

St. Margaret's School Summer Reading Philosophy

To prepare our students for life, we consider no habit of mind so important as reading- reading for information, for inspiration, for connections, for perspectives, and yes, for enjoyment. To that end we ask students to read at least THREE BOOKS over the summer vacation. There are many choices which should appeal to different age groups and different interests. Students will complete response sheets for each book found on page 3 and 4 for each book.

Summer reading complements the St. Margaret's curriculum. During the school year there is much emphasis on guided reading throughout the curriculum. Students study literary techniques, themes, and vocabulary in a formal manner. Students analyze literature using a variety of genres and become involved in literary criticism. During the summer students may continue formal analyses and may also make some choices in what they wish to read. We want students to take ownership of their reading program and know the pleasure of independence; we would like families to engage in lively conversations with daughters about reading and learning. For that reason the reading list is fairly extensive and contains brief annotations which provide the prospective reader with some idea of the content of each book.

Part of the reading program involves responses to the books read. Again, there are deliberate options for responses. In responding to what they read, students make connections between their own lives and the themes, plots, characterizations, and settings of the books of their choice. Our summer reading provides a way for students to grow in understanding personally and globally, learning about themselves and about the opportunities and challenges in the lives of those near and far, past and present.

The summer reading booklet is given to new and returning students and may be accessed at any time from the Summer Reading Link on the Intranet (https://webserver.sms.org/intranet/books/sr_list.htm) St. Margaret's Web Page (www.sms.org). Each book is linked to Amazon.com for easy purchasing and more detailed descriptions and reviews. We always encourage students to visit their local library or bookstore and challenge themselves to read widely during the summer months.

Guidelines and Choices

The St. Margaret's Summer Reading List was compiled after consulting teachers, librarians, bookstores, booklists and journals. Although students are free to read any book on the list, suggested grade levels are given for each book.

WHO:	All returning students and those enrolled by July 1. New students enrolled after that date are encouraged to read at least one book from the list.
WHAT:	Three books from the list. [Note: Books required for AP courses may be applied if desired]
HOW:	See list that follows for choices. Read the books. Fill out summer reading form for each book. [See example for appropriate sample responses] To access the template on the Internet, go to the SMS web page [http://www.sms.org/ac15read.htm].
WHERE:	To obtain books, visit a library, a bookstore, the SMS Web Page [http://www.sms.org/ac15.htm]. The list and reviews are available on the Web Page as well as information for ordering from <i>Amazon.com</i> . This on-line bookstore has a collection of 2.5 million books at a discount of at least 20%. Most books can be shipped within 24 hours, and your support of this site allows St. Margaret's to receive up to 15% cost of any book purchased.
WHEN:	Response sheets are due immediately upon arrival at your English class the first day of classes. Once you return to St. Margaret's, there will be no opportunity to finish your Summer Reading so be sure to complete it before you return.
BY WHOM:	A committee of faculty will read your responses and will grade them on a pass/high pass/fail basis. The results will be recorded on your permanent record and reported to you and to colleges and schools to which you apply.
ASSESSMENT:	Your responses will be graded High Pass, Pass, Fail. If all requirements are met, a student will earn a Pass. A student will receive a failing grade if one or more of the required components are missing. If a student goes beyond expectations on their reading and presentation of responses, she will earn an High Pass grade. All grades will be included on the student's St. Margaret's transcript.

**St. Margaret's Summer Reading
Response Sheet
Books of Your Choice**

Write or type; use one form for **each** book.

Student Name: _____ **Grade Level:** _____

Title of book: _____ **Author:** _____

I. Plot of book:

II. Theme of book:

III. Major characters in book:

IV. Setting of book:

Write full responses on separate paper and attach to the form.

V. In paragraph form, describe TWO passages in the book that were especially memorable or meaningful to you. Tell why.

VI. Pick ONE or MORE of the questions below and write a well-organized AND complete response of at least one-half page to a whole page in response.

1. How is the title of the book/story significant? What do you think the title means? How does it relate to the plot of the story? The ending of the story?
2. What do you think the author is saying about life, perfect or otherwise, in this book/story? Do you agree with the point(s) of view? Did the book change your beliefs or opinions? Explain.
3. Describe how any of the events in the reading remind you of any events in your own life or something that has happened in history or something you predict may happen.
4. What are common themes you have found in the books you have read? How does this book illustrate one or more of these themes? Give specific examples to illustrate your points.
5. Why do you think the author ended the book/story the way he/she did? Would a different ending work as well? Why or why not?
6. Write a short review of the book/story such as you might find in a newspaper or in a style that you have used in the past.
7. Explain why you chose this book and what you gained in knowledge, beliefs, understandings, insights, or enjoyment from it.

Sample Response Sheet

Student Name: Composite answers from papers

Title of Book: The Giver

Author: Lois Lowry

I. Plot of Book:

The book The Giver is about a boy named Jonas and his special role in the community. In Jonas' community there are no feelings or memories and everyone sees in black and white. It is Jonas' job as the new Receiver to remember all of these things so they will not be lost. He begins to receive memories and feelings such as love and pain. These emotions unlock a whole new world for Jonas, one that once entered, one cannot return from.

II. Theme of Book:

Life is meant to be lived and cherished and embraced, including all of the pain, love, and fear that comes with it. In The Giver this theme is evident. This book shows that life is monotonous and shades of gray when you take out emotions and feelings. This is realized even by those who have never lived any other way.

III. Major characters in book:

Jonas, the main character in this book is a bright and perceptive 12 year old with an important position. His family unit is made up of his parents and younger sister Lily. Jonas is given his special job as Receiver at a ceremony with his friends Fiona and Asher. He is the next Receiver and is to be trained by the current Giver.

IV. Setting of book:

Jonas' story takes place in the future, in a small community separate from pain, fear, and color.

V. In paragraph form, describe TWO (3 are given) passages in the book that were especially memorable or meaningful to you. Tell why.

