

Summer Reading 2009 for students entering into 11th grade

As with last year, the students will use these books in the curriculum throughout the year, and in the order of the list, but they should do all required reading over the summer.

The books on the required and supplementary reading lists have been chosen to relate somewhat to these topics while also offering a broad range of enjoyable, enlightening reading. Books marked with a * are on the IB World Literature List.

Required Reading:

- **Woman at Point Zero*, Nawal El Saadawi
- **The Metamorphosis*, Franz Kafka
- **The Stranger*, Albert Camus
- Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston

Assignment: discuss the issue of perspectives. Some ideas to consider: Gregor's perspective on his condition compared with his family's; Meursault's perspective on his crime; the perspective of a woman in Firdaus's society; the white man's perspective of Africa in Conrad. This assignment is open to interpretation, but should include quotations to support your ideas. 2 ½-3 pages double-spaced.

Supplementary Reading Suggestions:

*Martel, Yann. *The Life of Pi: A Novel*
Harcourt, 2002. Sixteen-year-old Pi Patel, his family and their zoo animals emigrate from India to North America aboard a cargo ship, but the ship sinks and Pi finds himself sharing a lifeboat with a 450-pound Bengal tiger. Interesting, enjoyable, and full of thoughtful discussion on religion, faith, truth and the stories that make our lives bearable. Man Booker Prize.

Pullman, Philip. *The Golden Compass*
Alfred A. Knopf, 1996. Accompanied by her daemon, Lyra Belacqua sets out to prevent her best friend and other kidnapped children from becoming the subject of gruesome experiments in the Far North. Carnegie Medal.

Smith, Bob. *Hamlet's Dresser: A Memoir*
Scribner, 2002. A young man with a troubled family background discovers Shakespeare and his life.

*Markandaya, Kamala. *Nectar in a Sieve*
First published 1955. A realistic novel about a life of terrible hardships and disasters lived out in India with unflinching optimism and courage by a peasant woman and her family.

**The English Patient*, Michael Ondaatje: beautiful story about tragedy, loss, identity, secrecy, nationalism, conflict, the ravages of war, and above all, the lengths we will go to for love.

Mathabane, Mark. *Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa*
Macmillan, 1986. Despite overwhelming odds, a young South African boy triumphs over the degrading racism and dire poverty of his childhood.

Tsukiyama, Gail. *Women of the Silk*

St. Martin's Press, 1991. In 1926, a group of Chinese women toiling from dawn to dusk in a vast silk factory forge a sisterhood and lead the first strike against their employers.

Reed, Kit. *Thinner Than Thou*

Tor, 2005. A clever science fiction take on our culture's pursuit of youth and physical perfection as the new, true religion. Food rather than sex is now society's forbidden fruit, and the Fashion Police really are out to get you! There are laugh-out-loud parts and parts that hit too close to home.

Ha, Jin. *Waiting: A Novel*

Pantheon Books, 1999. Lin Kong, a devoted and ambitious Chinese doctor, has for seventeen years been in love with Manna Wu, an educated, modern woman, and has repeatedly and unsuccessfully tried to divorce the compliant wife his family chose for him back in his home village. National Book Award, PEN/Faulkner Award

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse Five*

First published 1969. After surviving the bombing of Dresden in World War II, Billy Pilgrim spends time on the planet Tralfamadore.

Wiggins, Marianne. *Evidence of Things Unseen: A Novel*

Simon & Schuster, 2003. In the years between the two world wars, a passion for science and belief in the future of technology leads Ray "Fos" Foster to work at a secret government lab developing the atomic bomb, but radiation poisoning ends his great faith in science. National Book Award finalist.

Tan, Amy. *Bonesetter's Daughter*

G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2001. Ruth, American-born daughter of a Chinese immigrant mother, arranges for a translation of her mother's handwritten story of her life in China and learns some long-hidden truths about her family that help her understand and appreciate her mother better. NY Times Notable Book

Wooten, Jim. *We Are All the Same: A Story of a Boy's Courage and a Mother's Love*

Penguin, 2004. Nkosi Johnson, a young South African boy born with AIDS, comes to symbolize the strength of the human spirit and the global battle against the disease.

Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*

First published 1939. Forced out of their home in the Oklahoma dust-bowl region by economic desperation, a family of "Okie" farmers drives west to California in search of work as migrant fruit pickers. Pulitzer Prize

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*

First published 1813. Elizabeth and Jane Bennet overcome obstacles to their happiness with Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley respectively, in this comedy of manners set in early nineteenth-century England.

Sittenfeld, Curtis. *Prep*

Random House, 2005. Midwesterner Lee Fiora wins a scholarship to an exclusive East coast boarding school where she constantly feels like an outsider. A painful coming-of-age story told by a modern teenager. NY Times Notable Book of the Year

Atwood, Margaret. *The Blind Assassin*

This book is awesome. There are no words that I could use to convince you to read it- but I bet you will love it.

*Davies, Robertson. *Fifth Business*

This book is equally awesome. Read it.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. *The Namesake*

Houghton Mifflin, 2003. Gogol Ganguli's parents, after their arranged marriage, emigrate to Cambridge, Massachusetts. He grows up resenting both his strange name and the Indian culture imposed on him by his family.

