinder, Marissa Meyer

Cyborgs like Cinder are second-class citizens with few rights. "But when her life becomes intertwined with the handsome Prince Kai's, she suddenly finds herself at the center of an intergalactic struggle.... Caught between duty and freedom, loyalty and betrayal, she must uncover secrets about her past in order to protect her world's future." (Publisher description) First in a trilogy.

The Girl of Fire and Thorns, Rae Carson

Marked by God for a great destiny, Elisa is sent to marry the king of a far-off country threatened by war and magic. First in a trilogy.

Golden Compass, Philip Pullman

The first novel in an epic fantasy trilogy of stolen children, Arctic witches, armored bears, mysterious prophecies, and a struggle for the soul of the world.

Howl's Moving Castle, Diana Wynne Jones

All is not as it appears in the castle of the fearsome wizard Howl, as practical young hat shop apprentice Sophie discovers.

DIARIES AND POEMS

The Diary of a Young Girl, Anne Frank

First published in 1947, the insightful journal chronicles Anne's 25 months in a crowded Amsterdam attic as she and her family hide from the Nazis during World War II.

Make Lemonade, Virginia Euwer Wolff

A teenage single mom and her 14-year-old babysitter try to cope with life's lemons in this tough, funny, and ultimately hopeful novel told in poems.

SURVIVAL AND ADVENTURE

Call of the Wild, Jack London

Buck is a dog born to luxury, but his life changes dramatically when he is sold to be a sled dog in the Yukon Territory. First published in 1903, this masterpiece of adventure and survival continues to enthrall readers a century later.

The Knife of Never Letting Go, Patrick Ness

Todd is the only boy in Prentisstown, where there are no women and all the men can hear each other's thoughts. Before he turns 13 and becomes a man, he and his dog are forced to run into the swamp beyond their town...where he learns that everything he thought he knew about his home may be a lie. First in a trilogy.

A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story, Linda Sue Park

The intersecting stories of two children, one in 1985 and one in 2008, surviving and building new lives in war-torn Sudan.

My Antonia, Willa Cather

The story of Antonia Shimerda, the daughter of an immigrant family in Nebraska in the early 20th century. A quiet, beautiful story of American pioneers.

Nation, Terry Pratchett

Mau's island village is destroyed by a great wave. The same wave shipwrecks British traveler Daphne. "Separated by language and customs, the two are united by catastrophe. Slowly, they are joined by other refugees. And as they struggle to protect the small band, Mau and Daphne defy ancestral spirits, challenge death himself, and uncover a long-hidden secret that literally turns the world upside down." (Publisher description)

SELF-DISCOVERY

Elsewhere, Gabrielle Zevin

When Liz dies in a car crash, she wakes up in an afterlife where everyone ages backward, and has to make a new "life" for herself in this uplifting, poignant book.

Hope Was Here, Joan Bauer

Hope has grown up working in diners up and down the east coast with her aunt, Addie. She loves being a waitress, but all that moving around is hard. Now that Addie's taking over a diner in tiny Mulhoney, Wisconsin, will Hope find a home at last?

If I Stay, Gayle Forman

The last thing Mia remembers is the car accident that killed her family. Now she's caught in a coma between life and death. Which will she choose?

Saving Francesca, Melina Marchetta

Between the infuriating boys at her new “co-ed” school (where boys outnumber girls 25 to 1) and her mother's sudden depression, Francesca has a lot to handle in high school.

Thirteen Reasons Why, Jay Asher

A package of cassette tapes from a classmate who recently committed suicide forces Clay to think about the sort of person he wants to be.

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, Betty Smith

Francie Nolan is a girl growing up in Brooklyn in the early 1900s. Although life is hard—her family is poor, her father dies while she is young, and she does not make friends easily—Francie closely observes what happens around her and tries to make the best of things. In the process, she becomes a strong young woman with powerful memories of her childhood and an eagerness to learn what her future may hold.

UPPER SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

1. During the first two weeks in your English classes, you will be asked to discuss and to write about these books you read during the summer. Your first trimester grade will include work connected with your summer reading.
2. Most of the books we have selected are readily available in paperback, and some are also available in e-book format. Review the reading list early in the summer to make sure that you can obtain copies of your choices. Many of these books are also available at your local library; however, it would be best if you brought the books you read during the summer with you in September.

New 9th Grade International Students

- *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Alexandre Dumas (only the Lowell Bair edition)
- Two books from the reading list “Recommended Books for Grade 9”

New 10th-12th Grade International Students

- *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Alexandre Dumas (only the Lowell Bair edition)
- *Dreams of Trespass*, Fatima Mernissi
- One book from the reading lists “Recommended Books for Grade 10” or “Recommended Books for Grades 11 &12”

Literature and Composition I

- *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Alexandre Dumas (only the Lowell Bair edition)
- Two books from the reading list “Recommended Books for Grade 9”

Literature and Composition II

- *Dreams of Trespass*, Fatima Mernissi
- Two books from the reading list “Recommended Books for Grade 10”

Literature and Composition III

- *Fences*, August Wilson
- *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller
- Two books from the reading list “Recommended Books for Grades 11 & 12”

AP English Language

- *The Best American Science and Nature Writing 2013*, ed. Siddhartha Mukherjee & Tim Folger
- *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*, Katherine Boo
- One book from the reading list “Recommended Books for Grades 11 & 12”

Found Voices, Women at the Edge, and Voices of Black America

- *Bird by Bird*, Anne Lamott
- Two books from the reading list “Recommended Books for Grades 11 & 12”

AP English Literature

- *Bird by Bird*, Anne Lamott
- *A Room of One’s Own*, Virginia Woolf
- *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, Thomas Hardy
- One book from the reading list “Recommended Books for Grades 11 & 12”

NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

All new 9th grade international students will be mailed copies of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and all new 10th-12th grade international students will be mailed copies of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *Dreams of Trespass* in early June.

I. *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Alexandre Dumas

This classic French novel tells the story of hero Edmond Dantes, who is unjustly accused and imprisoned for 14 years on an island fortress. Full of passion and suspense, this story tells of one man’s journey to survive, remake himself, and plot an elaborate revenge against his enemies. Author Alexandre Dumas sets this winding tale in exotic locations in France and Italy and depicts the characters with beauty and mystery.

While you will not be required to submit your written responses, you are encouraged to take notes in a journal or notebook and to underline significant passages in the book as you read.

1. Keep a timeline of events of this book in your notes, marking the major shifts in location and action. You will not have space to record every event, only those that represent a change in character, motivation, or action. We will use these visual representations of the book as we discuss the reading.
2. What have you learned about imprisonment from this novel? Make notes about how the limits of confinement change Dantes’s character.
3. Think about similarities and differences between pairs of characters, such as Valentine de Villefort and Eugenie Danglars, and Madame Danglars and Mercedes. How do these characters represent opposite characteristics? What themes become evident through this comparison?
4. Consider character change in this novel. Compare Edmond Dantes with the Count of Monte Cristo. Has Dantes become a completely new person by the end of this novel?
5. Bring in one discussion question of your own that will inspire your classmates to talk about the themes of the novel.

II. *Dreams of Trespass*, Fatima Mernissi

Mernissi’s memoir covers her childhood in Morocco in the 1940s, before she grew up to become a well-known sociologist. As is true for many young children, her world consists mostly of her family members and close family friends. Choose ONE of the people she talks about in her memoir — maybe one of her aunts or uncles or cousins, or one of the harem servants, or her parents or grandparents — and write two pages (typed and double-spaced) about *why* and *how* you find this character particularly interesting.

- Do you perhaps identify with this character?
- Or is he or she so far outside your own world that you find him or her a puzzle?
- Are you inspired by or disgusted by this character?

Also include in your two pages at least two quotations from the memoir about or by this character, which will help illustrate why you’ve reacted as you have. This is personal writing about your own response to a character; use “I” and treat this assignment as though you’re writing a letter to your teacher about your reactions. These “letters” will be turned in on the first day of class and will be the starting point for the class’s conversation about this memoir.

LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION I

REQUIRED READING

- *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Alexandre Dumas (only the Lowell Bair edition)
- Two books from the reading list “Recommended Books for Grade 9”

The Count of Monte Cristo, Alexandre Dumas

This classic French novel tells the story of hero Edmond Dantes, who is unjustly accused and imprisoned for 14 years on an island fortress. Full of passion and suspense, this story tells of one man’s journey to survive, remake himself, and plot an elaborate revenge against his enemies. Author Alexandre Dumas sets this winding tale in exotic locations in France and Italy and depicts the characters with beauty and mystery.

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2. What have you learned about imprisonment from this novel? Make notes about how the limits of confinement change Dantes’s character.

3. Think about similarities and differences between pairs of characters, such as Valentine de Villefort and Eugenie Danglars, and Madame Danglars and Mercedes. How do these characters represent opposite characteristics? What themes become evident through this comparison?
4. Consider character change in this novel. Compare Edmond Dantes with the Count of Monte Cristo. Has Dantes become a completely new person by the end of this novel?
5. Bring in one discussion question of your own that will inspire your classmates to talk about the themes of the novel.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR GRADE 9

Choose two books from this annotated list to complete your summer reading requirement. We encourage you to read as many of these selections as you can.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, Sherman Alexie

“Budding cartoonist Junior leaves his troubled school on the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white farm town school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.” (Library of Congress)

American Born Chinese, Gene Luen Yang

Three seemingly unrelated storylines—Jin Wang trying, and failing, to fit in at his school; the Monkey King’s quest to become a god; and Danny, whose life is being ruined by his cousin Chin-Kee—come together in a surprising way in this graphic novel.

Annie John, Jamaica Kincaid

The story of a young girl who grows up on the beautiful and magical island of Antigua. But Annie John’s story goes beyond a typical adolescence; it is about the terrible struggle between Annie and her mother and the greater struggle Annie faces trying to discover who she really is.

Black Ice, Lorene Cary

An autobiographical account of the author’s struggles as a young black girl who tries to maintain two separate lives while attending an independent school.

Boy Meets Boy, David Levithan

Paul has a close group of friends (including Infinite Darlene, the larger-than-life football star and homecoming/drag queen), a supportive family, and a budding romance with artistic Noah, the new boy at school.

The Bermudez Triangle, Maureen Johnson

Nina, Avery and Mel have been best friends forever. How dare Avery and Mel mess everything up by falling in love with each other?

Brat Farrar, Josephine Tey

Twelve-year-old Patrick Ashby, distraught over the death of his parents, apparently commits suicide, leaving behind a cryptic note. But then, eight years later, he reappears at the Ashby estate, just in time to inherit the family horse farm. What the readers know—but the other characters do not—is that “Patrick” is a fraud who bears a remarkable resemblance to the Ashby family. But then strange “accidents” start happening that endanger his life. This short novel by British crime novelist Josephine Tey is a captivating tale of suspense, false identity, forbidden romance, and passion for horses.

The Color of Water, James McBride

Journey alongside an African American reporter as he tracks down the biggest story of his life: what brought his white mother and his black father together?

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, Mark Haddon

Autistic math genius Christopher Boone must solve the mystery of his neighbor’s murdered poodle.

The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks, E. Lockhart

The same fall she discovers that she is beautiful enough to attract the attention of the most handsome senior at a coed private school, Frankie begins to ask big questions about the mysterious world of boys. Why are their relationships with friends so intense and yet so distant? What is their definition of loyalty? And can a girlfriend ever get as close to knowing a boy’s heart as his best friend can? This alternately funny and vaguely disturbing book looks at male secret societies and leaves us wondering whether Frankie is a genius of social criticism or one seriously crazed stalker.

Dracula, Bram Stoker

You’ve read and seen dozens of stories about vampires, so why not go back to the source? Read about the heroes, villains, and victims whose adventures have become etched forever into our collective experience of fear.

Eleanor & Park, Rainbow Rowell

Half-Korean sophomore Park Sheridan is getting through high school by lying low, listening to the Smiths (it’s 1986), reading Alan Moore’s *Watchmen* comics, never raising his hand in class, and avoiding the kids he grew up with. Then new girl Eleanor gets on the bus. Tall, with bright red hair and a dress code all her own, she’s an instant target. Too nice not to let her sit next to him, Park is alternately resentful and guilty for not being kinder to her. When he realizes she’s reading his comics over his shoulder, a silent friendship is born. And slowly, tantalizingly, something more.

