

Summer Reading 2012 -- Book List
As chosen by teachers in the English Department of Thornton Academy

Recommended by Ms. Barklow:

<p>Title: <i>Foxfire: Confessions of A Girl Gang</i> Author: Joyce Carol Oates Description: The time is the 1950s. "The place is a blue-collar town in upstate New York, where five high school girls are joined in a gang dedicated to pride, power, and vengeance on a world that seems made to denigrate and destroy them." An edgy novel about friendship, coming-of-age and defining yourself in a world that sometimes ignores your value. This is one of novels that helped shaped my worldview, I still re-read it.</p>	<p>Title: <i>The Stand</i> Author: Stephen King Description: My favorite Stephen King novel, " a mutated strain of the flu that will wipe out 99 percent of humanity within a few weeks. The survivors who remain are scared, bewildered, and in need of a leader." A story of survival in post-apocalyptic world, if you are a fan of King, <i>The Hunger Games</i>, <i>The Walking Dead</i> or dystopian literature, this is the epic to read.</p>	<p>Title: <i>Shampoo Planet</i> Author: Douglas Coupland Description: A coming of age story focused on a superficial narrator who spends a chapter naming the brands of his hair care products, <i>Shampoo Planet</i> is the rich and dazzling point where two worlds collide -- those of 1960s parents and their 1990s offspring, "Global Teens." Raised in a hippie commune, Tyler Johnson is an ambitious twenty-year-old Reagan youth, living in a decaying northwest city and aspiring to a career with the corporation whose offices his mother once firebombed.</p>
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Recommended by Mrs. Poulin:

<p>Title: <i>Ship Breaker</i> Author: Bacigalupi, Paolo Description: In a futuristic world, a teenage boy scavenges oil tankers for a living, but when he finds a ship with a girl in the wreckage, he has to decide if he should strip the ship of its wealth or rescue the girl. Winner of the 2011 Printz Award for excellence in young adult literature.</p>	<p>Title: <i>Anything But Typical</i> Author: Baskin, Nora Raleigh Description: An incredible story told entirely from the point of view of an autistic boy who is a creative writing whiz.</p>	<p>Title: <i>Out of My Mind</i> Author: Draper, Sharon Description: A brilliant student with cerebral palsy discovers a technological device that will allow her to speak for the first time.</p>
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Recommended by Ms. Hefler:

<p>Title: <i>Wicked: The Life & Times of the Wicked Witch of the West</i> Author: Gregory Maguire Description: "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?" -- www.amazon.com</p>	<p>Title: <i>American Born Chinese</i> Author: Gene Luen Yang & Lark Pien Description: "This graphic novel tells the story of three apparently unrelated characters whose lives and stories come together with an unexpected twist. The story is action-packed and culminates in an astonishing climax. <i>American Born Chinese</i> is a 2006 National Book Award Finalist for Young People's Literature and the winner of the 2007 Eisner Award for Best Graphic Album." -- www.amazon.com</p>	<p>Title: <i>Q & A</i> Author: Vikas Swarup Description: This is the novel that the movie <i>Slumdog Millionaire</i> was based on. "The novel opens in a jail cell in Mumbai, India, where Ram Mohammad Thomas is being held after correctly answering all twelve questions on India's biggest quiz show, 'Who Will Win a Billion?' Ram explains to his lawyer how episodes in his life gave him the answer to each question." -- www.amazon.com</p>
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Recommended by Ms. Timberlake:

Title: *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*
Author: Jean-Dominique Bauby
Description: Bauby was editor of French Elle magazine until he had a massive stroke that left him completely paralyzed and unable to speak, a victim of “locked-in syndrome.” Miraculously, Bauby found a way to compose this memoir and allow his readers to experience his world.

Title: *East of Eden*
Author: John Steinbeck
Description: This is the story of three generations and two love triangles, and is a timeless story. East of Eden is an epic novel full of good and evil, love and hatred, failure and redemption. Find out why this is Ms. Timberlake’s favorite novel.

Title: *A Thousand Splendid Suns*
Author: Khaled Hosseini
Description: This is the breathtaking story of two generations of women struggling to survive and find happiness in Afghanistan--from the Soviet invasion to the Taliban’s reign to post-Taliban rebuilding. A page-turner!

Recommended by Mr. Mitchell:

Title: *Dove*
Author: Robin Lee Graham
Description: A first hand account of the youngest person to sail around the world single-handedly. In the book, Graham describes his contempt for his school and society in general. He takes to the ocean initially to escape but finds adventure and love along the way.

Title: *The Alchemist*
Author: Paulo Coelho
Description: This story, dazzling in its powerful simplicity and inspiring wisdom, is about an Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago who travels from his homeland in Spain to the Egyptian desert in search of a treasure buried in the Pyramids. The book is an eternal testament to the transforming power of our dreams and the importance of listening to our hearts.

Title: *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*
Author: John Perkins
Description: For many years Perkins worked for an international consulting firm where his main job was to convince less developed countries around the world to accept multibillion-dollar loans for infrastructure projects and to see to it that most of this money ended up at United States engineering and construction companies. This book, which many people warned Perkins not to write, is a blistering attack on a little-known phenomenon that has had dire consequences on both the victimized countries and the U.S.