Chabon, Michael. *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay: A Novel*

Random, 2000. Comic strip adventures interwoven with an escape from war torn Europe and the progress to maturity of two young men of great charm and talent. Pulitzer Prize

*Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment*

First published 1866. Raskalnikov, a student who believes his personal intellectual and spiritual superiority places him above the masses, tests his theory of invincibility by committing murder.

Eugenidies, Jeffrey. *Middlesex*

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2002. In order to understand why she is not like other girls, Calliope must uncover a guilty family secret and the astonishing genetic history that turns Callie into Cal. Pulitzer Prize

Pamuk, Orhan. *Snow*

Knopf/Random House, 2004. Exiled Ka returns to his home town in Turkey. There he finds that Ipek, the beautiful girl he loved as a child, still lives in the city of Kars, and that his community has been stunned by a rash of suicides of zealously religious girls who had refused to remove their head scarves in public. New York Times Notable Book

Non-Fiction

*Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*. First published 1963. This autobiographical novel describes an ambitious and brilliant young woman's search for values and her eventual breakdown. Additional poems were added to the 2004 edition.

The Diary of Anne Frank, Anne Frank: this book stands alone as an insight into what it was like to be persecuted by the Nazis. Anne lived for years in a secret attic with her entire family, going through usual and unusual experiences of adolescence, and this is her diary. Unique and powerful!

Wright, Richard. *Native Son*

First published 1940. A young African-American man, trapped in the poverty-stricken ghetto of Chicago's South Side, only finds release in acts of violence.

Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*

Houghton Mifflin, 2001. The author charges that fast food has hastened the malling of the American landscape, widened the chasm between rich and poor, fueled an epidemic of obesity, and propelled U.S. cultural imperialism abroad.

Roach, Mary. *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*
Norton, 2003. Explores the sometimes funny, sometimes gruesome uses for human bodies after death: for example, as crash-test dummies, practice for plastic surgeons, and research on decomposition.

Weintraub, Stanley. *Silent Night: The Story of the World War I Christmas Truce*
Free Press, 2001. From an acclaimed historian and National Book Award finalist comes the poignant story of the 1914 Christmas truce of World War I-- the spontaneous and tantalizingly brief moment when mortal enemies came together as friends to celebrate the holiday.

Wood, Michael. *Shakespeare*
Basic Books, 2004. An acclaimed broadcaster and historian recreates the turbulent times of Elizabethan England, attempting to paint a more convincing and complete portrait of the most widely read and performed writer in history. A Companion book to the PBS series, "In Search of Shakespeare."

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*
W.W. Norton, 2004. An attempt by a noted Shakespeare scholar to explain the influences on Shakespeare and the steps in his becoming the great poet and playwright of the English language. National Book Award finalist

Cone, Marla. *Silent Snow: The Slow Poisoning of the Arctic*
Grove/Atlantic, 2005. Traditionally thought of as the last great unspoiled territory on Earth, the Arctic is actually home to some of the most contaminated people and animals on the planet.

Wilson, Edward O. *The Future of Life*
Knopf, 2002. A complex, intelligent look at a plan to save the biosphere for ensuing generations by resolving the conflict between environmentalism and economics.

Feynman, Richard. *Six Easy Pieces: Essentials of Physics Explained by Its Most Brilliant Teacher*
Addison-Wesley, 1995. Presents six "easy" chapters from the Nobel Prize-winning physicist's Lectures on Physics (1963), originally prepared for Caltech undergraduate students.

Hawking, Stephen. *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes*
Bantam, 1998. In this 10th, expanded edition the brilliant physicist updates and explains his theory of the nature and creation of the universe, including a chapter on wormholes and time travel.

Flannery, Sarah with David Flannery. *In Code: A Mathematical Journey*
Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2002. A sixteen-year-old girl and her father convey their love of mathematics in the book written after Sarah wins Ireland's Young Scientist of the Year 1999 award for her project on cryptography.

Gladwell, Malcolm. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*
Little Brown, 2002. Looks at why major changes in society often happen suddenly, and describes the personality types who are natural originators of new ideas and trends.

Gould, Lewis. *The Modern American Presidency*

University Press of Kansas, 2003. A no-holds-barred analysis of all the modern presidents from William McKinley up to George W. Bush includes the observation that today's presidency is so bogged down in media manipulation, fund-raising, and self-indulgence that it is no more capable of grappling with difficulties than it was a century ago.

Krakauer, Jon. *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith*

Doubleday, 2003. On July 24, 1983, a woman and her infant daughter were murdered by two brothers who believed they were ordered to kill by God. The roots of their crime lie deep in the history of an American religion practiced by millions. NY Times Notable Book of the Year, ALA Notable Book of the Year

Levitt, Steven and Stephen J. Dubner. *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Engineering*

William Morrow, 2005. Levitt ties economics to the emotional forces affecting human behavior, in interesting explanations of things from cheating sumo wrestlers to the relative dangers of guns versus swimming pools.

Tucker, Jonathan B. *Scourge: The Once and Future Threat of Smallpox*

Grove Press, 2001. The history of the smallpox virus is traced from the first recorded outbreak around 3700 B.C. through its development as a modern biological warfare agent.

Poetry

Neruda, Pablo. *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* First published 1924. Beautiful bilingual edition of love poems by the Nobel Laureate poet.