Fahrenheit 451, Ray Bradbury

Books are for burning in a society not too distant from the present, and a few people decide to challenge the ways of the world. A frightening myth of our time.

Feed, M. T. Anderson

In the future, almost everyone has a feed—a brain implant that constantly “feeds” them entertainment and shopping. Titus’s easy, empty life is threatened when he meets Violet, a girl who dares to think for herself... and whose feed is dangerously malfunctioning.

The Fellowship of the Ring, J. R.R. Tolkien

The first volume of Tolkien’s epic classic, *The Lord of the Rings*. Hobbit Frodo and his friends get swept up into a mighty conflict with the dark lord Sauron, the monstrous Gollum, the Cracks of Doom, and the awful power of the magical Ring.

Fire, Kristin Cashore

In Fire’s world, “monsters” are beautiful, dangerous creatures with the ability to control people’s thoughts. Fire’s father was a monster who used his power to control the king. Can Fire overcome her father’s evil legacy and use her monster abilities to heal her kingdom? Part of a trilogy.

I Capture the Castle, Dodie Smith

Sixteen-year-old Cassandra lives with her older sister, younger brother, eccentric stepmother (who is not much older than Cassandra), and novelist father in a dilapidated British castle. The tone of the novel is humorous, the characters are lovable and well drawn, and the plot will keep you guessing. The novel takes the form of Cassandra’s journal, so reading it is like sharing the intimate thoughts of a close friend.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou

Powerful, lyrical autobiography of an African American writer growing up in the South.

Jellicoe Road, Melina Marchetta

Abandoned at a boarding school as a little girl, Taylor searches for clues to her past in a story written by the mysterious young woman who raised her. Stick through the confusing beginning, and you won’t be able to put down this tragic, uplifting book.

Lord of the Flies, William Golding

A mysterious plane crash maroons a group of British schoolboys on what appears to be an uncharted tropical island. With no adults to guide them, next-to-no supplies, and virtually no chance for survival, can they survive the island—and themselves?

Maisie Dobbs, Jacqueline Winspear

Maisie Dobbs is an English housemaid in the early twentieth century; she is smart and driven enough to work her way into Cambridge and then to become a nurse during World War I. After the war, she becomes a private investigator, but her very first case brings up dark memories of the war. This is the first novel in an extremely engaging series.

The Midnight Zoo, Sonia Hartnett

In this lyrical fable, two gypsy brothers, Andrej and Tomas, along with their infant sister, Wilma, narrowly escape the Nazis' roundup of their small Romanian village during World War II. While traveling at night the boys discover an intact, yet dilapidated, zoo in an otherwise burned-down town. The brothers quickly learn the sad history of the animals locked in the cages and they share their stories of displacement and abandonment together.

Mr. Churchill's Secretary, Susan MacNeal

Maggie Hope is an American living in England during World War II; she wants to be a mathematician but can only find work as a typist ... until, that is, she gets the chance to work for Winston Churchill himself in the War Rooms hidden underground. The woman who had the job before her was murdered, and Maggie soon finds herself drawn into dangerous political intrigue involving both Nazis and the Irish Republican Army. This is the first novel in a series.

My Most Excellent Year: A Novel of Love, Mary Poppins, and Fenway Park, Steve Kluger

Best friends T.C. and Augie have treated each other like brothers since they were little. When T.C. falls for feisty and brilliant Alé and Augie falls for a boy, it's the beginning of the most excellent year of their lives.

The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency, Alexander McCall Smith

Precious Ramotswe, a "traditionally-sized" African woman, opens the only detective agency in Botswana run by a woman. The cases she cleverly investigates are exciting, such as her search for an 11-year-old boy who may have been snatched by witch doctors. But Mama Ramotswe's philosophy of living and her understanding of people make this book more than just a detective novel. Caution: after this first book, you may have strong urges to read the whole series.

The Prince and the Pauper, Mark Twain

Tom Canty is an impoverished child of the cruel streets of London, and Prince Edward is the son of Edward VII, King of England. As fate would have it, the two meet, discover they look more alike than twins, switch clothes, and have a good romp tricking their friends. However, when a freak accident occurs, the boys are separated, with the likely outcome that the beggar will become king of England and the royal son will be murdered by a thieving, abusive father. If you subscribe to Atticus Finch's belief that "You never really

understand a person until you consider things from his point of view—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it,” you will enjoy this exciting tale of mistaken identity.

Revolution, Jennifer Donnelly

Since the death of Andi’s younger brother, her family has fallen apart. Andi, in danger of failing her senior year of high school, is dragged by her father to Paris for winter break so he can watch her write her senior thesis. There Andi discovers the diary of a girl who lived over two centuries ago, and she distracts herself with the discovery of things that happened long ago. Can a diary from the past and a French rapper named Virgil help Andi find her way back to her own life?

The Secret Life of Bees, Sue Monk Kidd

This heartwarming coming-of-age novel is set in 1964, a time of civil unrest and racial tension. Fourteen-year-old Lily Owens wants to escape her neglectful and abusive father and find her deceased mother’s legacy. When Lily’s beloved nanny Rosaleen gets into trouble with the police for trying to assert her right to vote, Lily and Rosaleen flee their home of Tiburon, South Carolina, and begin a life-transforming journey.

Ship Breaker, Paolo Bacigalupi

In this dystopian future, Nailer has a dangerous job as a ship breaker, salvaging oil tankers. He lives day to day, barely making his quota and avoiding his dad’s drug-addled rage—until a storm washes up the biggest salvage of all, a luxury craft full of enough wealth to buy Nailer and his best friend Pima out of ship breaking for good. There’s just one problem: the owner, a teenage girl, is alive, and mixed up in problems far too big for a couple of lowly ship breakers.

Son, Lois Lowry

In the gripping finale to *The Giver* quartet, Lowry keeps the suspense mounting until the last few pages. “The elders in *The Giver* and *Gathering Blue* believed that knowledge should be held by a few for the good of the many. But the people of the community where Claire’s son lives know — through painful trial and error — that knowledge shared and freedom of choice can build strength among its citizens. Now they are put to an extreme test.” (Shelf Awareness) If you are a fan of *The Hunger Games* and have not read these four books, you are in for a treat.

Speak, Laurie Halse Anderson

Incoming ninth-grader Melinda Sordino secures outcast status for herself when she calls the cops at a rowdy end-of-the-summer party. You’ll cheer as Melinda, made nearly mute by her experience that night and in the ensuing year, regains her ability to speak.

Stardust, Neil Gaiman

A young man sets off on a quest into the walled-off world of Faerie to find a fallen star for his beloved, who has promised him a kiss if he brings it back to her. This contemporary fairy tale is filled with adventure, humor, danger, romance, wit, magic, whimsy, and fun; in short, just what every non-Grimm fairytale needs.

Story of a Girl, by Sara Zarr

Imagine making a mistake at thirteen so big and so public that it defines you. In an effort to escape the role her town has given her, Deanna Lambert gets a job the summer of her sophomore year so she can raise enough money to move her, her 19-year-old brother, his wife, and their newborn daughter out of her parents' basement. As a waitress at the worst pizza shop in California, she wrestles through conflicts with her best friend, seductive ghosts from her past, and a father who hasn't looked at her for three years. *Story of a Girl* offers readers believable realism and a hint at how, even after the greatest mistakes, life can go on.

Velva Jean Learns to Drive, Jennifer Niven

Velva Jean promises her dying mother to heal people with her singing and to "live out there in the great wide world." After falling in love with Harley Bright, however, she faces some difficult choices as she attempts to build a home life and honor both her promise to her mother and her own independent spirit.

The Wednesday Wars, Gary D. Schmidt

Holling Hoodhood has a problem: he's the only Presbyterian in his class, so he has to stay after school every Wednesday afternoon while everyone else goes off to Jewish or Catholic class. He's stuck all alone with his teacher, who decides that they will read Shakespeare together. Life is so unfair! Actually, life is unfair in all kinds of ways in 1967. You'll come to love Holling as he shares his many adventures in this funny and poignant novel.

Whale Talk, Chris Crutcher

Multiethnic TJ gives a bunch of nonconformists the chance to be a swim team. Who says they need a pool?

Will Grayson, Will Grayson, John Green and David Levithan

Will Grayson has so far survived high school by adhering strictly to two rules: feel nothing and say nothing. He has one true friend, the spectacularly large and spectacularly gay Tiny Cooper, and a maybe girlfriend who is adorable; however, in order to win her he might have to admit that he has feelings for her. No can do. Fates conspire for him to meet "will grayson," a depressed, closeted senior who goes to another high school. Though their meeting is brief, it sets off a series of remarkable changes in the Wills and the people in their lives. If you like hilarity, outrageous characters, and musings on the nature of love and

the whole “fate or free will?” debate, you will love *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*, which, incidentally, is written by two writers!

The Wizard of Earthsea, Ursula K. LeGuin

The story of Ged, a boy with an unusual aptitude for wizardry; the first book of Le Guin’s famous Earthsea trilogy.

When I Was Puerto Rican, Esmeralda Santiago

A memoir of a girl’s journey from extreme poverty in Puerto Rico to life in New York—and her first year at Harvard University.

LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION II

REQUIRED READING

- *Dreams of Trespass*, Fatima Mernissi
- Two books from the reading list “Recommended Books for Grade 10”

Dreams of Trespass, Fatima Mernissi

Mernissi’s memoir covers her childhood in Morocco in the 1940s, before she grew up to become a well-known sociologist. As is true for many young children, her world consists mostly of her family members and close family friends. Choose ONE of the people she talks about in her memoir — maybe one of her aunts or uncles or cousins, or one of the harem servants, or her parents or grandparents — and write two pages (typed and double-spaced) about *why* and *how* you find this character particularly interesting.

- Do you perhaps identify with this character?
- Or is he or she so far outside your own world that you find him or her a puzzle?
- Are you inspired by or disgusted by this character?

Also include in your two pages at least two quotations from the memoir about or by this character, which will help illustrate why you’ve reacted as you have. This is personal writing about your own response to a character; use “I” and treat this assignment as though you’re writing a letter to your Lit Comp II teacher about your reactions. These “letters” will be turned in on the first day of class and will be the starting point for the class’s conversation about this memoir.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR GRADE 10

Choose two books from this annotated list to complete your summer reading requirement. We encourage you to read as many of these selections as you can.

An Abundance of Katherines, John Green

Weeping face down into a pillow is no way to spend the summer after graduating high school. But what if you can’t move on? Colin Singleton, serially heartbroken, determines to create an equation to predict relationship meltdown and avoid losing in love. His best

friend suggests a remedy: a road trip. Before the summer ends, Colin will complete his formula, almost shoot a wild pig, find employment in a plant that manufactures a feminine hygiene product, and get over himself just enough to fall in love. Warning: math appears throughout, but is more than made up for by lots of belly laughs.

All Quiet on the Western Front, Erich Maria Remarque

This classic war novel tells the story of World War I through the eyes of a young man, full of idealism about war, who enlists in the German army. He quickly becomes convinced of the horror of war and vows to work against the forces of hate that compel an entire generation of young men to kill one another.

Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation, Jonathan Kozol

A documentary account of human triumph and struggle. Through the author, we see the dangers, injustice, and hopelessness of a South Bronx community in the throes of unthinkable poverty.

Angela's Ashes, Frank McCourt

In this humorous and deeply touching memoir, Frank McCourt takes us through his childhood in Limerick, Ireland. Coping with death, disease, extreme poverty, and alcoholism, McCourt magically leads us into the depths of love and loss that his family experiences.

Before I Fall, Lauren Oliver

Oliver's evocative novel asks us what we would do differently if we were given another chance to make things right before we die. Seventeen-year-old Samantha Kingston has what other girls at Jefferson High want: a cute boyfriend, good looks, great friends and, most importantly, popularity. When Sam is killed in a car accident something miraculous happens: she relives the last day of her life seven times. It's then that Sam realizes what is truly important in her life and what she has to do to save someone else.

The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath

An autobiographical novel about a young woman's nervous breakdown, attempted suicide, hospitalization, and recovery. Contains both humorous and emotionally disturbing parts.

