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Summer Reading at Kent Denver School

“It is what you read when you don’t have to that determines what you will be when you can’t help it.” Oscar Wilde

School-Wide Approach

During the school year, students and adults report that they are so busy with school and work that they have very little time to read for pleasure. Sure, students read, but often only what they are assigned, what has been chosen for them. An assigned reading system inadvertently implies that students should only read when it is required. In various discussions, the Kent Denver faculty has confirmed, virtually in one voice, that summer should be a time for all of us to recharge without the pressures of homework and school, and to rediscover reading for pleasure. Choice of texts forms the foundation of the summer shift away from “what do I have to read” to “what do I want to read.” The research on the efficacy of summer reading overwhelmingly supports that students get more from summer reading when they choose their own texts. Choice allows students to pick books at reading levels appropriate to their own levels and to choose topics and genres about which they truly care. The summer reading program at Kent Denver, in varying degrees from middle school to upper school, embraces this fundamental idea of discovering the joy of reading through choice.

The summer reading program also embraces our core values. The obvious core value is that of personal growth. With each book read, our lives are enriched, and if the book so moves us, we live in the company of those characters. But there is also the acknowledgement that we are our own community of readers who enjoy sharing our ideas and interests with each other. Reading as a community makes us all better as individuals.

This booklet is a wonderful compilation of recommendations from Kent Denver students, faculty, and staff. We invite all members of our community to read for pleasure this summer, and we hope that these reviews will assist you as you select your readings.

Thank you students, faculty, and staff who took time to submit recommendations—this publication would not be possible without your contributions.

Have a wonderful summer filled with great reads, hammocks, and warm breezes.

Neil Batt, English Faculty and Kayti Mathewson, Library Director
The Middle School Program: Community Books and Individual Choices

The summer reading program in the Middle School balances choice with a desire to give students at each grade level a common reading experience with which to begin the year. For each grade level, 6th through 8th, a student will read three books: one common book, one book selected from a list of titles provided by the faculty, and one book entirely of the student's choice. The experience of the common text helps build a community through grade-level-wide discussions of themes the common text raises. The other two texts give students the experience of choosing and finding for themselves something that they enjoy.

Students should expect to talk about their reading experiences at retreats, in advisory groups, and in their classes early in the fall. They should be able to answer questions such as, “What did you really like and why?” “What did not work for you?” “What did you learn?” “What did your summer reading make you think about?” and “What would you recommend to the rest of us?”

Sixth Grade

Entering sixth graders are required to read a minimum of THREE titles prior to the start of school.

Book 1: Required for students.

Palacio, R.J.  

Wonder

Focus Questions for Wonder

Upon completion of reading this book, please complete the following activities and have them with you on the first day of school. Please also remember to bring your book to school! It would be advisable to take notes, especially if you read the novel early in the summer. We also invite a parent or grandparent to read it as well.

1. Using 150 characters or less, create a sample Tweet for each of the following characters (you do not actually need to use Twitter):
   - Auggie Pullman
   - Via Pullman
   - Jack Will
   - Summer
   - Miranda
   - Justin
   - Julian

   Example: So excited that he hung my art work. #TushmanPrincipalWhoCares #ManWhoDefends#WishMorePeopleWereLikeHim

2. On an 8.5x11 sheet of paper, please redesign the cover using whatever materials you would like. During the first week of school, you will be asked to share your new design and tell your classmates why you chose your design.

Book 2: Required for students – select ONE of the following.
McCaughrean, Geraldine  
One Thousand and One Arabian Nights (Oxford edition)
King Shahryar is enthralled by the stories of his new bride Shahrazad. Take a magic carpet ride and experience these tales of humor, horror, wisdom, deceit, incredible adventure and love.