One of the most memorable passages in Lois Lowry's The Giver is that when the Giver tries to explain to Jonas the idea and importance of memories and how it helps the Elders shape the future. In this passage, the Giver explains the idea and existence of a past. He says, "There's much more. There's all that goes beyond--all that is Elsewhere--and all that goes back, and back, and back"(78). Then the Giver continues to describe the significance of memories by saying, "...I re-experience them again and again. It is how wisdom comes. And how we shape our future" (78). It is not until this moment that Jonas realizes that different living styles had existed before him. By telling Jonas about a past, The Giver exposes a new concept to Jonas, a concept that will ultimately change everything in his life

Another significant passage in The Giver is that when Jonas and the Giver decide on a plan which will allow everyone to have memories. Because of the feelings memories provide, Jonas and the Giver want to allow every

person in the community to have memories. The Giver explains that "...memories tell us that...people felt things once" (154), and both he and Jonas are willing to risk anything for them to feel it again. The Giver says, "The worst part of holding memories is not the pain. It's the loneliness of it. Memories need to be shared" (154). In this passage, Jonas and the Giver finally have resolved to change the lives of everybody in the Community. In addition, they have learned from their memories that "it has not always been" (154) and they can change their world for the better.

The passage that shows Jonas' realization of the true reason why he left his Community is the most essential in Lowry's *The Giver*. When Jonas is starving during his escape to Elsewhere, he ponders whether he had made the wrong choice of leaving. However, he recalls that "if he had stayed...he would have starved in other ways. He would have lived a life hungry for feelings, for color, for love" (174). Here, Jonas remembers the goal of his escape: to live a life of choice and freedom. He had the freedom to feel and experience new things. Never feeling anything but sameness, he finally experienced it and "enjoyed the new feeling of it...[he] became cold and wet" (174). This passage demonstrates how Jonas has changed, for now "he no longer cared about himself" (174).

VI. Pick ONE of the questions below and write a well organized and complete response of at least one-half page to a whole page in response.

Question: What do you think the author is saying about life, perfect or other wise, in this book?" Do you agree with the point(s) of view? Did the book change your beliefs or opinions? Explain.

I think the author is trying to show a world that is supposedly perfect, but in actual fact it's the opposite. In *The Giver*, the community that Jonas lives in is safe and perfect, but it lacks many things. The people behave almost as if they are computerized and have no feelings at all. I strongly feel that Lois Lowry is trying to get a message across saying that if everything in life were perfect and safe, it would also be very artificial. The people of this community had never experienced emotions such as anger, fear, or even happiness. They didn't know what it was like to feel real pain or loss, not even the warm feeling of love

I agree with the message that the author is trying to convey to the reader, which is that it is better to live in a real world rather than an artificial one. Even though the world we live in today has many problems, it would be really incomplete if we were to live in a perfect world. We would miss out on so many things if our lives were controlled and our decisions were made for us. No close relationships were formed between people and a "family unit" was just a temporary attachment. Though the people of this community lacked emotions such as anger, jealousy, sadness, etc., they also lacked knowledge. They knew nothing of the little splendors of life. They had never seen snow, never had a real friendship and never seen colors

To give up all the good things in life to achieve a perfect world would be a great loss to me; I would rather just stay and live in the imperfect world that I am in today.

Summer Reading List

The Summer Reading List was compiled after consulting teachers, librarians, bookstores, booklists and journals. Although students are free to read any book on the list, suggested grade levels are given for each book. The English teachers have recommended the books they think would best prepare students in each class. Students should look at the codes at the end of this list to see which books are recommended for the class they will enter in the fall (if known). Students should read books they have not previously read, and we encourage everyone to choose at least one book they find challenging either topically or linguistically.

Feel free to use the St. Margaret's Bookstore in partnership with [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) for discounts on books. For ordering and book reviews, click on the title of your preferred book choice. Purchases made through Amazon.com earn St. Margaret's School up to 15% return on each purchase. Contact [George McDowell](mailto:George.McDowell@stmg.org) if you have further questions.

Abelove, Joan. [*Go and Come Back*](#). 1996. Nonfiction. (8-12) In a story of mutual culture shock, Alicia, a young Isabo girl in a remote area of Peru, is just as fascinated by the American anthropologists, Joanna and Margarita, as they are with the ways of her people. (8)

Adams, Richard. [*Watership Down*](#). 1974. (8-12) A timeless classic and one of the most beloved novels of all time. Set in England's Downs, a once idyllic rural landscape, this stirring tale of adventure, courage and survival follows a band of very special creatures on their flight from the intrusion of man and the certain destruction of their home. Led by a stouthearted pair of brothers, they journey forth from their native Sandleford Warren through the harrowing trials posed by predators and adversaries, to a mysterious promised land and a more perfect society. (8, ILC)

Aebi, Tania. [*Maiden Voyage*](#). 1997. Nonfiction. (8-12) The remarkable true adventure of the 18-year-old girl who left on a 27,000-mile, two-and-a-half-year solo sail around the globe, braving typhoons, pirates, and starvation to return home a woman, and a hero. (ILC, WLC, ESL)

Allende, Isabel. [*Ines of My Soul*](#). 2006. Nonfiction. (8-12) 2006. (10-12) This historical fiction novel is about Ines Suarez, a conquistadora, who with her husband fought indigenous people to found the nation of Chile. Adventurous and passionate, Ines led an extraordinary life that changed the course of history.

Alvarez, Julia. [*In the Time of Butterflies*](#). 1995. (9-12) Inspired by the story of the real Mirabal sisters who were involved in the plot to overthrow the Dominican dictator Trujillo. From innocent girls the sisters grow into passionate women who are instrumental to the revolutionary movement. Three sisters are ultimately martyred for their dedication to ending a bloody regime.

Anderson, Laurie Halse. [*Speak*](#). 2000. (8-12) Melinda Sordino busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops. Now her old friends won't talk to her, and people she doesn't even know hate her from a distance. The safest place to be is alone, inside her own head. But even that's not safe. Because there's something she's trying not to think about, something about the night of the party that, if she let it in, would blow her carefully constructed disguise to smithereens. And then she would have to speak the truth. (ILC)

Anderson, Laurie Halse. [*Wintergirls*](#). 2009. (9-12) Lia is haunted by her former best-friend, Cassie, who called her 33 times on the night she died. As life grows more difficult, Lia turns to her favorite coping mechanism, anorexia. In Lia's mind the battle is waged between food and ana, living family and the ghost of a friend, and ultimately life and death.