Black Boy, Richard Wright

This classic and gripping memoir tells of Wright's childhood as a young black boy in the 1920s and 30s in the American South.

Born on a Blue Day, Daniel Tammet

This fascinating autobiography is the memoir of an autistic British man, one who is extraordinarily gifted (able to learn a language in a single week, for example) and who can only function within very strict routines.

Boy Toy, Barry Lyga

Josh Mendel has a secret. Unfortunately, everyone knows what it is. Five years ago, Josh’s life changed. Drastically. And everyone in his school, his town—seems like the world—thinks they understand. But they don’t—they can’t. And now, about to graduate from high school, Josh is still trying to sort through the pieces. (*Goodreads*)

Boxers and Saints, Gene Luen Yang

“This two-volume graphic novel follows the intertwined lives of two young people on opposite sides of China’s Boxer Rebellion. Little Bao, whose story is told in *Boxers*, grows up fascinated by the opera’s colorful traditional tales and filled with reverence for the local deities. Appalled by the arrogant behavior of foreign soldiers, Christian missionaries and their Chinese supporters, he eventually becomes a leader of the Society of the Righteous and Harmonious Fist, fighting under the slogan “Support the Ch’ing! Destroy the Foreigner!” The protagonist of *Saints*—an unlucky, unwanted, unnamed fourth daughter—is known only as Four-Girl until she’s christened Vibiana upon her conversion to Catholicism. Beaten by her family for her beliefs, she finds refuge and friendship with foreign missionaries, making herself a target for the Boxers. The books ask big questions about culture, faith, and identity and refuse to offer simple answers.” (*Kirkus Reviews*)

Briar Rose, Jane Yolen

Becca’s grandmother repeatedly told the classic fairy tale of Briar Rose to her grandchildren when they were young. After her grandmother’s death, Becca travels back to Poland to solve the mystery of her grandmother’s past during the Holocaust and explore what it had to do with Briar Rose.

The Camel Bookmobile, Masha Hamilton

A librarian travels from New York to a village in Kenya, where she joins with local villagers to run the bookmobile. This interesting novel explores potential clashes between book cultures and oral history cultures.

The Chosen, Chaim Potok

This is the warm and moving story of two friends, both young Orthodox Jews, going to a boys’ school in Brooklyn before and during World War II. Religious differences between their fathers (one is a Hasidic Jew and the other is not) threaten to destroy their friendship.

The Color of Earth, Dong Hwa Kim

The story of Ehwa, a girl growing up in Korea from the time she is a child to her wedding night. Over the years, Ehwa slowly learns about the confusing world of love. First in a graphic novel trilogy.

The Color Purple, Alice Walker

Walker's Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel chronicles the life of Celie, who, after being torn away from her sister, is forced into a life of domestic abuse, oppression, and self-loathing. Finally, through the unlikely friendship of her husband's lover, Celie learns the most important lesson of all: self-respect.

The Complete Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle

When faced with mysteries that confound everyone else, Holmes, the famous fictional detective, uses his brilliant deductive reasoning and his encyclopedic knowledge of everything from chemistry (especially poisons) to law to declare to his friend Watson that the solution is "elementary"!

Dreams from My Father, Barack Obama

President Obama's first book, originally published in 1994, is a memoir of growing up as the son of a white American mother and a black Kenyan father. It explores race from the point of view of someone who has seen and been a part of several cultures.

Emma, Jane Austen

If you knew an idle girl, admired, beautiful and of good family, a young lady who has never encountered any obstacle to her wishes, a meddler in the affairs of others, a manipulative and patient maker of love-matches, wouldn't you just love to be her? Or, would you prefer to see her get her comeuppance? If you answered "Yes!" to either question, *Emma* is for you.

The Fault in Our Stars, John Green

Sixteen-year-old Hazel, a stage IV thyroid cancer patient, has accepted her terminal diagnosis until a chance meeting with a boy at a cancer support group forces her to reexamine her perspective on love, loss, and life. "Green shows his readers what it is like to live with cancer, sometimes no more than a breath or a heartbeat away from death. But it is life that Green spiritedly celebrates here, even while acknowledging its pain." (*Booklist*)

Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe, Fannie Flag

In this delightful narrative set in the American South, two women run a restaurant, challenge injustice, and form a strong center in a close-knit community.

Girl with a Pearl Earring, Tracy Chevalier

After studying Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer's famous portrait, "Girl with a Pearl Earring," Tracy Chevalier charts the life of Griet, a servant girl in the Vermeer household, who, in spite of her social status, Vermeer's jealous wife, and his domineering mother-in-law, becomes Vermeer's model for the painting.

A Great and Terrible Beauty, Libba Bray

This suspenseful novel, the first of the Gemma Doyle trilogy, features a 16-year-old protagonist who is sent from India to a girls' boarding school in England after she begins having terrible visions, the first of which accurately foretells her mother's violent death. As she learns to control her visions, they lead her into magical realms where all things are possible...but also dangerous.

The Great Santini, Pat Conroy

An autobiographical novel that describes a Southern family ruled by a dogmatic retired Marine. The book brilliantly depicts the emotional tension in the relationship between Bull Meacham and his 18-year-old son, Ben.

The House at Sugar Beach: In Search of a Lost African Childhood, Helene Cooper

What happens to a rich, protected girl when the country she lives in erupts in war and chaos? That's the situation of Helene Cooper, who is now a respected American journalist but in 1980 was a high school student living in Liberia when that country was torn apart by a series of armed rebellions. This is a gripping, engaging memoir—sometimes funny, sometimes sad, always enlightening—about Cooper's childhood in Liberia, her experience of the military coups, her adolescence and adulthood in America, where the family fled after the fighting began, and finally her return to Liberia in 2003 to reunite with the adopted sister who had stayed in Liberia when the rest of the family left.

The Hundred Secret Senses, Amy Tan

In the spirit of *The Joy Luck Club*, Tan writes about three generations of Chinese women, weaving together their lives, loves, and the ghosts that haunt them. (Recommended for **East Asian Studies** students.)

In a Sunburned Country, Bill Bryson

Here is a laugh-out-loud travelogue, filled with adventures in Australia. Bryson draws the humanity and humor out of the most surprisingly trivial moments. He mingles history, encounters with people and animals, and cultural commentary in an informative and fascinating way. After reading this you will want to hop on the next plane to the Outback!

Inside the Halo and Beyond: The Anatomy of a Recovery, Maxine Kumin

From a celebrated poet and horsewoman comes this journal of recovery after a nearly fatal accident when Kumin's horse bolted. A heartwarming story of a fighter and a survivor.

Into Thin Air, Jon Krakauer

Experience both the thrill and horror of mountain climbing as described by one of the survivors of a devastating attempt to scale Mt. Everest.

Iron and Silk, Mark Salzman

Salzman taught English in China following his graduation from Yale University. In this memoir, he presents touching vignettes of the people he met, including Pan, his martial arts teacher. (Recommended for **East Asian Studies** students.)

The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini

Amir, a boy growing up in Afghanistan, commits a terrible betrayal against a dear friend, which shapes the rest of both of their lives. Years later, he has a chance to return to Afghanistan and set things right, but the risks he faces are grave indeed. This powerful and gripping coming-of-age novel is also a good introduction to modern Afghanistan.

The Last Time I Saw Mother, Arlene J. Chai

A grown woman is summoned home to the Philippines by her mother, who feels compelled to reveal the secret she has kept hidden for years.

The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven, Sherman Alexie

This collection of short stories about contemporary Native Americans and their joys and struggles focuses on the Spokane Indian Reservation and is narrated by a quirky central character named Victor. Readers will appreciate Alexie's unique ability to partner troubling issues such as economic struggles and alcoholism with beautiful or amusing images.

Lonesome Dove, Larry McMurtry

Cowboys, adventure, love, danger, humor—the best of the American West—are all present in this intelligent and exciting novel that won the 1986 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. Characters and events on the great trail drive will brand you with their unforgettable power.

Marcelo in the Real World, Francisco X. Stork

Marcelo, a young man with Asperger's Syndrome, has spent his whole life in a special school. For his last summer in high school, his dad gets Marcelo a job in the “real world”: the mailroom of his dad's law firm. The real world turns out to be full of new friends, moral ambiguity, and a lot more growing up than Marcelo or his dad had anticipated.

The Miseducation of Cameron Post, Emily M. Danforth

“When Cameron's parents die suddenly in a car crash, her shocking first thought is relief. Relief they'll never know that, hours earlier, she had been kissing a girl. That relief doesn't last, however, and Cam is soon forced to move in with her conservative aunt Ruth and her well-intentioned but hopelessly old-fashioned grandmother. Survival in Cam's small Montana town means blending in and leaving well enough alone (as her grandmother might say), and Cam becomes an expert at both. Then Coley Taylor moves to town...and Cam is brought face-to-face with the cost of denying her true self—even if she's not exactly sure who that is.” (Publisher description)

Murder on the Orient Express, Agatha Christie

This absorbing 1934 mystery by the famous “Queen of Crime,” Agatha Christie, has become a beloved classic, and with good reason. Detective Hercule Poirot investigates the murder of an American tycoon on the swanky Orient Express train, which has been stopped in its tracks one night by a blizzard. The train’s doors are locked. Will Poirot find the killer, before he—or she— strikes again?

New Boy, Julian Houston

As the first African-American student at an exclusive boarding school in the 1950s, Rob Garrett is a witness to the civil rights struggle as it plays out on small and large stages.

Oliver Twist, Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens’ second novel traces the story of Oliver Twist, a young orphan in Victorian London whose journey takes him from a workhouse to an undertaker to a gang of child pickpockets. Dickens criticizes the miserable treatment of orphans, both by the misguided social programs designed to help them and by the outright criminals who take advantage of them.

The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake, Aimee Bender

Right before her birthday, Rose discovers that she has a form of ESP: she can sense what her mother is feeling, not by reading her mind but by eating the food she cooks. Rose’s dependable but strange father and her even stranger, but brilliant, younger brother, add flavor to our observant and witty protagonist’s daily life.

The Passion of Alice, Stephanie Grant

This eloquent novel, set in Boston, explores the complex mind of an intelligent young woman who is hospitalized for anorexia. What sets this novel apart from other books about eating disorders is the fullness of the character development, the refusal of the author to turn her characters into victims, and its suggestion that popular contemporary explanations of why young women develop eating disorders may not tell the whole story.

Plain Truth, Jodi Picoult

One of Jodi Picoult’s less well-known novels, *Plain Truth* is perhaps one of her most exciting in its examination of an Amish community in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The novel details the shocking and devastating story of Katie Fisher, an 18-year old, unmarried Amish woman who is accused of killing her own child.

Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen

In one of the most romantic novels of the 19th century, Jane Austen tells the story of Elizabeth Bennet, a stubborn, witty, and independent young woman, who struggles with unexpected love. Jane Austen’s masterpiece exposes the secrets of high-society England

and makes us, along with her heroine, slowly fall in love with the curt Mr. Darcy. This is Austen at her finest!

A Raisin in the Sun, Lorraine Hansberry

Set in Chicago’s south side in the 1950s, between World War II and the Civil Rights Movement, *A Raisin in the Sun* is the story of the Younger family. Through the realistic and frank portrayal of this African-American family, Hansberry’s play explores issues of gender, morality, identity, and justice. *A Raisin in the Sun* is a classic of American literature in which the American dream is repeatedly deferred.

Red: Teenage Girls in America Write on What Fires Up Their Lives Today, ed. Amy Goldwasser

In this book of essays, 58 American teenage girls—from a diverse range of geographic, socioeconomic, racial and religious backgrounds—write about body image, family, politics, and pop culture. These well-written essays document the authors’ thoughts and reactions to such topics as post-Katrina New Orleans, Johnny Depp, and the pain of losing a friend.

Rocket Boys, Homer Hickam

Against overwhelming odds and with little knowledge of rocket science, Hickam and his high school buddies win the National Science Award for rocketry. The author went on to become a NASA engineer.

Selected Poems, Edna St. Vincent Millay

Millay was famous for her wild love life, including her many affairs with both men and women, but she also wrote some of the best sonnets of the twentieth century. This collection includes her most famous poems—poems that are both sentimental and cynical about love.