Riordan, Rick  
The Lightning Thief
What if the gods of Olympus were alive in the 21st Century? What if they still fell in love with mortals and had children who might become great heroes - like Theseus, Jason and Hercules? What if you were one of those children? Such is the discovery that launches twelve-year-old Percy Jackson on the most dangerous quest of his life - to catch a thief who has stolen the original weapon of mass destruction, Zeus’ master bolt. Along the way, he must face a host of mythological enemies determined to stop him. Most of all, he must come to terms with a father he has never known and an Oracle who has warned him of betrayal by a friend.

Book 3: Your choice; please see the following:

- Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Book Awards at [http://www.ala.org/yalsa/bookawards/booklists/members](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/bookawards/booklists/members)

- YALSA’s Teen Book Finder App: available on the App Store and Google Play


Or consider these books enjoyed by sixth grade teachers:

Karr, Kathleen  
Exile: Memoirs of a Camel
As part of the United States Camel Corps, Ali, a camel originally from North Africa, crosses the Texas desert in 1856. He must balance his work ethic with his dreams of freedom. This little-known slice of civil war history is told from the unique perspective—that of a camel and sheds light on American and Arabic histories and cultures during the 1860’s.

Konigsburg, E. L.  
A View from Saturday
Four students, bound together through intertwined lives, attract the attention of their teacher, a paraplegic, who chooses them to represent the sixth grade in the formidable Academic Bowl competition.

Levine, Dr. Mel  
Jarvis Clutch: Social Spy
“Social interactions are often the most stressful aspect of adolescent life. In this book, the author teams up with fictitious eighth-grader Jarvis Clutch to offer insight and advice on the middle school social scene. Jarvis's spy notes provide a bird's eye view of the often traumatic social experiences that middle school students are bound to encounter.” (Recommended for parents too.)

Paterson, Katherine  
The Great Gilly Hopkins
Unhappy and badly behaved, Gilly has bounced from foster home to foster home. About to give up on her, the social worker stumbles across a new and surprising family for Gilly.

Paulsen, Gary  
Hatchet
Bitter about his parents’ divorce, Brian Robeson finds himself stranded in the Canadian wilderness, where he must put his anger behind him and struggle to stay alive.

Paulsen, Gary  
*Woodsong*  
The popular writer for young people recalls his experiences with “sleds and dogs,” from his introduction to sled-dog racing in northern Minnesota to the seventeen grueling days he spends with his fifteen-dog team in Alaska’s Iditarod race.

Rawls, Wilson  
*Where the Red Fern Grows*  
This novel is a heartwarming classic about a ten-year-old boy growing up in the Ozarks and his inseparable pair of coonhounds.

Sachar, Louis  
*Holes*  
*Holes* is a darkly humorous award winner about a motley group of boys at a detention center run by some unsavory adults. Everyone learns lessons about crime, punishment, and redemption.

Serraillier, Ian  
*Beowulf the Warrior*  
This is the story of the hero Beowulf and his three memorable exploits—his rescue of Hrothgar the Dane from the ravages of monstrous Grendel, his victory over Grendel’s strange and horrible mother, and the saving of his own people, the Geats, from a dragon.

Spinelli, Jerry  
*Maniac Magee*  
Jeffrey “Maniac” Magee, a white boy who runs faster and hits balls farther than anyone, runs away from his loveless home to Two Mills, a town racially divided into the black East End and the white West End.

Stevenson, Robert Louis  
*Treasure Island*  
Set in the days of sailing ships and pirates, this classic retells the adventures of cabin boy Jim Hawkins and his search for the buried treasure of the notorious pirate Captain Flint.
Seventh Grade

We encourage students to read to relax, to escape, to explore, and to pursue their passions, and we ask them to read a minimum of THREE titles over the course of the summer. We expect all students to be prepared to discuss their reactions to their reading in small and large classroom groups.

**Book 1: Required for students.**

Teachers will be doing a lot of work with this novel during the first couple of weeks of school; please read this title in the month of August or review the work prior to coming back to school.