Anderson, M.T.. [*The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Vol. 1: The Pox Party*](#) 2006. (8-12) Raised by a group of rational philosophers known only by numbers, a boy and his mother — a princess in exile from Africa — are the only persons in their household assigned names. As the boy's regal mother, Cassiopeia, entertains the house scholars with her beauty and wit, young Octavian begins to question the purpose behind his guardians' fanatical studies. Only after he dares to open a forbidden door does he learn the hideous nature of their experiments — and his own chilling role in them. Set against the disquiet of Boston during the American Revolution, this extraordinary novel takes place at a time when American Patriots rioted and battled to win liberty

while African slaves were entreated to risk their lives for a freedom they would never claim. Sequel: [*The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Vol. II: The Kingdom on the Waves*](#) (2008)(National Book Award)

Angelou, Maya. [*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*](#). 1971. Nonfiction (9-12) A poetic and frank autobiography about a talented black girl who recounts her experiences growing up in Arkansas, St. Louis, and San Francisco. (ALC)

Beah, Ismael. [*A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*](#). 2008. Nonfiction (9-12) This is the autobiography of a man who became a soldier at age 12 during Sierra Leone's bloody civil war. Beah tells about the years of drug abuse and casual violence in the army and his rescue and rehabilitation at 15 by UNICEF. Now Beah is a children's rights activist living in the United States.

Beard, Philip. [*Dear Zoe*](#). 2005. (9-12) When 15-year-old Tess DeNunzio loses her stepsister in a freak hit-and-run accident on September 11, 2001, she chronicles her family's recovery in an epistolary novel that is a tribute to the power of love to heal.

Berg, Elizabeth. [*Joy School*](#). 1998 (9-12) Katie, the narrator, has relocated to Missouri with her distant, occasionally abusive father, and she feels very much alone: her much-loved mother is dead; her new school is unaccepting of her; and her only friends fall far short of being ideal companions. When she accidentally falls through the ice while skating, she meets Jimmy. He is handsome, far older than she, and married, but she is entranced. As their relationship unfolds, so too does Katie's awareness of the pain and intensity first love can bring.

Bradley, Marion Zimmer. [*The Mists of Avalon*](#). 1987. (10-12) The Arthurian legend is retold from the feminine point of view with an emphasis on the conflict between the old religion and Christianity.

Bray, Libba. [*Going Bovine*](#). 2009. (9-12) Apathetic stoner Cameron begins to see strange things and spaz out. It turns out he has Mad Cow Disease, but an angel named Dulcie tells him to seek out Dr. X to find a life-saving cure and save the world from a black hole. Cameron sets out on a the road trip of a lifetime with his hypochondriac friend Gonzo where he starts an uprising at a smoothie-loving cult, picks up a lawn gnome/Norse god, jams with dead musicians, visits another dimension-probably, wins on a tv game show, falls in love, and goes to Disney World. This is the 2010 Printz Award winner for excellence in young adult literature.

Bray, Libba. [*A Great and Terrible Beauty \(The Gemma Doyle Trilogy\)*](#). 2009. (9-12) 2005. (9-12) A Victorian boarding school story, a Gothic mansion mystery, a gossipy romp about a clique of girlfriends, and a dark other-worldly fantasy. It's 1895, and after the suicide of her mother, 16-year-old Gemma Doyle is shipped off from the life she knows in India to Spence, a proper boarding school in England. Lonely, guilt-ridden, and prone to visions of the future that have an uncomfortable habit of coming true, Gemma's reception there is a chilly one. To make things worse, she's been followed by a mysterious young Indian man, a man sent to watch her. But why? What is her destiny? And what will her entanglement with Spence's most powerful girls-and their foray into the spiritual world-lead to? Also [*Rebel Angels*](#) and [*A Sweet Far Thing*](#). (ILC)

Burns, Olive Ann. [*Cold Sassy Tree*](#). 1984. (8-12) Fourteen-year-old Will Tweedy lives in Cold Sassy, Georgia at the turn of the century. When his grandfather is widowed and remarried to a much younger woman within a month, Will is as shocked as the rest of the community. But, as he grows up and learns to celebrate the happiness they have. (RWC)

Butler, Octavia. [*The Kindred*](#). 1979. (8-12) The book utilizes the devices of science fiction in order to answer the question "how could anybody be a slave?" A woman from the twentieth century, Dana is repeatedly brought back in time by her slave-owning ancestor Rufus when his life is endangered. She chooses to save him, knowing that because of her actions a free-born black woman will eventually become his slave and her own grandmother. When forced to live the life of a slave, Dana realizes she is not as strong as her ancestors.

Card, Orson Scott. [*Sarah*](#). 2001. (8-12) The character of Sarah, Abraham's beloved wife, illuminates this rendering of a pivotal story from the Old Testament. (8)

Choi, Sook Nyui. [*Year of Impossible Goodbyes*](#). 1991. (8-10) In 1945 the courageous ten-year-old Sookan and her family must endure the cruelties of the Japanese military occupying Korea, and later the Russian Communist troops. Here is an incredible story of one family's love for each other and their determination to risk everything to find freedom. (8, ESL)

Christie, Agatha. [*Sleeping Murder*](#). 1976. (8-12) A young newlywed's new home, a charming old English house, is giving the lovely new bride the strangest feeling of déjà vu...and an unnatural fear of the unknown. When she seeks help from her husband's delightful aunt, clues begin to surface about a long ago secret that could reveal a terrifying truth.