She’s Not There, Jennifer Boylan

A bittersweet account of being transgendered before, during, and after gender reassignment surgery. After reading this, you will want to read Boylan’s *I’m Looking Through You: Growing up Haunted*, her account of growing up among ghosts—in her childhood house in Pennsylvania, in her community, and in her heart.

The Songlines, Bruce Chatwin

The Songlines pays homage to the nomadic spirit that prompted Chatwin’s own peripatetic existence with an exploration of the “labyrinth of invisible pathways which meander all over Australia,” the “dreaming-tracks” or “songlines” of the Aborigines. Chatwin weaves memoir, history, science, and philosophy into an Australian Outback travel tale of brilliance and beauty.

A Spy in the House, Y.S. Lee

In Victorian England, women had few rights and fewer options. What better setting for a top-secret women's detective agency? In this first novel in a series, the agency rescues orphan Mary Quinn from the gallows and trains her to become a detective; her first case places her as a spy in the household of a suspected smuggler and threatens not only the scandalous secret that she has kept for years but also her very life.

Still Life with Rice, Helie Lee

In this memoir of her Korean grandmother's life, Lee interprets the complex nature of family relations, the impact of social upheaval on an individual, and the rapidly changing lives of women in the 20th century. (Recommended for **East Asian Studies** students.)

Strength in What Remains, Tracy Kidder

Deogratias ("Thanks be to God" in Latin) moves to the United States from Burundi in 1994, after a civil war tears his country apart. Kidder tells Deo's story in chapters that alternate between Deo's life in New York, as he teaches himself English and discovers his calling as a doctor; accounts of the losses he experienced in Burundi; and his return home to establish a much-needed clinic.

The Syringa Tree, Pamela Gien

Set in South Africa in 1963 at the height of the Apartheid movement, this story is seen through the eyes of Lizzie, a young white girl caught up in racial and political upheaval when the family of her black nurse is torn apart by law and the violence of brutal police raids. The story builds to its conclusion at the 1976 Soweto uprising, which was led by children.

This Boy's Life, Tobias Wolff

In his memoir, both hilariously funny and heart-breakingly sad, Wolff recounts his struggles to survive adolescence while on the road with his single mother in the 1950s. Toby's penchant for trouble forces him to invent a new life for himself. Think Holden Caulfield in Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*—but Toby's story is true.

Thunderstruck, Erik Larson

This intriguing history reads like a suspense novel. A London doctor murders his wife and then flees across the Atlantic, followed by a Scotland Yard detective; meanwhile, the rest of the world follows the exciting chase via the newly developed wireless telegraph.

Tomorrow They Will Kiss, Eduardo Santiago

"Imaginate!" says Caridad, one of three smart Cuban girlfriends living in a small town during the early days of Castro's regime. This fast-paced, funny novel includes their daring escapes from Cuba, searches for love, and their work in a New Jersey doll factory.

Travels with Charley, John Steinbeck

In 1960, author Steinbeck decided to rediscover America, so he set out in a camper for a three-month journey with Charley, his standard poodle. This is the delightful record of their travels together.

Year of Wonders, Geraldine Brooks

Set in England during the 17th century plague, *Year of Wonders* is the heroic tale of the people in a small northern village, who—being led by an ascetic and devout minister—quarantine themselves to prevent the spread of the plague. Despite its disturbing subject, *Year of Wonders* is a fast-paced read which is sure to hold your attention.

GRADES 11 AND 12

REQUIRED READING

I. Literature and Composition III

- *Fences*, August Wilson
- *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller
- Two books from the reading list “Recommended Books for Grade 11 & 12”

Keep notes as you read the plays, and write a one-page response to one question for each play (two typed, double-spaced pages altogether). We will collect your responses during the first week of class and grade them with special attention to the depth of your thinking and the quality of your writing. We will also spend time discussing the plays during the first two weeks of class; please bring them with you on the first day, along with this written assignment.

Questions about *Fences* (choose one):

1. *Fences* is part of a series of plays, set in various time periods, by August Wilson, whose goal was to write plays to help sensitize Americans to the struggles of African Americans. August Wilson sets *Fences* in 1957. An important physical symbol in the play is the fence Troy is building. As you read the play, make note of the many metaphorical or symbolic fences in the play. Write about two of these fences. In your writing, think about the following: How are fences used in the play? Are these fences a result of the time period? Are they used, as Bono says, “to keep people out...” or “to keep people in”? (II. 1)
2. Wilson’s main character is Troy Maxson, a reformed criminal who is making bold choices in a changing society. He is an unusual and flawed hero. Write a response to Lloyd Richard, the original director of the play, who asks, “Is [Troy’s] life to be discarded or honored?” Support your opinion with specific references to the play.

Questions about *The Crucible* (choose one):

1. Miller adopts an oracular language for the play, meant to suggest the language of the late seventeenth century. However accurate it may or not be as a reproduction of the actual

speech of the time, readers and viewers of the play often particularly enjoy the play’s language. Consider one of the following speeches carefully, and discuss both its meaning and its quality as language—whatever aspect of the language appeals to you and seems to have particular power.

a. Mrs. Putnam (Act One): “There are wheels within wheels in this village, and fires within fires!”

b. Hale (Act One): “Now let me instruct you. We cannot look to superstition in this. The Devil is precise; the marks of his presence are definite as stone, and I must tell you all that I shall not proceed unless you are prepared to believe me if I should find no bruise of hell upon her.”

c. Danforth (Act Three): “This is a sharp time, now, a precise time—we live no longer in the dusky afternoon when evil mixed itself with good and befuddled the world. Now, by God’s grace, the shining sun is up, and them that fear not light will surely praise it.”

d. Parris (Act Four): “I would to God it were not so, Excellency, but these people have great weight yet in the town. Let Rebecca stand upon the gibbet and send up some righteous prayer, and I fear she’ll wake a vengeance on you.”

e. Proctor (Act Four): “Would you give them such a lie? Say it. Would you ever give them this?” She cannot answer. “You would not; if tongs of fire were singeing you you would not! Good, then—it is evil, and I do it!”

2. In his discussions of the events of the Salem witch trials and their resonance in his own time, Miller discusses “theocracy” and suggests that its division of the world into absolute good and evil, truth and falsehood, led to the injustice of the executions in Salem. Whether in terms of religion or of politics, one might argue that a similar absolutism affects life today, on both the national and the world stages. Make a brief comparison between the events of the play and some aspect of contemporary life.

II. AP English Language

You will read all or part of two nonfiction books this summer. In addition, you will read one book (fiction or nonfiction) from the “Recommended Books for Grades 11 & 12” reading list. Your written assignment for *The Best American Science and Nature Writing 2014* is due on the first day of classes in the fall.

1. *The Best American Science and Nature Writing 2013*, ed. Siddhartha Mukherjee & Tim Folger

Can a jellyfish unlock the secret of immortality? This and many other topics are explored in this fascinating collection of essays. Your summer assignment is to read at least ten of the collection’s 26 essays. For each of the ten essays of your choice, answer the following questions briefly but thoughtfully:

- Is this essay primarily expository (that is, explaining or describing something) or argumentative (that is, proving a thesis)? Since these are all essays about science or nature

that are written for a general audience, they are all going to be expository to some extent; the question is whether the author is also trying to make an argument. Explain your answer briefly.

- Did you learn something you consider worthwhile in this essay, and did you enjoy reading this essay? Why? There’s no right or wrong answer here.
- Type out a sentence that you particularly like or think is well-crafted from this essay; include a parenthetical citation with page number.

2. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*, Katherine Boo
 Katherine Boo spent three years among the residents of Annawadi, a makeshift settlement of shacks and huts in the shadow of Mumbai’s International Airport and the glitzy new hotels surrounding it. Exploring economic and social injustice with sharp intelligence and quiet humanity, Boo tells the stories of some of the people living in this slum—stories of astonishing optimism and breathtaking resilience as well as disheartening corruption and cutthroat survival of the fittest. Boo won the National Book Award in 2012 for this unforgettable glimpse into an overlooked world. As you read, make notes in the margins. Mark up the passages you find most interesting, thought-provoking, confusing, and/or touching; write questions and connections in the margins. Also, please think about the following questions and be prepared to discuss them during the first week of class.

- Whose story had the strongest effect on you, and why?
- In exploring the question of why the residents did not bond together in their common interests and against common enemies, Boo writes: “Instead, powerless individuals blamed other powerless individuals for what they lacked. Sometimes they tried to destroy one another” (237). Why, in your view, did these “powerless individuals” blame “other powerless individuals”? Why would they try to destroy one another?
- “In India, a land of few safe assumptions, chronic uncertainty was said to have helped produce a nation of quick-witted, creative problem solvers. Among the poor, it was no surprise that instability fostered ingenuity, but over time the lack of a link between effort and result could become debilitating” (219). Explain what Boo means by “lack of a link between effort and result.” For whom—or for what—could this be debilitating? Do you agree?
- In her Author’s Note, Boo writes: “It is easy, from a safe distance, to overlook the fact that in under-cities governed by corruption, where exhausted people vie on scant terrain for very little, it is blisteringly hard to be good. The astonishment is that some people are good, and that many people try to be...” (254). Did you find this astonishing? Give an example.
- Do you feel you would maintain your sense of optimism in a similar set of circumstances? What about your sense of morality? Your goodness?
- What, in your view, are the strengths and weaknesses in how Boo presents the realities of everyday life in Annawadi? What does she allow you to see and understand more fully? What does she miss or overlook or distort?

3. Your selection from “Recommended Books for Grades 11 & 12”

As you read, make notes in the margins. Mark up the passages you find most interesting, thought-provoking, confusing, and/or touching; write questions and connections in the margins. Be prepared to write a review of your book during the first two weeks of class.

III. Found Voices, Women at the Edge, and Voices of Black America

- *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*, Anne Lamott
- Two books from the reading list “Recommended Books for Grades 11 & 12”

An accurate description of *Bird by Bird* is found in its subtitle, *Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. Lamott says in the Introduction, “Writing has so much to give, so much to teach, so many surprises. That thing you had to force yourself to do—the actual act of writing—turns out to be the best part. It’s like discovering that while you thought you needed the tea ceremony for the caffeine, what you really needed was the tea ceremony. The act of writing turns out to be its own reward.” As you read this book, star the passages you find particularly and personally relevant and note why in the margins. Further, seriously consider Lamott’s statement: “The act of writing turns out to be its own reward.” Be ready to discuss and write about that idea as well as your own responses to *Bird by Bird*.

In two chapters early on (16-27), Lamott gives writers two helpful pieces of advice that you will want to consider as you write your college essay, which is due on the first day of class. Also consider Lamott’s warning against perfectionism (28-32)! This essay should respond to one of the Common Application prompts, and the maximum length for the final version is 650 words. Your college essay will undoubtedly start as a very rough first draft; however, by the time you give it to your senior English teacher for his or her feedback, it should be a thoughtful essay that you think will tell colleges something that will help them to know who you are.

IV. AP English Literature

- *Bird by Bird*, Anne Lamott
- *A Room of One’s Own*, Virginia Woolf
- *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, Thomas Hardy
- One book from the reading list “Recommended Books for Grades 11 & 12”

1. An accurate description of *Bird by Bird* is found in its subtitle, *Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. Lamott says in the Introduction, “Writing has so much to give, so much to teach, so many surprises. That thing you had to force yourself to do—the actual act of writing—turns out to be the best part. It’s like discovering that while you thought you needed the tea ceremony for the caffeine, what you really needed was the tea ceremony. The act of writing turns out to be its own reward.” As you read this book, star the passages you find particularly and personally relevant and note why in the margins. Further, seriously

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2. You will need to read Virginia Woolf’s 1929 essay *A Room of One’s Own* **twice** and annotate it; you’ll turn in your annotated copy of the book on the first day of class (and thus you’ll need a physical book rather than an ebook). Everyone’s annotation style is individual, and you should feel free to mark up the book and write margin comments in the way that will be most useful to you in arriving at a clear understanding of Woolf’s essay. (One hint: don’t go overboard with highlighters, which can make your annotations visually distract from the essay itself! Consider pen or pencil or Post-It notes instead.) Your annotation should include the following:

- **Argument and evidence:** Woolf informally states her basic thesis in the first, lengthy paragraph of the book. Underline that thesis, and then note (with underlining and/or margin comments) any expansions on or evidence of that thesis that she provides.
- **Genre:** *A Room of One’s Own* is an essay (hence your looking for argument and evidence), but in that same initial paragraph Woolf also says that “Fiction here is likely to contain more truth than fact. Therefore I propose, making use of all the liberties and licenses of a novelist.” As you read and reread the essay, make note of when Woolf moves between fiction and nonfiction and think about why she might be doing so.
- **Structure:** There are six chapters in this book-length essay. On one of the blank pages at the front or back of the book, outline the essay by chapter; what is the topic or content of each chapter? (Recall that an outline is skeletal, containing relatively short phrases. Do not summarize the chapters in your outline.)
- **Reflection:** On a blank page, on Post-It notes stuck into the text, or on a separate piece of paper that you tuck into the book, keep a list of the questions and ideas that you have, first as you are reading and then after you have finished the essay.

