

Dear Parents,

Students' success in high school and college depends on their thoughtful, critical reading. During the school year, we monitor students' reading through quizzes, exams, essays, oral presentations, reader response journals, supplemental research tasks and text-related projects. Through both small group and broad-based class discussions, we allow students to share their perceptions of their reading. During the summer, we ask you to encourage your children to read. Just as all artists and athletes need to practice year-round if they are to excel, so too do our students need to stay intellectually in shape and in training over the summer if their transition back to school in September is to be smooth. Beyond the academic benefits, of course, we hope our students enjoy reading on many levels--as adventure, enlightenment, self-discovery, playful escape, etc. The true value of reading is in its ability to nourish the soul.

Accompanying this letter you will find a list of titles which we in the English department believe students may enjoy over the summer. While none of the books is specifically required, we strongly recommend that students read one or more of the titles suggested for their year. We also invite *you* to read one or more of the books. In doing so you would be sharing a worthwhile experience with your child, while demonstrating how important you feel reading is. As with most worthwhile pursuits, the habit and pleasure of independent reading need to be cultivated.

Sincerely,

James P. Sheehan
English Department Chair

RECOMMENDED FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 9:

Bray, Libba. *A Great and Terrible Beauty*.

A vision that foretells her mother's death leads a Victorian girl into a world of mystery and intrigue.

Doctorow, Cody. *Little Brother*. Computer geek bypasses school's security system, is mistaken for a terrorist, and flights a battle against surveillance.

Holt, Kimberly Willis. *When Zachary Beaver Came To Town*.

Comic novel about a town that has a memorable--and at first disagreeable--summer visitor.

Klaus, David. *You Don't Know Me*.

Teenager creates alternative realities in his mind as he deals with challenges at school and at home.

Lynch, Chris *Vietnam #1: I Pledge Allegiance*.

Morris, Rudi, Ivan, and Beck are best friends for life. So when one of them is drafted into the Vietnam War, the others sign up, too. Although Morris means to keep his friends safe, he may have his hands full just watching out for himself.

Lue, Marie. *Legend*. In a nation perpetually at war with its neighbors, fifteen-year-old June is a prodigy being groomed for success in the Republic's highest military circles. Born into the slums, fifteen-year-old Day is the country's most wanted criminal. A shocking murder brings these two together on a suspenseful adventure.

Meyer, Marissa. *Cinder: Book One of the Lunar Chronicles*

A terrific and unusual retelling of the Cinderella story in futuristic China.

RECOMMENDED FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 10:

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

Basketball, cartoons, friendship, and humor help a young Indian teen on his journey to adulthood.

Allende, Isabel. *City of the Beasts*.

Fifteen-year-old Alexander Cold is about to join his fearless grandmother in the wilds of South America on a mission to document the legendary Yeti of the Amazon known as "the Beast." Many secrets await them in the unexplored wilderness, as Alex and his new friend Nadia discover.

Charbonneau, Joelle. *The Testing*.

All Cia can think about—hope for—is whether she'll be chosen for The Testing, a United Commonwealth program that selects the best and brightest new graduates to become possible leaders of the slowly revitalizing post-war civilization. When Cia is chosen, her father finally tells her about his own nightmarish half-memories of The Testing--just before she herself bravely heads off to Tosu City, far away from friends and family, perhaps forever.

Connolly, John. *The Book of Lost Things*.

Stories and fairy tales assume a strange reality after an adolescent experiences the death of a loved one.

Crutcher, Chris. *Deadline*. When eighteen year old Ben Wolfe learns he has only a year to live, he makes some difficult decisions.

Frayn, Michael. *Spies*. Two English boys during World War II secretly watch one of their mothers, who they become convinced is harboring a German spy.

Grogan, John. *Marley and Me*.

Though Marley is a trouble-maker who hardly fits the good-dog Labrador retriever stereotype, his family grows to love him.

Kirn, Walter. *Thumbsucker*. Young Justin Cobb experiences humor, frustration, and affection in his interactions with his eccentric family.

Shusterman, Neal. *Unholy*. (sequel to *Unwind*)

Thanks to Connor, Lev, and Risa and their high-profile revolt at Happy Jack Harvest Camp—people can no longer turn a blind eye to unwinding. However, unwinding has become big business, and there are powerful political and corporate interests that want to see it continue. Will these three friends be successful this time?

Yoano, Brenna. *Paper Valentine*

Someone in Hannah Wagner's peaceful suburban community is killing girls. Her best friend Lillian died six months ago, and Lillian's ghost is haunting her bedroom, pushing her to investigate the mysterious string of murders. With the entire city in a panic, Hannah soon finds herself drawn into a world of ghost girls and horrifying secrets.