Cisneros, Sandra. [*Caramelo*](#). (9-12) When Celaya (or "Lala") Reyes takes a family vacation from Chicago to Mexico City, she begins a journey from girl to young adult and from the present to the past. Generous digressions trace roots and branches on the luxuriant family tree, telling the tales of ancestors, family members, and sometimes even walk-on players. The book's title refers to an unfinished, candy-colored rebozo (shawl) that comes to symbolize both the interconnectedness of all these individual histories and the author's act of weaving them together. (ALA, FCTB)

Collins, Suzanne. [*The Hunger Games*](#). 2008. (8-12) In a post-apocalyptic North America, the new government requires a yearly tribute from each territory: two teenagers. Those two, chosen by lottery, must battle the teens from the other territories to the death on a reality tv show. From the region that used to be Appalachia comes Katniss, who poaches to feed her mother and sister, and Peeta, a baker's son who has secretly been in love with Katniss for years, must go, even though their region hasn't produced a winner in many years. To win this contest they'll have to become stars with killer clothes, killer personas, and killer instincts. Fans will be eager to read sequels: [*Catching Fire*](#) (2009) and [*Mockingjay*](#) (2010).

Conroy, Pat. [*The Lords of Discipline*](#). 1980. (11-12) Drawing on experiences as a cadet at The Citadel, Pat Conroy wrote a fictional story about a boy who attends a southern military college in the 1960s. The story is narrated by Will McLean who tells about the brutality of the plebe system, the challenges and rewards of military school, and the changes happening in the military and larger society during that tumultuous era. (RWC)

Crew, Linda. [*Children of the River*](#). 1991. (8-10) Having fled Cambodia with her aunt's family to escape the Khmer Rouge army, Sundara, 13, struggles to adjust to a new culture without knowledge of the fate of her immediate family. (8)

Cross, Donna Wookfolk. [*Pope Joan*](#). 1996. (9-12) For a thousand years men have denied her existence--Pope Joan, the woman who disguised herself as a man and rose to rule Christianity for two years. Now this compelling novel animates the legend with a portrait of an unforgettable woman who struggles against restrictions her soul cannot accept. When her older brother dies in a Viking attack, the brilliant young Joan assumes his identity and enters a Benedictine monastery where she distinguishes herself as a scholar and healer. Eventually drawn to Rome, she soon becomes enmeshed in a dangerous mix of powerful passion and explosive politics that threatens her life even as it elevates her to the highest throne in the Western world.

Culberson, Sarah and Tracy Trivas. [*A Princess Found: An American Family, an African Chiefdom, and the Daughter Who Connected Them All*](#). 2010. (8-12) As a biracial child adopted into a nurturing white middle-class family in West Virginia, Sarah grew up in a warm and stable home. Like most adopted children, Culberson had questions about her biological roots, and as a biracial child dealt with the additional emotional burden of negotiating the world of racial identity. Culberson begins the journey to find-and embrace-her roots discovering her father is not just alive and living in Africa, but is part of African royalty, making her an African princess. This entertaining, informative, inspiring memoir is told through two narratives taken up in alternating chapters: one is Culberson's story; the other recounts her father's incredible story of falling in love with Culberson's American mother, his struggle to keep his family alive during Sierra Leon's brutal civil war, and the remarkable reunion of father and daughter.

Dallas, Sandra. [*Alice's Tulips*](#). 2000. (8-12) When her husband enlists in Union army, newlywed Alice is left to mind the family farm with her cantankerous mother-in-law. Alice's matter of fact, sometimes funny letters to her sister tell of the uncertainty and daily hardships of women on the home front. Then Alice becomes prime suspect in a local murder. (ALA Best Book)

Danticat, Edwidge. [*The Farming of Bones*](#). 1999. (9-12) A Caribbean holocaust story, when nationalist madness and ethnic hatred turn island neighbors into executioners. Amid the rumors of terror, Annabelle and Sebastien hold on to love, to dignity-and struggle to survive. (FTCB)

De Rosnay, Tatiana. [*Sarah's Key*](#). 2007. (9-12) Julia, an American journalist living in Paris, begins a story about Jewish Parisians who were deported during World War II. In 1942 Jewish families were rounded up, taken to the Velodrome d'Hiver, and moved to Auschwitz where many were killed during the Holocaust. As Julia researches her

story she learns about her personal connections to the family who lived in her apartment 60 years ago and Sarah, the one survivor.

Delany, Elizabeth, Sarah Delany, and Amy Hill Hearth. *Having Our Say*. 1993. (8-12) Two daughters of former slaves tell their stories of fighting racial and gender prejudice during the twentieth century. (8, ILC, ALC)

Dessen, Sarah. *Along for the Ride*. 2009. (8-10) Insomniac Auden is spending the summer with her dad and his new family and working at a boutique. While discovering the carefree teenage pleasures she denies herself living with her mother, Auden helps her new friend Eli as he grieves his friend's death.

Diamant, Anita. *The Red Tent*. 1997. (9-12) This novel is an attempt to breathe life into the story of Jacob's daughter, Dinah, who is known in an episode in the book of Genesis as a woman dishonored by Shalem and the cause of a bloody massacre. Dinah herself narrates this novel, giving a new perspective on herself, Jacob's wives, and her famous half-brother, Joseph. This is a celebration of women and their work: of life, birth, cooking, cleaning, sewing, gardening, and even dying. (WLC)

Du Maurier, Daphne. *Rebecca*. (9-12) With a husband she barely knew, the young bride arrived at this immense estate, only to be inexorably drawn into the life of the first Mrs. de Winter, the beautiful Rebecca, dead but never forgotten...her suite of rooms never touched, her clothes ready to be worn, her servant -- the sinister Mrs. Danvers -- still loyal. And as an eerie presentiment of evil tightened around her heart, the second Mrs. de Winter began her search for the real fate of Rebecca...for the secrets of Manderley. (WLC, BLC, ESL)

Dunant, Sarah. *The Birth of Venus*. (9-12) Dunant's lush and intellectually gripping novel is set in fourteenth-century Florence at the height of the Renaissance. Fifteen-year-old Alessandra Cecchi does not fit the mold of the compliant Florentine woman. She avidly consumes books written in Greek and Latin as she keeps abreast of the art movement, hoping to some day create her own masterwork. The city is teeming with artisans working for the Catholic Church and the ruling Medici family, and sightings of Botticelli in the piazza or the infamous Michelangelo are commonplace incidents in a city that thrives on beauty. (WLC)