3. You will also need to read Thomas Hardy’s 1891 novel *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* by the first day of class. You will write a timed essay on the novel very early in the school year, so read actively and carefully, annotating the novel as you read.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR GRADES 11 AND 12

The Age of Innocence, Edith Wharton

This famous novel is about upper-class New York society in the late 19th century. The wealthy young Newland Archer is attracted to two very different women, one of them a respectable young American woman and the other a “dangerous” European divorcée.

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe, Benjamin Alire Saenz

“When Aristotle and Dante meet, in the summer of 1987, they are 15-year-olds existing in the universe between boys and men. The two are opposites in most ways: Dante is sure of his place in the world, while Ari feels he may never know who he is or what he wants. But both are thoughtful about their feelings and interactions with others, and the book explores the back-and-forth in their relationship over the course of a year. Family issues take center stage, as well as issues of Mexican identity, but the heart of the novel is Dante’s openness about his homosexuality and Ari’s suppression of his.” (*Booklist*)

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay, Michael Chabon

Two young artists—one New Yorker, one Jewish immigrant—create comic books out of their fears and dreams as Hitler’s power grows in Europe. This novel won the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

American Pastoral, Philip Roth

If ever a novel deserved the description “powerful,” it is this story of “the Swede” who after World War II builds a life worthy of the great American dream, only to see it destroyed after Vietnam—and it’s all about his children. (Recommended for **American Identities** students.)

An Anthropologist on Mars, Oliver Sacks

With characteristic sensitivity and wit, neurologist Oliver Sacks presents case studies of seven “differently brained” people, from a surgeon with Tourette’s Syndrome to an autistic artist. As he depicts his individual subjects in respectful and humane detail, Sacks also examines the creative potential that can emerge from “defects, disorders, diseases.”

The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Malcolm X and Alex Haley

A controversial political and social activist of the 1960s, whose influence continues to grow, tells his life story. Spike Lee’s 1992 movie restored this classic to its bestseller status. (Required for **AP U.S. History** students; if you are in **AP U.S. History** you must choose another title to fulfill your English requirement.)

Barchester Towers, Anthony Trollope

A satirical comedy of mid-Victorian society awash in intrigues, jealousies, and unrequited love. Meet a shrewish wife, an oily curate, and a lovely and innocent victim.

Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity, Katherine Boo
 Katherine Boo spent three years among the residents of Annawadi, a makeshift settlement of shacks and huts in the shadow of Mumbai’s International Airport and the glitzy new hotels surrounding it. Exploring economic and social injustice with sharp intelligence and quiet humanity, Boo tells the stories of some of the people living in this slum—stories of astonishing optimism and breathtaking resilience as well as disheartening corruption and cutthroat survival of the fittest. Boo won the National Book Award in 2012 for this unforgettable glimpse into an overlooked world. **(Required for AP Language.)**

A Bend in the River, V.S. Naipaul

This novel tells the harrowing story of a Muslim Indian merchant who opens a store in a newly independent African nation caught between “the alluring modern world and its own past and traditions.”

Between Two Worlds: My Life and Captivity in Iran, Roxana Saberi

An American journalist of Japanese and Iranian descent, Saberi was dragged from her home and arrested, charged with espionage. In this compelling and inspirational story, she writes of her imprisonment, trial and ultimate release, and introduces us to a remarkable group of women who have been otherwise forgotten.

Bossypants, Tina Fey

Witty, absorbing, and purely hilarious, Tina Fey’s *Bossypants* is one story not to be missed. Journeying through her uncomfortable early years, Fey worked her way into stardom and the hearts of many through her comedy. The line between being “nobody” and “somebody” is thin, and as she pushes this boundary we discover what the true meaning of bossy really is. (Sarah Gaffney ’13)

Brief Encounters with Che Guevara, Ben Fountain

This short story collection will take you to the rain forests of Columbia, refugee camps in Sierra Leone, and, among other bizarre spots, a trailer park in Texas. The stories are thrilling, sometimes funny, and filled with vivid images about love and Voodoo and finding what really matters in life.

The Cider House Rules, John Irving

Homer Wells is raised as an orphan in St. Cloud, Maine. Under the tutelage of Dr. Larch, he learns the tricks and the trade of obstetrics, a set of skills which shapes his career but which he refuses to let define his morality. In a world fraught with injustice and heartache, Homer learns to embrace honesty and love.

Cold Mountain, Charles Frazier

In the final weeks of the Civil War, Inman, a wounded Confederate soldier, decides to return home to Ada, the woman he loves. There are parallels here to *The Odyssey* as Inman has his share of hostile encounters with strangers intent on disrupting his journey.

Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families,
J. Anthony Lukas

This is a fascinating account of the court-ordered desegregation of Boston public schools in the 1970s. Told from the perspective of three diverse families, this story is a history of race and class conflict in Boston.

The Corrections, Jonathan Franzen

This long and complex novel offers a compelling story of a family of grown-up children and their parents; as with most family stories, this one is sad, funny, and unfortunately true to life.

Crooked Little Heart, Anne Lamott

Lamott tells the story of a precocious 12-year-old tennis champ, her loving but dysfunctional family, and her struggle to be confident and capable despite all odds.

Cutting for Stone, Abraham Verghese

The narrator of this novel starts out by speaking to us from the womb. He then takes us through many generations of his own life and those of his parents, and his characters travel to India, Ethiopia and the United States. Since Verghese is a doctor, he is able to include specific medical details in his descriptions, and we view his experiences through many different lenses.

Daytripper, Fabio Moon and Gabriel Ba

Bras died at 28. And at 31. And at 11. In this unique graphic novel, we see what a person's life means depending on when it ends.

Digging to America, Anne Tyler

In her 17th novel, Anne Tyler chronicles the intertwining stories of two families who meet at the airport while waiting for the arrival of their adopted Korean infants. Despite cultural clashes—the Donaldsons are emphatically “American,” while the Yazdans have roots in Iran—the families become important in each other's lives. After reading this witty, touching novel, full of subtle observations about family configurations, cross-cultural communication, assimilation, and the continuing hazards of the American dream, you will be tempted to camp out in the library and catch up on Tyler's first 16 novels.

Disgrace, J. M. Coetzee

Disgrace takes place in South Africa after Apartheid. It is a novel about racial violence, revenge, rape, love, and justice. Winner of the 2003 Nobel Prize in Literature, it is both brutal and brilliant.

The Elegance of the Hedgehog, Muriel Barbery

They are unlikely friends: a rich Japanese gentleman named Kakuro Ozu; Renée, the middle-aged concierge of an exclusive Parisian apartment building; and Paloma, a 12-year-old girl who lives there with her wealthy, intellectual family. The three are drawn together in this intricate and compelling novel as Paloma, a sort of French Holden Caulfield, struggles to find a reason not to commit suicide on her 13th birthday.

Empire Falls, Richard Russo

Miles Roby is forced to give up his college career to return to his run-down hometown of Dexter County, Maine, where the ramshackle ruins of his past threaten to derail the promise of his future. *Empire Falls* is the story of his return and his resilience; the story of how even amidst the worst nightmare one might achieve one's dreams.

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, Jonathan Safran Foer

The search for meaning in the wake of September 11 is shaped by the perspective of Oskar Schell, a precocious nine year old who lost his father in the attack on the World Trade Center. Oskar's story is a quest to make sense of the world he has inherited. His search is balanced by the narrative of his grandfather, who survived the bombing of Dresden during World War II. The novel's strength is in Foer's ability to filter horror, humor, joy, and wonder through a child's perspective.

Fires in the Mirror, Anna Deavere Smith

A play taken from the words of the people involved in an explosion of ethnic tensions in 1991 Crown Heights, Brooklyn, when a car driven by a Hasidic Jew struck and killed a young African American child.

Franny and Zooey, J.D. Salinger

A moving and sometimes funny pair of interrelated stories about a brother and sister. Franny seeks spiritual purification through increasingly obsessive prayer and has a nervous breakdown, while her older brother, Zooey, tries to calm her down.

Freakonomics, Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner

An economics book for beach reading? Really? Though written by economists, this book reads nothing like an economics textbook. Levitt and Dubner collected mounds of data as they examined social trends, and they reach surprising conclusions about the way society functions and the impact present actions can have on the future. Written in lively prose and

full of fascinating stories, *Freakonomics* will engage and entertain you, and it may change the way you see the world.

A Free Life, Ha Jin

In the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, Nan Wu, a Chinese graduate student at Brandeis, decides not to return to his native country and instead leaves his studies to pursue a “free life” in America as a poet. With his wife, Pingping, and their son, Taotao, he eventually buys a Chinese restaurant in suburban Atlanta. Nan struggles to balance the demands of business and poetry as he also confronts the memory of his first love—a memory that keeps him from fully loving his wife and son.

Fun Home, Alison Bechdel

An engrossing memoir in graphic novel format, *Fun Home* documents Bechdel’s childhood experiences and coming of age as a woman and lesbian. At its center lies her painful relationship with her distant father.

A Game of Thrones, George R.R. Martin

Fans of epic fantasy have to be patient (in order to wait for the next volume in the series), strong (these books are heavy) and mentally agile (in order to follow multiple characters and plots). If you fit this description, you will savor this masterpiece of the genre. The Stark and Lannister families struggle for control of the Iron Throne, all the while threatened by barbarians, ice vampires and direwolves. Plus there’s a dragon princess waiting to save the day. Start reading today and this series might consume your entire summer.

The Gardens of Kyoto, Kate Walbert

Walbert’s novel is a mesmerizing narrative of loss, memory and the power of books. The story flows through allusions to mysterious places and times from the Underground Railroad to a Japanese garden, from an innocent America before World War II to the decision to drop the atomic bomb.

The Given Day, Dennis Lehane

An absorbing historical novel set in Boston right after World War I, in which the action unfolds through the lives of two men, one white and one black. The 1918 influenza epidemic arrives with the returning soldiers, and revolutionaries and anarchists want to build a new world even if it means destroying everything first.

The Glass Castle, Jeannette Walls

A chronicle of a childhood in the hands of eccentric, nomadic parents, told with love and remarkable gratitude considering the emotional and physical neglect which the author and her siblings endured.

The Good Thief, Hannah Tinti

Abandoned at a monastery as an infant, Ren has no idea where he came from or how he lost one of his hands. He is adopted by a man claiming to be his long-lost older brother, but all is not as it seems, and this stranger seems to be more grave robber than savior. Now leading a life with which he's not entirely comfortable, Ren begins to unravel the mystery of who he is and where he came from. This work of historical fiction is one part Charles Dickens, one part Tim Burton, and completely mesmerizing.

Gulliver's Travels, Jonathan Swift

Go on a journey with Lemuel Gulliver, surgeon and sea captain, as he meets the Lilliputians, the Brobdingnagians, the Yahoos, and other strange creatures. This is satire at its best!

Half the House, Richard Hoffman

A boy grows up in blue-collar America; his brothers sicken with muscular dystrophy; his coach abuses him; his family struggles. As an adult, he writes this memoir, a testament to the healing power of truth telling and a story of love, reconciliation and triumph.

A Handful of Dust, Evelyn Waugh

This story of infidelity in 1940s England blends both tragedy and comedy. Tony and Brenda Last seem to have an idyllic marriage until Brenda begins an affair with a young fortune hunter. Their aristocratic life begins to crumble, and Tony flees England, falling into the clutches of a madman in South America.