RECOMMENDED FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 11

Carriger, Gail *Etiquette & Espionage*

It's one thing to learn to curtsy properly. It's quite another to learn to curtsy and throw a knife at the same time. Welcome to Finishing School.

Chevalier, Tracy. *Girl With A Pearl Earring*.

Servant in the house of the great artist Vermeer becomes an unexpected source of inspiration for his work.

Dickey, R. A. *Throwing Strikes*.

The inspiring story of how knuckleballer R. A. Dickey became one of the game's best pitchers. He had humble beginnings, and as a child kept a terrible secret. Dickey went on to pitch in the Olympics while at the University of Tennessee, but his Major League hopes took a downturn when an X-ray revealed a major problem with his throwing arm. It seemed his future in baseball was over before it even began.

Forman, Gayle. *Just One Day*.

Allyson Healey's life is exactly like her suitcase—packed, planned, ordered. Then on the last day of her three-week post-graduation European tour, she meets Willem. A free-spirited, roving actor, Willem is everything she's not, and when he invites her to abandon her plans and come to Paris with him, Allyson says yes. This uncharacteristic decision leads to a day of risk and romance that will transform Allyson's life.

Perrotta, Tom. *Joe College*.

A college junior trying to balance his New Jersey working class roots with his Yale education unexpectedly tangles with Mafia thugs.

Polly, Matthew. *American Shaolin*.

Ninety-eight pound weakling turns his nerdy self into a fighting machine by traveling to China in this "funny, offbeat tale."

Robinson, Kin Stanley. *Fifty Degrees Below*.

Novel about the effects of global warming and ecological disaster.

Satrapi, Marjane. *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*.

Graphic novel that tells the story of an Iranian girl's life during the Islamic Revolution.

Tinti, Hannah. *The Good Thief*.

The adventures of a one-armed orphan who becomes a thief in nineteenth century England.

Zailckas, Koren. *Smashed*. A memoir that chronicles a young woman's recovery from alcoholism.

Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*.

During World War II, a young European girl finds comfort for her nightmares in the books she steals.

RECOMMENDED FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 12:

Ayers, Chris. *War Reporting for Cowards*.

Reporter at the London Times is unexpectedly sent to cover the war in Iraq.

Danticat, Edwidge. *Eyes, Breath, Memory*.

Girl leaves Haiti to live in New York City where she grows into womanhood while struggling with her traditional mother.

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*.

Students at an elite English school gradually discover the strange and disturbing reason they are there.

Lewis, Michael. *The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game*.

An examination of professional football--its players, its strategies, its significance in American culture.

McCain, John. *Faith of my Fathers: a Family Memoir*. Senator and former presidential candidate John McCain learned about life and honor from his grandfather and father, both four-star admirals in the U.S. Navy. This is a memoir about their lives, their heroism, and the ways that sons are shaped and enriched by their fathers.

Obama, Barack. *Dreams from my Father*.

Autobiographical exploration by our current President.

Sepetys, Ruta *Out of the Easy*

It's 1950, and as the French Quarter of New Orleans simmers with secrets, seventeen-year-old Josie Moraine is silently stirring a pot of her own. Known among locals as the daughter of a prostitute, Josie wants more out of life than the Big Easy has to offer. She devises a plan get out, but a mysterious death in the Quarter leaves her tangled in an investigation that changes everything for her.

Sittenfeld, Curtis. *Prep*. Comedic novel about an Indiana teenager who wins a scholarship to an elite East coast boarding school.

Swanson, James L. *The President Has Been Shot!: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy*

In his new young-adult book on the Kennedy assassination, James Swanson will transport readers back to one of the most shocking events in American history. In a "you are there" style -- a riveting, ticking-clock pace, with an unprecedented eye for dramatic details and impeccable historical accuracy -- Swanson tells the story of the JFK assassination as it has never been told before.

Tammet, Daniel *Born on a Blue Day: Inside the Extraordinary Mind of an Autistic Savant*

Bestselling author Daniel Tammet is virtually unique among people who have severe autistic disorders in that he is capable of living a fully independent life and able to explain what is happening inside his mind. He sees numbers as shapes, colors, and textures, and he can perform extraordinary calculations in his head. He can learn to speak new languages fluently, from scratch, in a week. In 2004, he memorized and recited more than 22,000 digits of pi, setting a record.

Wroblewski, Mark. *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*.

A disabled boy whose parents raise and train dogs finds a shattering mystery to solve.