Edwards, Kim. *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*. 2006. (10-12) In 1964, when a blizzard forces Dr. David Henry to deliver his own twins, he immediately recognizes that one of them has Down Syndrome and makes a split-second decision that will haunt all their lives forever. He asks his nurse to take the baby away to an institution and to keep her birth a secret. Instead, she disappears into another city to raise the child as her own. (RWC)

Emecheta, Buchi. *The Bride Price*. 1976. (10-12) Aku-nna, a young Ibo girl, and Chike, her teacher and the son of a prosperous former slave, fall in love despite tribal custom forbidding their romance. (WLC)

Erdich, Louise. *Love Medicine*. 1993. (9-12) A multigenerational saga of two extended families who live on and around a Chippewa reservation in North Dakota. Each chapter is narrated in a memorable voice like the one of Lipsha Morrissey, a young man who is believed to have "the touch," with which he attempts to bring his wandering grandfather back to his long-suffering grandmother with a love medicine made from goose hearts. By placing us right inside the heads of her remarkable characters, Erdich allows us to feel the despair that insensitive government policies, poverty, and alcoholism have brought them.

Flagg, Fannie. *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café*. 1988. (9-12) A folksy, funny and endearing story of life in a small town in Alabama in the Depression and in the 1980s. However, the novel's laughter and tears are interrupted by a strange murder and a still stranger trial. (ALC)

Flannery, Sarah. *In Code: A Mathematical Journey*. 2001. (8-12) One teenager's discoveries in the science of cryptography dramatically impact the modern world. (FTCB)

Friesner, Esther. *Nobody's Princess*. 2008. (8-10) Helen of Sparta is a feisty, beautiful young princess who is doted upon by her family, even though her determination to be independent and hunt and fight like her brothers creates various awkward, even dangerous situations for everyone. Using the mythical character of Helen of Troy as inspiration, Friesner focuses on Helen's youth, before she became "the face that launched a thousand ships." You may also enjoy the sequel *Nobody's Prize*.

Gaarder, Jostein. *Sophie's World: A Novel About the History of Philosophy*. 1994. (11-12) Sixteen-year-old Sophie develops a sense of wonder and meaning as she searches for her father, herself, and the answers to the questions of the mysterious Major.

Gaines, Ernest J. . [*A Lesson Before Dying*](#). 1993. (8-12) When Jefferson's attorney states, "I would just as soon put a hog in the electric chair as this," disillusioned teacher Grant Wiggins is sent into the penitentiary to help this slow learner gain a sense of dignity and self-esteem before his execution. (RWC, ALC)

Garden, Nancy. [*Annie on My Mind*](#). 1982. (8-10) When Liza and Annie, two New York City high school seniors meet, they are immediately drawn to each other. Although both young women face conflicts in accepting their feelings of attraction, the story captures the magic and intensity of first love.

Geras, Adele. [*Troy*](#). 2001. (8-12) A city under siege, epic battles and heroes, powerful supernatural forces-it's the story of the Trojan war seen through the eyes of its women in one our oldest stories of the cruelty of war. (8, WLC, ESL)

Glancy, Diane. [*Stone Heart: A Novel of Sacajawea*](#). 2003. (9-12) You are there on the epic journey of Lewis and Clark that opened the west to the call of manifest destiny. Contrasts between the explorers' actual journals and the young Shoshone woman's own records reveal the inherent clash of cultures in this vast new land. (ALC)

Gruen, Sara. [*Water for Elephants*](#). 2006. (8-12) As a young man, Jacob Jankowski was tossed by fate onto a rickety train that was home to the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth. It was the early part of the great Depression, and for Jacob, now ninety, the circus world he remembers was both his salvation and a living hell. A veterinary student just shy of a degree, he was put in charge of caring for the circus menagerie. It was there that he met Marlena, the beautiful equestrian star married to August, the charismatic but twisted animal trainer. And he met Rosie, an untrainable elephant who was the great gray hope for this third-rate traveling show. The bond that grew among this unlikely trio was one of love and trust, and, ultimately, it was their only hope for survival. Alex Award 2006.

Hesse, Hermann. . [*Siddhartha*](#). 1922. (9-12) This classic book is the story of the Buddha. Siddhartha, an Indian prince, leaves home looking for enlightenment. His journey is filled with pleasures and pain he could never have imagined. Through his search for nirvana he finds understanding and eventually peace.

Hosseini, Khaled. [*A Thousand Splendid Suns*](#). 2007. (9-12) This new novel views the plight of Afghanistan during the last half-century through the eyes of two women. Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate. As they endure the ever escalating dangers around them-in their home as well as in the streets of Kabul-they come to form a bond that makes them both sisters and mother-daughter to each other, and that will ultimately alter the course not just of their own lives but of the next generation. With heart-wrenching power and suspense, Hosseini shows how a woman's love for her family can move her to shocking and heroic acts of self-sacrifice, and that in the end it is love, or even the memory of love, that is often the key to survival. You may also read [*The Kite Runner*](#), another very popular novel of Afghanistan. (ILC, WLC)

Hurston, Zora Neale. [*Their Eyes Were Watching God*](#). 1937. (9-12) Fair and long-legged, independent and articulate, Janie Crawford sets out to be her own person -- no mean feat for a black woman in the 1930s. Janie's quest for identity takes her through three marriages and into a journey back to her roots. (ALC)

Ishiguro, Kazuo. [*Never Let Me Go*](#). 2005. (10-12) Kathy grew up in at Hailsham, an experimental boarding school, in a dystopian future. In her world clones are raised to be organ donors with little opportunity for anything else. At this school the clones are treated almost like regular people, encouraged to pursue art and fall in love. But, when they are grown up their lives will still end in the same way as all the other clones. This is the poignant story of people who can never realize their aspirations. (BLC)

Kamkwamba, William and Bryan Mealer. . [*The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*](#). 2009. Young teen William, who taught himself enough physics and engineering to build a windmill and bring electricity to his drought-stricken village, discovered the magic of his Malawi homeland in the miracles of science. This book is a 2010 Alex Award winner