The Handmaid's Tale, Margaret Atwood

In a dystopian future, women are no longer allowed to read or control money. The polluted environment has also reduced fertility, so women who can still bear children are reduced to the role of "handmaids," servants who must produce offspring for the infertile upper classes. A gripping and frightening futuristic fable!

The Hare with Amber Eyes, Edmund de Waal

The true story of the fabulously rich and cultivated Ephrussi family, who established banks in Vienna and Paris in the 19th century. Their collections of furniture, homes, clothes, and art included hundreds of Japanese *netsuke*—small ceramic figures, passed from one family member to another and hidden by a devoted servant during the Holocaust. The author, a ceramicist today, tells the breathtaking story of his own family.

A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius, Dave Eggers

This is both a memoir of the author's experiments at raising his younger brother after their parents' death and an experiment in narrative prose. The story of Eggers and his brother is heartbreaking at times, and even the preface is clever, if not a work of staggering genius—in particular, pay close attention to his "Rules and Guidelines for Enjoyment of this Book." Whatever it might be, this book is never boring and usually very funny.

The Help, Kathryn Stockett

In a small Mississippi town in 1962, three women of different social classes and races come together, telling their stories to change the world, or at least their small town. *The Help* is a story that will at once anger and humor you, but ultimately, it will move you.

Her Fearful Symmetry, Audrey Niffenegger

Julia and Valentina Poole are inseparable identical twins. Their lives are forever changed when they receive a letter from their mother's twin, Elseph, whom they've never met. Elseph has died, and has left her London apartment to the twins, under the conditions that they live in it for a year before they sell it and that their parents never set foot inside it. Julia and Valentina settle into the apartment, and find that Elseph is perhaps not as gone as they thought.

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents, Julia Alvarez

A story of sisterhood, friendship, and the personal ramifications of political strife by an award-winning novelist and poet.

In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens, Alice Walker

Pulitzer-Prize winner Walker speaks out as a black woman, writer, mother, and feminist in 36 essays ranging from the personal to the political. Included are pieces about other writers, accounts of the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the anti-nuclear movement of the 1980s, and a vivid memoir of a scarring childhood injury and her daughter's healing words. (Harvest/HBJ)

Invisible Man, Ralph Ellison

One of the great novels of our century. A sequence of events beginning in a Southern town and moving to Harlem convinces the protagonist that he is visible as an African-American man but invisible as a man. (Recommended for **AP English Literature** students.)

Kindred, Octavia Butler

Dana, an African-American woman, celebrates her 26th birthday with her husband in 1976 only to be snatched abruptly from her home in southern California and transported to the antebellum South. Butler examines love, hate, slavery, and racial dilemmas, then and now.

The Known World, Edward P. Jones

This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel presents unknown truths about slavery. It reaches into the hidden corners of this devastating institution to bring to light what most of us can't and don't want to imagine. *The Known World* is a compelling story by a brilliant writer.

The Left Hand of Darkness, Ursula K. LeGuin

This fantasy novel was a groundbreaker in 1969 and has since become a classic in the genre.

Middlesex, Jeffrey Eugenides

Spanning eight decades, Eugenides’s novel is a grand, utterly original fable of crossed bloodlines and the intricacies of gender. The story questions what it is that makes us who we are and concludes that one’s inner essence stays the same, even in light of drastic outer changes. You will love watching the narrator go from Callie to Cal, and witnessing all of the life experiences that s/he encounters along the way.

The Mill on the Floss, George Eliot

Siblings Maggie and Tom Tulliver struggle to maintain a sense of unity as they face familial and societal oppressions. Set in the early nineteenth century, *The Mill on the Floss* is a story about choices and consequences. Maggie undergoes a series of complex experiences, from poverty to wealth and from love to heartache. When she finally decides what path she wishes to take, disaster strikes and only the solidarity between brother and sister can provide her happiness.

The Mistress of Spices, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

In this poetic, spellbinding tale, Tilo, a young ordained spice mistress, inhabits an old body in a San Francisco shop, working spice magic to help her customers. A chance meeting with a romantic man challenges her to question her choices in life.

Mornings on Horseback, David McCullough

Courage, love, grief and passion marked the life of Theodore Roosevelt from his early childhood to his position as our 26th President and beyond. The skill and excitement with which McCullough tells Roosevelt’s story will almost convince you that *Mornings on Horseback* is an exciting novel rather than a biography, but it’s all true. (Recommended for **U.S. History** students.)

Mountains Beyond Mountains, Tracy Kidder

This compelling work of nonfiction tells the story of Dr. Paul Farmer, an American doctor who has brought medical aid and world attention to poor people in Haiti through his Boston-based Partners in Health. Farmer specializes in infectious diseases, and his fight for better economic and social conditions as well as better medical care for the poor is inspiring.

Never Let Me Go, Kazuo Ishiguro

In a futuristic world where all illnesses have been cured, a young woman named Kathy seeks to discover her identity and solve the secrets of her past. She reflects on her childhood at Hailsham, a “special” boarding school with an unusual emphasis on creativity and health. The students are never permitted to leave the school grounds. Now adults, she and her two friends, Tommy and Ruth, struggle to find their places in the world and in each other’s lives. (Kristina Ohl ’13)

The Night Circus, Erin Morgenstern

Le Cirque des Reves, the Circus of Dreams, is no ordinary circus. A truly magical experience awaits all who enter. It is the arena for two magicians, Celia and Marco, who have been trained since childhood in two very different magical traditions. Now they must compete against each other, neither player aware that in order for someone to win, the other must die.

On the Road, Jack Kerouac

In this novel of Dean Moriarty and Sal Paradise's exuberant search to find meaning and excitement on the open roads of postwar America, Kerouac gave style and voice to the Beat Generation of the 1950s. (Recommended for **Literature and Composition III** students.)

People of the Book, Geraldine Brooks

In this fast-paced novel of rich and vivid detail, Geraldine Brooks transcends time and place by tracing the journey of an ancient and mystifying Hebrew manuscript. Through her analysis of artifacts found in the Sarajevo Haggadah's ancient binding, Anna, the protagonist, unveils the complicated and troubling history of the diverse people and cultures who have possessed it.

The Picture of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde

The dark haunts of Victorian London, a handsome young man whose beauty never fades, and a portrait that is more than paint on canvass all coalesce in this chilling and thrilling late nineteenth-century novel.

The Poisonwood Bible, Barbara Kingsolver

Zealous Baptist missionary Nathan Price drags his wife and four daughters to the Belgian Congo in 1959: a foolish and grimly misguided enterprise. Unprepared for the weather, the snakes, the culture, and the political instability of their new home, each family member struggles to survive in his or her own way. Narrated in turns by the wife and daughters, this is one of those long, absorbing novels that weaves a family's history into the larger story of a country's struggle against colonialism and tyranny. Readers who love stories about sisters and their intertwining fates will especially cherish the memorable characters in this stunning novel.

Reading in the Dark, Seamus Deane

The hero of this novel is a young man whose life turns upside down when a police officer frames him. Hovering over this mystery is the violence, poverty and despair of 1940s Ireland.

Relish: My Life in the Kitchen, Lucy Knisley

“Knisley, daughter of a chef mother and gourmand father, had the kind of upbringing that would make any foodie salivate, and she’s happy to share. In this collection of memories studded with recipes, she explores how food shaped her family life, friendships, travel experiences, and early career as a cartoonist. Knisley’s illustrated recipes are particularly delightful and inventive, and she tempers any navel-gazing impulses with humor, humility, and honesty, noting, for example, that even someone who loves fine food can still put away a truckload of McDonald’s fries from time to time.” (*Booklist*)

The Return of the Native, Thomas Hardy

Clym Yeobright returns from Paris to the English village of his birth, inspired to improve the life of its men and women. But his plans are upset when he falls in love with a beautiful but discontented girl, Eustacia Vye, who longs to escape from her provincial surroundings. This classic novel prompts its readers to consider questions like: Is it possible to live our dreams? Are romantic illusions dangerous? How much control do we have over our own destinies?

The Road, Cormac McCarthy

“A father and his son walk alone through burned America. Nothing moves in the ravaged landscape save the ash on the wind. It is cold enough to crack stones, and when the snow falls it is gray. The sky is dark. Their destination is the coast, although they don’t know what, if anything, awaits them there. They have nothing; just a pistol to defend themselves against the lawless bands that stalk the road, the clothes they are wearing, a cart of scavenged food — and each other. *The Road* is the profoundly moving story of a journey. It boldly imagines a future in which no hope remains, but in which the father and his son, ‘each the other’s world entire,’ are sustained by love.” (Vintage Books)

Room, Emma Donoghue

“In many ways, Jack is a typical five-year-old. He likes to read books, watch TV, and play games with his Ma. But Jack is different in a big way—he has lived his entire life in a single room, sharing the tiny space with only his mother and an unnerving nighttime visitor known as Old Nick. For Jack, Room is the only world he knows, but for Ma, it is a prison in which she has tried to craft a normal life for her son. When their insular world suddenly expands beyond the confines of their four walls, the consequences are piercing and extraordinary...Readers who enter Room will leave staggered, as though, like Jack, they are seeing the world for the very first time.” (Amazon)

A Room of One’s Own, Virginia Woolf

What if Shakespeare had had a sister? Would she too have been able to become a world-famous playwright, or would social expectations and pressures around gender have affected her options? Virginia Woolf asks these and other questions about women and writing in this famous and engaging 1929 essay. (**Required for AP Literature.**)

Roots, Alex Haley

This family narrative spans seven generations of African Americans from the 1700s to the middle of the 20th century.

Rubyfruit Jungle, Rita Mae Brown

This is a novel of growing up lesbian in America, the triumphant story of Molly Bolt blossoming into an adulthood of her own creation.

Run, Ann Patchett

Since their mother's death, Tip and Teddy Doyle have been raised by their loving, possessive, and ambitious father. As the former mayor of Boston, Bernard Doyle wants to see his sons in politics, a dream the boys have never shared. But when an argument in a blinding New England snowstorm inadvertently causes an accident that involves a stranger and her child, all Bernard Doyle cares about is his ability to keep his children—all his children—safe. Patchett shows us how worlds of privilege and poverty can coexist only blocks apart from each other, and how family can include people you've never even met. (HarperCollins)

Runaway, Alice Munro

This collection of short stories cannot—and should not—be read quickly. Each one is about a woman who faces a moment when she must stay or go. Alice Munro's masterful writing illuminates the why and how of these decisions and the many different faces of love and betrayal that spur them.

The Secrets of Mary Bowser, Lois Leveen

What on earth would make an 1850s black woman leave the free North and travel to the enslaved South, knowing that such a decision could mean the end of her freedom or even her life? How about the opportunity to spy on Confederate President Jefferson Davis? In this exciting novel, based on the life of an actual Union spy, freed slave Mary Bowser returns to Virginia and passes herself off as a slave, sending military secrets to the North and finding love in the midst of danger. (Recommended for **U.S. History** students.)

Shakespeare, Bill Bryson

"Willm Shaksp," "William Shakespe," "Wm Shakspe": the great Shakespeare never even signed his name the same way twice. So what can we really know about him? That is the question Bryson asks and answers in this fast-paced and amusing book about our most renowned and mysterious playwright and poet.

The Shipping News, E. Annie Proulx

After the death of his two-timing wife, Quoyile, a third-rate newspaperman, retreats with his two daughters to the wild and starkly beautiful shores of Newfoundland in order to confront his heritage and reclaim his life. This novel won the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

Slave Moth, Thylia Moss

This neo-slave narrative, written in verse, follows Varl, a young slave girl who finds beautiful and creative ways to rebel against her master's determination to "collect" her. She attempts to maintain her humanity and her individuality in the face of the many-tiered assaults of slavery, while also bringing something new and worthwhile into the world.

Small Island, Andrea Levy

"Hortense Joseph arrives in London from Jamaica in 1948 with her life in her suitcase, her heart broken, her resolve intact. Her husband, Gilbert Joseph, returns from the war expecting to be received as a hero, but finds his status as a black man in Britain to be second class. His white landlady, Queenie, raised as a farmer's daughter, befriends Gilbert, and later Hortense, with innocence and courage, until the unexpected arrival of her husband, Bernard, who returns from combat with issues of his own to resolve." (Macmillan) Told in the vivid voices of these four characters, *Small Island* is a story of racism, immigration, post-war trauma and, ultimately, female empowerment.