Recommended by Mr. Grasso:

Title: *Sophie’s World*
Author: Jostein Gaardner
Description: This book blends fiction and history in the form of a story about a 14 year old girl and her quest to understand more about philosophy. By the end, the reader is interested in both.

Title: *I thought my father was God*
Author: Edited by Paul Auster
Description: These stories, compiled from the National Story Project show what every student should learn--that they each have a story to tell. Told in brief excerpts--this book is a quick read.

Title: *A Thousand Acres*
Author: Jane Smiley
Description: A Pulitzer Prize winning story of splitting up the family farm once the family’s father has passed away. A very clever re-telling of Shakespeare’s King Lear. Awesome.

Recommended by Mrs. Browne:

Title: *The God of Animals*
Author: Aryn Kyle
Description: Set on a run-down horse ranch in Colorado, this is a haunting coming of age story about a 12 year old girl who struggles with her family’s problems. Horses, love, death, class in America, this debut novel covers wide reaching themes with astonishing beauty.

Title: *A Town Like Alice*
Author: Nevil Shute
Description: This is sweeping WWII tale of love & war that follows a young Englishwoman’s horrific experience of a 7-month death march through the jungles of Malaysia to her later personal and financial triumphs in the Australian outback. An inspirational, globe-trotting story that swirls with romance, heroism, & the human spirit at its very best.

Title: *The Killer Angels*
Author: Michael Shaara
Description: The American Civil War comes to life in this historical fiction selection that tells the story of three days of the Battle of Gettysburg. The novel is character driven and features the perspective of different protagonists. Maine is prominently represented in the book with Colonel Joshua Chamberlain leading the 20th Maine Volunteer Infantry Regiment in the famous battle of Little Round Top.

Recommended by Mrs. Glidden:

Title: *Stormbreaker*
Author: Anthony Horowitz
Description: My son loved this book and its sequels. This is the first in the series of books that follows 14-year old "reluctant spy" Alex Rider during his quest to uncover the circumstances behind his guardian and uncle's death. If you are looking for a fast paced story that focuses on plot rather than character development, this is the book for you. One reviewer describes it as "James Bond for the Harry Potter Set." If you are a boy who gets bored with reading, this might just change your mind.

Title: *Secret History*
Author: Donna Tartt
Description: Part bildungsroman, part psychological thriller, part social satire, this novel follows the journey of "lower-class" narrator Richard Hagen from California to a small elite college in Vermont. This is a well-written that has richly textured characters. It is intellectual and philosophical, a book that will make you ponder the capacity for evil within us all. Greek and Latin scholars will love the allusions in this novel. Secret History is definitely a modern classic and a book I loved so much that I read it twice.

Title: *Cutting For Stone*
Author: Abraham Verghese
Description: I have to admit that I am only halfway through this book, but I love it so much and it came so highly recommended that it must be on my list. Marion and Shiva are twin brothers born of a secret union between an Indian nun and a British surgeon. After she dies in childbirth and the surgeon disappears, the twins are raised in an Ethiopian mission hospital. Spanning years and traveling from Addis Ababa to New York City and back, Cutting For Stone is a story of love and betrayal in a land on the brink of revolution. Students with an interest in science and medicine will be drawn to the medical aspects in this novel.

Recommended by Ms. Lasante:

Title: *Eagle Blue*
Author: Michael D'Orso
Description: A true story that follows the journey of a high school basketball team from deep in the Alaskan wilderness. Winners of 6 consecutive championships, you meet the team, the coaches and the families who live for the pride and identity of their culture and their team. Think Into the Wild meets Hoosiers!

Title: *Tuesdays with Morrie*
Author: Mitch Albom
Description: Albom becomes reunited with his old teacher, friend, and "coach" at a time when Albom, a successful sportswriter, was struggling to define his own life and career. Morrie, on the other hand, after a rich life filled, is dying from Lou Gehrig's disease. Albom visits Morrie in the final months of his life and writes an inspirational story of friendship and admiration.

Title:
Author: Jodi Picoult
Description: Honestly, I just can't choose one. Anything by this best-selling contemporary American novelist comes highly recommended. She touches upon human relationships in all its complexity in a fine, detailed way that brings the reader in. Always a page-turner, you just cannot put her books down!

Recommended by Ms. Durkee

Title: *Night*
Author: Elie Wiesel
Description: This is a short memoir of a the final year of the Holocaust - a year which the author spent in Auschwitz. This memoir begs the question: to what extent are we witnesses of history and messengers to humanity? Though this is admittedly a sad read, what prevails for me is humankind's amazing resiliency.

Title: *The Pearl*
Author: John Steinbeck
Description: Like his father and grandfather before him, Kino is a poor diver. Then, on a day like any other, Kino emerges from the sea with a pearl as large as a sea gull's egg, as "perfect as the moon." With the pearl comes hope, and the promise of comfort and of security. A story of classic simplicity, based on a Mexican folktale, **The Pearl** explores the secrets of man's nature, the darkest depths of evil, and the luminous possibilities of love.