Kidd, Sue Monk. [*The Secret Life of Bees*](#). 2002 (9-12) This sweeping debut novel tells the tale of a 14-year-old white girl named Lily Owen who is raised by the elderly African American Rosaleen after the accidental death of Lily's mother. Following a racial brawl in 1960s Tiburon, SC, Lily and Rosaleen find shelter in a distant town with three black bee-keeping sisters. The sisters and their close-knit community of women live within the confines of racial and gender bondage and yet have an unmistakable strength and serenity associated with the worship of a

black Madonna and the healing power of honey. In a series of unforgettable events, Lily discovers the truth about her mother's past and the certainty that "the hardest thing on earth is choosing what matters." (ILC, ALC)

King, Laurie R. *The Beekeeper's Apprentice, or, on the Segregation of the Queen.* 1994. (8-12) Retired Sherlock Holmes meets his intellectual match in 15-year-old Mary Russell, who challenges him to investigate yet another case. (8)

Klein, Lisa. *Ophelia: A Novel.* 2007. (8-12) Using Hamlet as the basis for her tale, Klein relates the familiar events from the play, with Ophelia as the focal point. Thus, readers see the social-climbing Polonius as a negligent father, the queenly Gertrude as a concerned and observant mentor, the bewildered Hamlet as a fervent lover, and Horatio as a loyal friend who loves Ophelia from afar. But the novel goes beyond the life of the play for, instead of dying, Ophelia secretly weds Hamlet, escapes Elsinore (taking refuge in a convent in France), bears Hamlet's son, and reunites romantically with Horatio to bring the story full circle. (ESL)

Kyle, Aryn. *The God of Animals.* 2007. Alice's sister has eloped with a cowboy, her mother is too depressed to get out of bed, and the family horse farm is failing. How will Alice cope with so much trouble while she feels so alone? This coming-of-age novel is all about lies, love, and horses.

Lang, Ji-Li Jiang. *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution.* 1997 (8-10) A young Chinese girl must make difficult choices when the government urges her to repudiate her ancestors and inform on her parents. (ESL)

Leavitt, Martine *Keturah and Lord Death* 2006. (9-12) The romance is intense, the writing is startling, and the story is spellbinding--and it is as difficult to turn away from as the tales beautiful Keturah tells to the people of her village, Tide-by-Rood. But one day Keturah must use her storytelling skills with quite a different audience. Lost and hungry after following a stately hart through the forest, Keturah encounters Lord Death, who is ready to take her. Like Scheherazade, Keturah spins a story that she leaves unfinished and extracts from Lord Death a promise that if she finds her true love in a day, she can go free. But Lord Death is falling in love with her, and as the villagers begin to sense her alliance with this horrifying figure, her life twists and turns on itself.

Lewis, C.S. *The Screwtape Letters.* (8-12) Screwtape is an experienced devil. His nephew Wormwood is just beginning his demonic career and has been assigned to secure the damnation of a young man who has just become a Christian. In this humorous exchange, C. S. Lewis delves into moral questions about good v. evil, temptation, repentance, and grace. Through this wonderful tale, the reader emerges with a better knowledge of what it means to live a good, honest life. (8, WLC)

Lloyd, Saci. *The Carbon Diaries, 2015.* 2009. (8-12) Laura, a London teenager in 2015, keeps a diary of her life. Because climate change is causing disasters all over the world, Britain rations carbon usage, changing Laura's life in many ways. The environmental stresses add to the chaos in Laura's family, but life as a teenager is still life as a teenager. This book is an exciting and scary look at the near future.

Lockhart, E. *The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks.* 2008. (8-12) Everyone underestimates Frankie: her parents, friends, boyfriend, and school. After observing the power structures at her boarding school, Frankie decides to make a statement. She secretly takes over the secret all-boys old boys club. How she uses her new-found power is the stuff of legends.

Lord, Bette B. *Spring Moon: A Novel of China.* 1981. (9-12) A heart wrenching cultural and personal history of Twentieth-century China in transition. History unfolds through the experiences five generations of an upper-class family with special focus on Spring Moon, who though intelligent and educated, suffers the bound feet and other traditional bonds of Chinese women, and whose rebellious daughter takes part in the Long March of 1934-35. (WLC)

Mackler, Carolyn. *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Round Things.* 2003. (8-10) Feeling like she does not fit in with the other members of her family, who are all thin, brilliant, and good-looking, fifteen-year-old Virginia tries to deal with her self-image, her first physical relationship, and her disillusionment with some of the people closest to her. (ILC)

Maguire, Gregory. *Wicked.* 1996. (10-12) When Dorothy triumphed over the Wicked Witch of the West in L. Frank Baum's classic tale, we heard only her side of the story. But what about her arch-nemesis, the mysterious witch? Where did she come from? How did she become so wicked? And what is the true nature of evil? Gregory Maguire creates a fantasy world so rich and vivid that we will never look at Oz the same way again. Wicked is about

a land where animals talk and strive to be treated like first-class citizens, Munchkinlanders seek the comfort of middle-class stability and the Tin Man becomes a victim of domestic violence. And then there is the little green-skinned girl named Elphaba, who will grow up to be the infamous Wicked Witch of the West, a smart, prickly and misunderstood creature who challenges all our preconceived notions about the nature of good and evil. Fans will enjoy other books in the series: [Son of a Witch](#) (2005) and [A Lion Among Men](#) (2008).

Markandaya, Kamala. [Nectar in a Sieve](#). 1954. (9-12) Married at the age of 12 to a tenant farmer she has never seen but comes to love, a simple peasant girl, Rukmani, struggles quietly and courageously against poverty and natural disasters in a changing rural India. (WLC)

Mathabane, Mark. [Miriam's Song: A Memoir](#). Nonfiction. (9-12) The powerful memoir of a young black woman coming of age in South Africa amid the violence of apartheid, beautifully written by her brother, the bestselling author of [Kaffir Boy](#).