Snow Falling on Cedars, David Guterson

Part love story, part murder mystery, part portrait of a painful time in American history, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, *Snow Falling on Cedars* has won numerous awards, including the prestigious Pen/Faulkner Award.

So Far from God, Ana Castillo

This wacky, wild, funny novel, set in New Mexico, engages the reader in the lives of a Chicano mother and her four daughters, their loves and struggles, their gossip, recipes, miracles, and community activism.

Song of the Lark, Willa Cather

A novel about a young woman's development into a world-famous opera singer. Cather, one of the 20th century's great writers, portrays the emotional, physical, and financial challenges as well as the rewards of devoting a life to art.

The Sorrow of War: A Novel of North Vietnam, Bao Ninh

The ugliness of war is the backdrop of this novel, and the Vietnamese War, as seen from the point of view of a North Vietnamese Communist soldier, is the focus. Bao Ninh's brutal honesty is sometimes hard to stomach, and his writing style incorporates the chaos of the soldier's life. Nonetheless, *The Sorrow of War* is well worth the work, especially for those of us lucky enough never to have faced war first-hand.

Soul on Ice, Eldridge Cleaver

A spiritual and intellectual biography written by one of the most articulate and prophetic young voices of the African-American community in the atmosphere of turbulence that

sleuth-like vengeance on her two older sisters and delves into the forbidden past of her emotionally unavailable, widowed father, Colonel de Luce. When she discovers a mysterious corpse in the cucumber patch, she uses her scientific skills to try to uncover the murderer. Flavia is a comic forerunner of those slick female scientists on *CSI*.

Tender is the Night, F. Scott Fitzgerald

Fitzgerald’s semi-autobiographical novel is a good choice for those of you who enjoyed or who are looking forward to reading *The Great Gatsby* in Literature and Composition III. While vacationing on the French Riviera, the beautiful young movie starlet Rosemary Hoyt falls in love with the handsome American psychologist Dick Diver. Dick, however, is married to Nicole, a Chicago heiress and his patient. The complex relationships amongst these glamorous expatriates provide a fascinating glimpse into human nature and into the lives of Americans living abroad in the 1920s and 1930s. (Recommended for **Literature and Composition III** students.)

Tess of the D’Urbervilles, Thomas Hardy

When it was first published in 1891, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* received mixed reviews, perhaps because of how Hardy challenged prevailing sexual mores and depicted the reality of an ordinary woman’s life. Violent, tragic, great, arguably feminist—this is not the tidy novel about a milkmaid that its cover would suggest. (Required for **AP English Literature**.)

A Thousand Acres, Jane Smiley

An aging Iowa farmer announces his plans to turn over his farm to his three daughters. When the youngest is less than grateful, he cuts her out of the deal, and dark family secrets start to emerge. Set on farm in Iowa, with a plot that masterfully reimagines the story of *King Lear* from the point of view of the women, particularly the two “bad” daughters, this subtle, compelling story gathers force as it unfolds. Winner of the 1992 Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

The Tiger’s Wife, Tea Obreht

In their daily visits to the zoo, Natalia’s beloved grandfather tells her stories from his youth in a small Balkan village and of his mysterious meetings with the Deathless Man. Years later, the war and its aftermath push Natalia, now a young doctor, to solve the riddle of her grandfather’s mysterious death and to discover his last, untold story—of the tiger and the tiger’s wife. This is a breathtaking novel about the power of story, memory, survival and love.

Unaccustomed Earth, Jhumpa Lahiri

Eight luminous stories that take us from Cambridge and Seattle to India and Thailand—including a linked trio that explore the power of love, fate, and the secrets that lie at the heart of family life—from the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Interpreter of Maladies*.

The Uncommon Reader, Alan Bennett

When the Queen, in pursuit of her wandering corgis, stumbles upon a mobile library, she feels duty bound to borrow a book. Aided by Norman, a young man from the palace kitchen who frequents the library, Bennett describes the Queen's transformation as she discovers the liberating pleasures of the written word. (Goodreads)

Vanity Fair, William Thackeray

The epic adventure of Becky Sharp, a witty, clever, and accomplished young woman who is determined to break into society at any cost.

A Very Long Engagement, Sebastien Japrisot

You will find here a mixture of ingredients that make a great story: romance, history, mystery, quest. Set in France during World War I, the novel is dominated by a marvelous heroine, Mathilde Donnoy. (Recommended for **AP European History** students.)

A Visit from the Goon Squad, Jennifer Egan

In this brilliant novel, winner of the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, Egan explores the interlocking stories of a group of people with links to each other and/or the music business, starting in contemporary New York and moving forward and backward in time and across relationships. Speaking through the distinctive voices of her various characters (one of whom uses only PowerPoint charts), Egan explores the effects of the "goon squad," time, on each one. All of the characters are flawed, and most of them are unlikeable; still, you will grow to care about the fates of Bennie, an insecure music producer, Sasha, his kleptomaniac assistant, and their spouses, friends, children, and even high school buddies.

Wait Till Next Year, Doris Kearns Goodwin

A warm, humorous memoir about a young girl growing up in the suburbs of New York during the 1950s. Doris, her father, and her neighborhood are united by a love of baseball, through which she is also exposed to the fears of polio, the paranoia of McCarthyism, and the ugly face of racial prejudice. (Recommended for **Literature and Composition III** and **American Identities** students.)

A Walk in the Woods, Bill Bryson

Hiking will never be the same for readers who discover Bryson's biting humor and scathing observations while trekking along the fabled Appalachian Trail.

Water for Elephants, Sara Gruen

"This lushly romantic novel travels back and forth in time between Jacob Jankowski's present day nursing home and his adventures in the surprisingly harsh world of 1930s circuses, where he fell in love with both beautiful performer Marlena and Rosie, an

untrainable elephant. The book is partially based on real circus stories and illustrated with historical circus photographs.” (*Booklist*)

We Band of Angels: The Untold Story of American Nurses Trapped on Bataan by the Japanese, Elizabeth M. Norman

Women in war: the true, untold account of the first American nurses to prove their mettle in captivity at the hands of the Japanese during World War II.

What the Dog Saw and Other Adventures, Malcolm Gladwell

What do hair dyes, ketchup brands, birth control pills, plagiarism, homelessness and pit bulls have in common? They’re all topics that Gladwell explores in this collection of engaging essays (all published originally in the *New Yorker* magazine). Essays are especially suited for pool-side reading because they’re so easy to read in short bursts.

Wolf Hall, Hilary Mantel

A fascinating look at Tudor England, this is a fictionalized biography of Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII’s minister. Our view of the royal family as seen through Cromwell’s eyes is dark and frightening, and we worry that his ability to navigate the personal politics of the era will somehow fail. The picture of Sir Thomas More is new: he’s not the pure hero and martyr often found in textbooks but just as manipulative as everyone else at court. Cromwell turns out to be the real hero. (Recommended for **AP European History** students.)

The Woman in White, Wilkie Collins

This Victorian bestseller has all the ingredients of a suspenseful mystery: a fragile heroine, an insane asylum, and Count Fosco, the villain you love to hate.

Zeitoun, Dave Eggers

Zeitoun is a family: a mom, dad and four kids who live in New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina hits. The story of what happens to them, especially Abdulrahman, the father of the family, will make you shake your head in wonder at the capacity for good and evil in our fellow humans. This book is non-fiction, but it reads like a thriller.

The Zookeeper’s Wife, Diane Ackerman

If you’re intrigued by the desperate connections human beings make with each other and with animals during horrific times, you will marvel at this true story of a husband and wife, the keepers of the Warsaw Zoo, who rescued hundreds of Poles from death at the hands of the Nazis.

SOCIAL STUDIES BOOKS

The following titles are suggestions for summer reading from the Social Studies Department. While the required books are part of the assignments for AP European History and AP United States History courses, the other titles reflect readings that will provide enrichment. Each book was selected because it is well written and provides thoughtful excursions to other times, places and ideas. Enjoy!

AFRICAN STUDIES

July's People, Nadine Gordimer

“For years, it had been what is called a ‘deteriorating situation.’ Now all over South Africa the cities are battlegrounds. The members of the Smales family—liberal whites—are rescued from the terror by their servant, July, who leads them to refuge in his village. What happens to the Smaleses and to July—the shifts in character and relationships—gives us an unforgettable look into the terrifying, tacit understandings and misunderstandings between blacks and whites.” (Amazon.com) Gordimer won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1991.

Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer and Sex Changed a Nation at War, Leymah Gbowee

Nobel Peace Prize winner Gbowee recounts how “an army of women helped lead her nation [of Liberia] to peace—in the process emerging as an international leader who changed history. *Mighty Be Our Powers* is a gripping chronicle of a journey from hopelessness to empowerment that will touch all who dream of a better world.” (Amazon.com)

AMERICAN IDENTITIES

Jasmine, Bharati Mukherjee

This is a story of migration, both physical and personal. Jyoti, an Indian woman, travels to America to escape the confines of village life. She transforms herself again and again: as a laborer in Florida, a nanny in Manhattan, and finally a housewife in Iowa. With each transformation, she offers the reader a unique view into America, where the common becomes exotic and new.

American Pastoral, Philip Roth

This novel follows a father’s struggle to maintain normalcy through the increasingly turbulent 1950s and 1960s, in the face of protest and the Vietnam War, challenges to traditional family ideals and values, and an increasingly rebellious daughter.

EAST ASIAN STUDIES

American Born Chinese, Gene Luen Yang

Using the graphic novel format, the author presents his own experiences growing up as a person of Chinese descent in America. Yang also retells the classic Chinese folk story “The Monkey King” as a metaphor for his own search for identity. This book is a great introduction to issues faced by Asian Americans today and to one of the most popular and influential stories in East Asian culture.

China in the 21st Century: What Everyone Needs to Know, Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom

China has a long, complex history that can be daunting to a beginning learner, and Professor Wasserstrom’s book does an admirable job of covering the breadth of Chinese history and culture in an accessible manner. Reading this book is an excellent introduction to many of the topics -- both ancient and modern -- that will be discussed throughout the year in East Asian Studies.

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan, Lisa See

This is a fictional account of a woman’s life in rural Hunan province in China during the late 19th century. It follows her story from youth to adulthood as she experiences foot binding; learns a secret form of women’s writing called *nu shu*; and faces marriage, childrearing, friendship, and the collapse of her traditional world in the face of modernity.

The Tao of Pooh, Benjamin Hoff

Hoff uses the classic story of Winnie the Pooh to explain the deeper meaning of the beliefs of Taoism, one of the oldest and most important Chinese philosophies and a worldview that informs much of East Asian art and culture. Hoff reveals that the Pooh that we know is actually a Taoist in disguise, as are many of the other inhabitants of the wood.

Understanding China Through Comics, Jing Liu

This short introduction to the earliest history of China and its culture uses the graphic novel format to explain many of the ideas and events that are the foundations of Chinese civilization.

MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America, Firoozeh Dumas

Dumas came to America for the first time in the early 1970s, when many Americans were unfamiliar with Iran. She has a unique perspective on American culture, and she balances the comedy of her family’s misadventures with the more serious prejudices they face.

How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less, Sarah Glidden

A secular Jew with strong opinions, Glidden sets off on her first visit to Israel and learns that there are no easy answers to her questions. She details her discoveries in this beautifully-drawn graphic novel.

The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century, Thomas Friedman
 An award-winning *New York Times* columnist explains how the flattening--i.e., connectedness--of the world happened at the dawn of the 21st century, what it means to the global economy, and how governments and societies must adapt.

RUSSIAN STUDIES

The Cherry Orchard, Anton Chekhov

A timeless play about the human condition set in 19th century Russia. It examines the value of traditions in a changing world, and the hopes and fears of aristocratic Russia, even as the old order is replaced by the new.

City of Thieves, David Benioff

A novel set in the nightmarish world of the 900-day siege of Leningrad during World War II; a young boy accused of looting and an accused deserter are spared from execution if they complete a task to find 12 eggs in the starving city.

Nicholas and Alexandra, Robert K. Massie

A popular history of the last Tsar and Tsarina and their doomed family, inspired by the story of the most famous hemophiliac child in history, the only son and heir to the Romanov crown, Tsarevich Alexis.