Title: *The House On Mango Street*
Author: Sandra Cisneros
Description: A a short fictional work told in a series of vignettes – sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous – it is the story of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Though this text is seemingly simple to read, it invites a sophisticated analysis of and conversation with both the author and the main character.

Recommended by: Mr. Arenstam

Title: *The Giver*
Author: Lois Lowry
Description: Sometimes you are lucky enough to find a book you can read over and over again. For me, this is one of those books. Jonas's world is perfect. Everything is under control. There is no war or fear or pain. There are no choices. Every person is assigned a role in the Community. When Jonas turns twelve, he is singled out to receive special training from The Giver. The Giver alone holds the memories of the true pain and pleasure of life. Now, it is time for Jonas to receive the truth. Hmmmm....

Title: *Bradbury Stories: 100 of His Most Celebrated Tales*
Author: Ray Bradbury
Description: Who doesn't like a far-fetched fantasy tale of the future. Ray Bradbury was certainly a master at telling these type of stories. Spanning six decades of his astonishing career, here is a retrospective collection of 100 magnificent stories that confirms this literary genius's status as a master of short fiction.

Title: *Snow in August*
Author: Pete Hamill
Description: A story of New York City shortly after the end of World War II. The novel was written by a lifelong resident of the city whose love and knowledge of the area can be felt on every page. Set in a working-class Brooklyn neighborhood in 1947, this poignant tale revolves around two of the most endearing characters in recent fiction: an 11-year-old Irish Catholic boy named Michael Devlin and Rabbi Judah Hirsch, a refugee from Prague.

Recommended by: Ms. Russo

Title: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*
Author: Sherman Alexie
Description: A great story about finding your place in the world you live in. "This is the story of Junior, a teen growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the rez to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot. Based on a true story, this book is one about growing up and fitting in." (Amazon)

Title: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
Author: Mark Twain
Description: A classic story that helps us understand our history and heritage as well as experiencing Twain's unique style. "Climb aboard the raft with Huck and Jim and drift away from the "sivilized" life and into a world of adventure, excitement, danger, and self-discovery. Huck's shrewd and humorous narrative is complemented by lyrical descriptions of the Mississippi valley and a sparkling cast of memorable characters." (Amazon)

Title: *The Lovely Bones*
Author: Alice Sebold
Description: A heartbreaking but gripping story of a young girl, the injustice she suffers and her own revenge. "My name was Salmon, like the fish; first name, Susie. I was fourteen when I was murdered on December 6, 1973. "This is the story of Susie Salmon, who is adjusting to her new home as she is watching life on earth continue without her -- her friends trading rumors about her disappearance, her killer trying to cover his tracks, her grief-stricken family unraveling. This story is a tale filled with hope, humor, suspense, even joy." (Amazon)

Recommended by: Mr. Koch

Title: *Watership Down*
Author: Richard Adams
Description: We all have books that have transformed us in one way or another. When I moved schools, this was one of the books I had to read over the summer before my ninth grade year. I consider it the single most significant book I've ever read. In middle school, I really wasn't much of a reader, but this heart-wrenching story of adventure so captivated me at that age, I discovered how absolutely wonderful reading could be.

Title: *A River Runs Through It*
Author: Norman Maclean
Description: Part memoir, part philosophical exploration of growing up, growing old, the value of friends, family, and the significance of place in our lives, this wonderful contemplation has so many beautiful nuggets of how to consider the world around us that you can read a bit, put it down for a week, and just spend time thinking about what it all means.

Title: *In Cold Blood*
Author: Truman Capote
Description: A gripping, true account of a bloody home invasion on a Shakespearean scale. Interviews with the murderers and intimate examination into their relationship and motivations make for a great summer read.

Recommended by: Mrs. Hall

Title: *The Hungry Ocean*

Author: Linda Greenlaw

Description: Mainer Linda Greenlaw is known as one of the best sea captains on the East Coast. Here she offers an adventure-soaked memoir of her experiences. It is full of salty characters, humor and excitement.

"A beautiful book...a story of triumph, of a woman not only making it but succeeding at the highest level in one of the most male-dominated and most dangerous professions."

--Douglas Whynott

Title: *Room*

Author: Emma Donoghue

Description: This clever new novel is written from the perspective of five-year-old Jack who has lived in one room with his mother for his entire life. His mother manages to make the room (which has been her prison for seven years) expand to be a world of imagination, love, and possibility.

Title: *The Good Good Pig*

Author: Sy Montgomery

Description: This non-fiction story charts the relationship between the author and a pig. When she brought the tiny orphan piglet home in a box, she never imagined he would grow to be 750 pounds and have such an enormous influence on her personal life, her understanding of what it means to be human and her connection to others in her community. Sy Montgomery is a noted naturalist who has travelled the world researching animals, but what she learned on her own farm is so tender and funny it will make any reader think of animals and themselves in a new light.