Maynard, Joyce. [The Usual Rules: A Novel](#). 2003. (8-10) Wendy, the 13-year-old heroine lives in a happy, haphazard Brooklyn household with her dancer/secretary mom, her jazz musician stepfather, and her eccentric little brother. Life for Wendy is fraught with the usual teen angst until September 11, when her mom heads off to work at the World Trade Center and never comes home.

McCafferty, Megan. [Sloppy Firsts](#). 2001. (8-12) When her best friend, Hope, moves away from Pineville, New Jersey, 16-year-old Jessica Darling is devastated. Jessica is a fish out of water at school, a stranger at home, and now -- with the only person with whom she could really communicate gone -- more lost than ever. How is she supposed to deal with the boy-and-shopping-crazy girls at school, her dad's obsession with her track meets, and her nonexistent love life? *Sloppy Firsts* is an insightful, true-to-life look at Jessica's predicament, from the dark days following Hope's departure to her hopelessly mixed-up feelings about the intelligent and mysterious bad-boy who works his way into her life.

McEwan, Ian. [Atonement](#). 2002. (10-12) On a hot summer day in 1935, thirteen-year-old Briony Tallis witnesses a moment's flirtation between her older sister, Cecilia, and Robbie Turner, the son of a servant and Cecilia's childhood friend. But Briony's incomplete grasp of adult motives--together with her precocious literary gifts--brings about a crime that will change all their lives. The novel then follows that crime's repercussions through the chaos and carnage of World War II and into the close of the twentieth century.

McKinley, Robin. [Beauty](#). 1979. (8-12) The plot follows that of the renowned legend Beauty and the Beast. Beauty selflessly agrees to inhabit the Beast's castle to spare her father's life. Beauty's gradual acceptance of the Beast and the couple's deepening trust and affection are amplified in novel form. Robin McKinley's writing has the flavor of another century, and Beauty heightens the authenticity as a reliable and competent narrator. (ESL)

Miller, Kirsten. [Kiki Strike](#). 2006. (8-10) Life will never be the same for Ananka Fishbein after she ventures into an enormous sinkhole near her New York City apartment. A million rats, delinquent Girl Scouts out for revenge, and a secret city below the streets of Manhattan combine in this remarkable novel about a darker side of New York City you have only just begun to know about...

Moody, Anne. [Coming of Age in Mississippi: An Autobiography](#). 1968. (8-12) Living in two-room shacks in rural Mississippi and forced into menial jobs for little pay, Anne Moody learned at an early age the degradation of being African American. (ALC)

Mortenson, Greg. [Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time.](#) 2006. (8-12) Nonfiction. In 1993 Mortenson failed to claim K2, the world's second tallest mountain. He spent seven weeks after the attempt recovering in a village in Pakistan. In return for their hospitality he built the town's first school. Since then he has continued building schools and promoting education throughout rural Pakistan and Afghanistan. Mortenson's inspirational story shows how one person can make a difference in the world. Mortenson's 2009 follow-up [Stone into Schools](#) is also recommended. (WLC)

Nye, Naomi Shihab. [Habibi](#). 1997. (8-10) Fourteen-year-old Liyana loves to hear her father call her habibi -- Arabic for "darling." But she is not prepared for her family's move from St. Louis to Jerusalem. This provocative novel builds a bridge to the Arab world, introduces a family readers won't soon forget, and offers a hope for peace. (8, ILC)

Otsuka, Julie. [*When the Emperor Was Divine*](#). 2002. (9-12) This heartbreaking, bracingly unsentimental debut describes in poetic detail the travails of a Japanese family living in an internment camp during World War II. Spare, intimate, arrestingly understated, *When the Emperor Was Divine* is a haunting evocation of a family in wartime and an unmistakably resonant lesson for our times.

Park, Linda Sue. [*When My Name was Keoko*](#). 2004. (8-10) Sun-hee and her older brother Tae-yul are proud of their Korean heritage. Yet they live their lives under Japanese occupation. All students must read and write in Japanese and no one can fly the Korean flag. Hardest of all is when the Japanese Emperor forces all Koreans to take Japanese names. Sun-hee and Tae-yul become Keoko and Nobuo. Korea is torn apart by their Japanese invaders during World War II. Everyone must help with war preparations, but it doesn't mean they are willing to defend Japan. Tae-yul is about to risk his life to help his family, while Sun-hee stays home guarding life-and-death secrets. (ILC)

Pausch, Randy. [*The Last Lecture*](#). 2008. (8-12) Professors give talks called "The Last Lecture" to summarize their life's wisdom for their students as if it was their last opportunity to pass on that knowledge. Randy Pausch gave a lecture he called "Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams" after being diagnosed with terminal cancer at age 46. This book is an expansion on that lecture and his legacy for his children, students, and the world. While you read you may wish to view lecture he delivered at Carnegie Mellon on [YouTube](#).

Picoult, Jodi. [*Nineteen Minutes*](#). 2007. (9-12) Peter Houghton, an alienated teen who has been bullied for years by the popular crowd, brings weapons to his high school in Sterling, N.H., one day and opens fire, killing 10 people. Flashbacks reveal how bullying caused Peter to retreat into a world of violent computer games. Alex Cormier, the judge assigned to Peter's case, tries to maintain her objectivity as she struggles to understand her daughter, Josie, one of the surviving witnesses of the shooting.

Pierce, Tamora. [*Trickster's Choice*](#). 2003. (8-10) This first book in the fantasy series *Daughter of the Lioness* follows the adventures of Alianne. She wants to be a spy, but when her parents say no the warrior princess sails away in her boat. Unfortunately, she is captured by pirates, but Aly can take care of herself. She strikes a deal with a god, gets involved in a war, has some romance with a magical crow/man, and fulfills a prophecy. The sequel, [*Trickster's Queen*](#), concludes Alianne's story. (8)

Rosoff, Meg. [*The Bride's Farewell*](#). 2009. (9-12). Pell Ridley runs away on the morning of her wedding taking only her beloved white horse, Jack. Pell's unconventional journey teaches her not only how to survive, but also how to love bravely and be true to herself. This book is a 2010 Alex Award winner.