UNITED STATES HISTORY

Brave Companions, David McCullough

Pulitzer Prize-winning author David McCullough presents profiles of exceptional men and women who have contributed to the history of the United States. In this rich collection of 17 essays, readers meet figures such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frederic Remington, Teddy Roosevelt, Louis Agassiz, and Anne Morrow Lindbergh.

The Feminine Mystique, Betty Friedan

After graduating from Smith College, Friedan interviewed her classmates about their lives following college. What she found were countless women living in silent desperation, forced by social expectations into marriage and homemaking with little opportunity for personal expression. In many ways, this book launched the modern feminist movement.

Founding Brothers, Joseph Ellis

Ellis recounts several pivotal moments in the nation's creation: from the private debates and dealings over where to locate the capital, to the deadly duel between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr, to arguments between Thomas Jefferson and John Adams over the meaning of the nation. These anecdotes speak to the central values and the fundamental conflicts of the nation, then and now.

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Harriet Jacobs

The autobiographical account of a young girl's life as a slave and her escape to freedom. Jacobs recounts the horrors of her experience as a slave in North Carolina, her heroic escape and the years she spend in hiding, and her ultimate freedom. Written in a gripping and readable way, this narrative is a classic of slave literature.

WESTERN CIVILIZATION

The Bull from the Sea, Mary Renault

This novel, a marvelous choice for those who like mythology, tells the story of Theseus who meets the challenge of the Minotaur in the Labyrinth of Crete. Like all good historical fiction, this is not only an engaging story, full of complex characters and outstanding descriptions, but also a window into another time and place. After reading *The Bull from the Sea*, you will have a rich understanding of the ancient Aegean world.

The Eagle of the Ninth, Rosemary Sutcliff

Ms. Sutcliff has a great store of information about the Roman world and writes engaging, well-written and historically accurate stories. This particular tale is of a young soldier who must travel to Britain to defend his father's honor.

AP EUROPEAN HISTORY

Required: *The Prince*, Niccolo Machiavelli

This is the first book of Western political science. Machiavelli gives advice to a prince on how best to run his kingdom. The assumptions about human behavior caused the book to be burned and the author's name to become an adjective for evil political scheming.

Bury the Chains, Adam Hochschild

This is a powerful story of the British anti-slavery movement, which traced its origins from a small focused group to a mass movement that ended first the slave trade and ultimately slavery in the British Empire. Most Americans are taught about the abolitionist movements in the United States but are not aware of the earlier, powerful generation that inspired them.

The Daughter of Time, Josephine Tey

Did Richard III kill those little princes in the tower? This is a classic of historical fiction that attempts to solve the mystery that led to the end of Plantagenet rule in medieval England.

Hard Times, Charles Dickens

A classic novel that takes us into the world of 19th-century people struggling to make ends meet. With Dickens' marvelous characters, strong plot and a pleasing conclusion, the reader finishes *Hard Times* completely satisfied. As an artifact and as a polemic, this novel lets us know that Victorian England could be a grim place.

The Name of the Rose, Umberto Eco

In 1397, finding his sensitive mission at an Italian abbey further complicated by seven bizarre deaths, Brother William of Baskerville turns detective, penetrating the cunning labyrinth of the abbey and deciphering coded manuscripts for clues. This mystery conveys a marvelous sense of time and place.

Sophie's World: A Novel About the History of Philosophy, Jostein Gaarder

A page-turning novel that is also an exploration of the great philosophical concepts of Western thought. In order to answer two existential questions—who are you? and where does the world come from?—Sophie must use the philosophy she is learning. However, the truth turns out to be far more complicated than she could have imagined.

The Swerve: How the World Became Modern, Stephen Greenblatt

A page-turner that combines both biography and history to examine the origin of Western culture's foundation: the free questioning of truth. The story hinges on the discovery in 1417 of an ancient Latin text that had been neglected for a thousand years. We even learn the history of the bookworm—a real entity and one of the enemies of ancient written-cultural transmission. (*Publishers Weekly*)

Wolf Hall, Hilary Mantel

A long but fascinating look at Tudor England, this fictionalized biography of Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's minister, is a great novel. Our view of the royal family as seen through Cromwell's eyes is dark and frightening, and we worry that his ability to navigate the terrible personal politics of the era will somehow fail. The picture of Sir Thomas More is new: he's not the pure hero and martyr often found in textbooks but just as manipulative as everyone else at court. Cromwell turns out to be the real hero. *Bring Up the Bodies*, this book's sequel, explores the downfall of Anne Boleyn and is equally compelling.

AP UNITED STATES HISTORY

Required: *An American Childhood*, Annie Dillard

In this piece, Annie Dillard shares not only poignant remembrances of her childhood, but also valuable insights into the values and social expectations of suburban Pittsburgh. Dillard's writing is complex, varied, and accessible.

Required: *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Malcolm X and Alex Haley

A controversial political and social activist of the 1960s, whose influence continues to grow, tells his life story. Spike Lee's 1992 movie restored this classic to its bestseller status.

Required: *The Killer Angels*, Michael Shaara

This engaging novel takes place during the three most important days of the United States Civil War. Shaara's gripping characterizations of complex historical figures provide a rich

context for an exploration of the pivotal events that took place in Gettysburg during the summer of 1863.

WORLD LANGUAGE BOOKS

The following titles are suggestions and in some cases requirements for summer reading from the Language Department. The required books help our Advanced Placement courses run more smoothly and often prove to be helpful throughout the year. The recommended titles include both books in the language of the courses we offer at Dana—French, Latin, Mandarin, and Spanish—and also books that enhance the study of the cultures associated with each language. We encourage you to use the summer as a great opportunity to enjoy reading in another language not only for enjoyment but also to help keep the language in your ears and in your minds. Some of you might enjoy reading a book on the culture because you are especially interested in that culture and there isn't time for that during the school year.

FRENCH

Required for IV AP: *La Grammaire est une chanson douce*, Erik Orsenna

A girl and her brother are shipwrecked on a mysterious island. With their musical guide, they discover a magical place where words live and work together to form the basis of the French language. (Recommended for **levels III-V.**)

Le Chien jaune, Georges Simenon

One of the famous Inspecteur Maigret mysteries set in Brittany. The inspector traces a series of mysterious crimes and tries to find the connections between them. (Recommended for **levels III-V.**)

Je voudrais que quelqu'un m'attende quelque part, Anna Gavalda

Twelve short stories of the daily lives of contemporary everyday people. Some are tragic, some are joyous, and some are just accounts of common human experiences. (Recommended for **levels III-V.**)

Un Long dimanche de fiancailles, Sebastien Japrisot

During World War I, a French bride searches for clues to find her lost fiancé, a soldier who has mysteriously disappeared from the battlefield. (Recommended for **levels III-V.**)

A Moveable Feast, Ernest Hemingway

A memoir of Hemingway's early years when he lived in Paris "poor and happy" during the 1920s with his first wife and many other well-known expatriates such as F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Ezra Pound, James Joyce and Gertrude Stein. Anyone who has visited (and loves) Paris will truly enjoy this book, as it transports you to many magical Parisian places that still exist today.

Paris to the Moon, Adam Gopnik

A series of essays written by a New Yorker journalist who lived in Paris with his wife and young son from 1995 to 2000. Gopnik captures much of the essence of Paris, the French way of life, and the Franco-American relationship. As an American expatriate, he also offers many insights into American culture.

Le Petit prince, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

The classic story of a stranded pilot and a little boy searching the universe for friendship. Voted the greatest French work of literature of the 20th century by the French people. (Recommended for **levels III-V**.)

Le Racisme expliqué à ma fille, Tahar Ben Jelloun

A Moroccan writer explains the origins of and his struggles with racism to his daughter so that future generations will not have to suffer from it. (Recommended for **levels III-V**.)

LATIN

Carpe Diem: Put a Little Latin in Your Life, Harry Mount

Mount uses humor, pop culture, and examples from his own British education to make Latin come alive. For those who know a little Latin, this book will make you smile and want to continue learning, and for those who have never learned Latin, this book will make you want to do just that.

Fairy Tales in Latin: Fabulae Mirabiles, Victor Barocas

For those of you entering Latin III or IV, this book gives you an opportunity to read Latin without the need for notes or an extensive vocabulary. A glossary is provided, however, for the unusual words.

Never Let a Fool Kiss You or a Kiss Fool You, Mardy Grothe

Chiasmus is a literary device used in Latin poetry (and illustrated by the title of this book). The book gathers an impressive number of examples of chiasmus in English and does a great job explaining how it brings humor and depth to simple expressions. Quotations are grouped by theme and come from celebrities, historical figures, and popular culture.

The Venus Throw: A Mystery of Ancient Rome, Steven Saylor

In this intriguing mystery set during the late Republic, detective Gordianus the Finder investigates the actions of Clodia, a sexually promiscuous and powerful woman of the aristocracy. Based on the speeches of Cicero and the poetry of Catullus, the novel gives a glimpse of a specific time previously only portrayed in classical literature.

A Word a Day: A Romp through Some of the Most Unusual and Intriguing Words in English, Anu and Stuti Garg

Do you love words and wish we could study etymology all year long? Latin class will help your understanding of words, but reading this book will also inspire word lovers to dig even more deeply into roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

MANDARIN

The Lady in the Painting, Fred Fang-yu Wang

The only full-length story re-written for low to intermediate level learners of Mandarin, *The Lady in the Painting* tells the tale of a lonely young man who receives a painting of a beautiful woman as a gift. This great story is told using only 300 characters and is suitable for students at all levels.

Monkey: Folk Novel of China, Wu Ch'eng-en

A thrilling Chinese folk novel centered on a monkey and his interactions with a variety of spirits, gods, demigods, and other immortal beings (in English; suitable for all levels).

Taipei People, Pai Hsien-yung

Taipei People is a brilliant collection of beautifully translated, contemporary Chinese fiction. For advanced level Mandarin students, try your hand at reading the stories in Chinese; you can check your comprehension with the English translations. For beginning students, journey into the culture and lives of Chinese people by reading the English translations of the stories.

SPANISH

Required for V AP: *Yerma*, Federico García Lorca

One of Lorca's final plays from his famous trilogy, this is a powerful and poetic work on the yearning for motherhood.

Required for IV AP: *Devolver al remitente*, Julia Alvarez

A contemporary immigration story told through the alternating viewpoints of Tyler, son of an injured dairy farmer, and Mari, daughter of illegal migrant Mexican workers.

La Casa en Mango Street, Sandra Cisneros

In small vignettes, Esperanza Cordero tells the tales of the people she has met and experiences she has lived on Mango Street. (Recommended for levels IV and V.)

Crónica de una muerte anunciada, Gabriel Garcia Márquez

According to *The New York Review of Books*, "This investigation of an ancient murder takes on the quality of a hallucinatory exploration, a deep, groping search into the gathering darkness of human intentions for a truth that continually slithers away." (Recommended for level IV AP.)

En la ardiente oscuridad, Antonio Buero Vallejo

One of the major dramatic works of modern Spanish theater, full of human warmth and pity. (Recommended for **level III**.)

Hair/Pelitos, Sandra Cisneros

This bilingual picture book with its unique artwork helps beginning students read more complex structures with the aid of a translation. (Recommended for **levels I and II**.)

Harry Potter y la piedra filosofal, J.K. Rowling

This well known series explores the adventures of a young sorcerer and his friends. (Recommended for **level IV**.)

Platero y yo, Juan Ramón Jiménez.

A beautifully written collection of Andalusian poems that describes the birthplace of the author, a Nobel Prize winner in Literature in 1956, and that can be read with pleasure by children and adults alike. (Recommended for **level III**.)

El Viaje de su vida, Lisa Ray Turner and Blaine Ray

A short and easy beginning reader. (Recommended for **levels I and II**.)

El Viaje perdido, Lisa Ray Turner and Blaine Ray

Another short and easy beginning reader. (Recommended for **levels I and II**.)

NOTES

NOTES

This summer reading list was compiled by

Liz Gray, Library Director
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with selected annotations from the
Greater Boston Cooperative Library Association's
2007 7th and 8th Grade Reading List,
publishers, review journals and websites.

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