Sasson, Jean. [*Princess: A True Story of Life behind the Veil in Saudi Arabia*](#). 1992. (8-12) A Saudi Arabian princess describes the inequities for women in her country, discussing arranged marriages for child brides, the murder of female babies, and her own life in the shadow of men.

Satrapi, Marjane. [*Persepolis*](#). 2002. (9-12) Growing up in Iran wasn't all that bad, or all that different, except that Marjane wanted to be a prophet when she grew up. Dramatic black-and-white illustrations tell her story.

Sayer, Dorothy. [*The Nine Tailors*](#). 1934. (9-12) In this English mystery sleuth Lord Peter Wimsey solves a mystery involving murder and emeralds. (BLC)

See, Linda. [*Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*](#). 2006. (9-12) In nineteenth-century China, in a remote Hunan county, a girl named Lily, at the tender age of seven, is paired with a laotong, "old same," in an emotional match that will last a lifetime. The laotong, Snow Flower, introduces herself by sending Lily a silk fan on which she's painted a poem in nu shu, a unique language that Chinese women created in order to communicate in secret, away from the influence of men. As the years pass, Lily and Snow Flower send messages on fans, compose stories on handkerchiefs, reaching out of isolation to share their hopes, dreams, and accomplishments. Together, they endure the agony of foot-binding, and reflect upon their arranged marriages, shared loneliness, and the joys and tragedies of motherhood. The two find solace, developing a bond that keeps their spirits alive. But when a misunderstanding arises, their deep friendship suddenly threatens to tear apart.

Smith, Lee. [*Mrs. Darcy and the Blue-Eyed Stranger*](#). 2010 (8-12) Award-winning Southern writer Lee Smith's latest book is a collection of short stories. Fourteen beautiful, imaginative, and funny stories are included. Smith's previous novels and short story collections are also recommended.

Sones, Sonya. [*What My Mother Doesn't Know*](#). 2001. (8-10) Drawing on the recognizable cadences of teenage speech, this novel in verse poignantly captures the tingle and heartache of being young and boy-crazy. The author keenly portrays ninth-grader Sophie's trajectory of lusty crushes and disillusionment whether she is gazing at Dylan's "smoldery dark eyes" or dancing with a mystery man to music that "is slow/ and/ saxophony." Best friends Rachel and Grace provide anchoring friendships for Sophie as she navigates her home life as an only child with a distant father and a soap opera-devotee mother whose "shrieking whips around inside me/ like a tornado." Fans will enjoy the sequel - also in verse - as told by Sophie's boyfriend: [*What My Girlfriend Doesn't Know*](#) (2007).

Struther, Jan. [*Mrs. Miniver*](#). 1939. (9-12) From 1937-1939 the London Times published a series of short stories about Mrs. Miniver, one every two weeks. These stories became symbolic of English life between the world wars. In her subtle, quiet way Mrs. Miniver is an Everywoman expressing the thoughts, hopes and worries of an ordinary upper-middle-class housewife. (BLC)

Thom, James Alexander. [*Follow the River*](#). 1996. (9-12) Mary Ingles was twenty-three, married, and pregnant, when Shawnee Indians invaded peaceful Virginia settlement, killed the men and women, then took her captive. For months, she lived with them, unbroken, until she escaped, and followed a thousand mile trail to freedom--an extraordinary story of a pioneer woman who risked her life to return to her people.(ALC, ESL)

Von Drehle, David. [*Triangle: The Fire That Changed America*](#). (9-12) Beyond the terror, destruction and loss of life, this event changed the landscape of our cities and the lives of working people everywhere. (FTCB)

Walker, Sally. [*Written in Bone: Buried Lives of Jamestown and Colonial Maryland*](#). 2009. Nonfiction (8-12) History buffs and aspiring archeologists will be enthralled this book about burial site excavations of colonial Chesapeake Bay area settlements. Walker explains through text and illustrations forensic procedures and findings that give readers a new understanding of colonial life.

Walls, Jeanette. [*The Glass Castle*](#). 2005 (9-12) "Being homeless is an adventure," Walls's mom used to say. In her extraordinary memoir, Walls recalls her nomadic life with surprising affection—though she would not want to relive it. The title, which derives from her father's dream house, serves as an apt metaphor for the Walls' fragility. Yet Walls sheds no tears nor succumbs to self-pity—she probably learned early on they would get her nowhere. Instead of condemning her parents' foibles, she unblinkingly examines how they transformed hardship into family romance and adventure. Sharing incredible, painful experiences in no-nonsense prose. (ESL)

Westerfield, Scott. [*Uglies*](#). 2005. Tally is about to turn sixteen, and she can't wait. Not for her license -- for turning pretty. In Tally's world, your sixteenth birthday brings an operation that turns you from a repellent ugly into a stunningly attractive pretty and catapults you into a high-tech paradise where your only job is to have a really great time. In just a few weeks Tally will be there. But Tally's new friend Shay isn't sure she wants to be pretty. She'd rather risk life on the outside. When Shay runs away, Tally learns about a whole new side of the pretty world - - and it isn't very pretty. The authorities offer Tally the worst choice she can imagine: find her friend and turn her in, or never turn pretty at all. The choice Tally makes changes her world forever. Other books in the series are [*Pretties*](#), [*Specials*](#), and [*Extras*](#).

Wright, Richard.[*Black Boy*](#). 1945. Nonfiction (9-12) Wright's autobiography is one of his most famous and celebrated works. In the Jim Crow south Wright grew up in poverty without any stable home. He taught himself to read and write and worked saving money to move north. His reactions to the racism surrounding him were central to his formation as an artist. (ALC)

Zusak, Marcus. [*The Book Thief*](#). 2006. (9-12) Set during World War II in Germany, Markus Zusak's groundbreaking new novel is the story of Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich. Liesel scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist--books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement before he is marched to Dachau. This is an unforgettable story about the ability of books to feed the soul. (WLC)

English teachers recommended books for students entering each class. Codes follow for those classes.

8th grade English (8)

Introduction to Literature and Composition (ILC)

World Literature and Composition (WLC)

Reading and Writing for College (RWC)

American Literature and Composition (ALC)

British Literature and Composition (BLC)

English as a Second Language (ESL)