**Alvarez, Julia**

*Before We Were Free*

“Anita de la Torre never questioned her freedom living in the Dominican Republic. But by her twelfth birthday in 1960, most of her relatives have immigrated to the United States, her Tío Toni has disappeared, and the secret police terrorize her family for their suspected opposition of the country’s dictator. Read how Anita struggles to overcome her fears and to make a dramatic escape to freedom, leaving all she once knew behind.”

**Book 2: Required for students - select ONE of the following.**

- **Adams, Richard**
  *Watership Down*

- **Morpurgo, Michael**
  *The Elephant in the Garden*

- **Smith, Roland**
  *Peak*

- **Twain, Mark**
  *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

- **Woodsen, Jacqueline**
  *Brown Girl Dreaming*

**Book 3: Your choice: please see the following:**

- Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Book Awards at [http://www.ala.org/yalsa/bookawards/booklists/members](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/bookawards/booklists/members)

- YALSA’s Teen Book Finder App: available on the App Store and Google Play

Eighth Grade

As eighth graders embark on their final year in the middle school, we continue to celebrate the joy of reading by asking them to read at least THREE books over the course of the summer. We expect all students to be prepared to discuss their reactions to the books in small and large classroom groups.

**Book 1: Required for students.**

**Haddon, Mark**  *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*
Despite his inability to relate to humans, Christopher Boone relates well to animals. He is mathematically gifted and knows all of the countries of the world and their capitals. When his neighbor’s dog is killed, Christopher goes on a quest to find out what really happened.

**Book 2: Required for students - Select ONE of the following.**

**Adams, Douglas**  *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*
Ford Perfect reveals to his friend, Arthur Dent, that he is not really an Earthling but a roving reporter from a distant planet whose mission is to compile a travel guide to the galaxy. The adventures of these two characters are comical to the very end.

**Ayer, Eleanor**  *Parallel Journeys*
She is a young German Jew. He is a staunch supporter of Hitler and the creation of a “master race.” Alternating chapters trace the experiences of Helen Waterford and Alfons Heck during the Nazi reign of terror and WWII.

**Beales, Melba Patillo**  *Warriors Don’t Cry*
In 1957, Melba Patillo turned sixteen. That was also the year she became a warrior on the front lines of a civil rights firestorm. Follow her story of courage and resolve as she paves the way for the privileges that all of us enjoy.

**Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker**  *Jefferson’s Sons*
This is the untold story of Thomas Jefferson’s slave children and the complexities of skin color within the same family. Will the act of “passing” carry implications Jefferson’s children are unable to bear on their own?

**Bracken, Alexander**  *Brightly Woven*
A young wizard, Wayland North, is searching for an assistant who will join him in his quest to save a village. He chooses Sydelle Mirabil for the job, but why? Join Sydelle on her journey with Wayland as she discovers secrets about this wizard and why he’s chosen her.

**Going, K.L.**  *Fat Kid Rules the World*
Have you ever felt alone in the world; that you are the one person who doesn’t quite fit in? If the answer is yes, read this book; if the answer is no, read this book anyway. This is a book for anyone who escapes reality through music.

**Lupica, Mike**  *Summer Ball*
When you are the smallest guy on the basketball court, the challenges at times seem insurmountable. Just ask Danny Walker as he leads his travel team to the national championship. His experience at a summer camp for basketball players changes his opinion of the game.
Book 3: Your choice: please see the following:

- Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Book Awards at http://www.ala.org/yalsa/bookawards/booklists/members

- YALSA’s Teen Book Finder App: available on the App Store and Google Play

- Outstanding Books for the College Bound at http://www.ala.org/yalsa/outstanding-books-college-bound
MIDDLE SCHOOL RECOMMENDATIONS

A note to students and parents:
Students and faculty have submitted the following recommendations; these titles are suggested as a way of offering choice for students. The titles offer a wide variety of reading interests, levels, and content.

Some inclusions have been edited for the purpose of clarity and space; however, we have tried to honor the student’s own, authentic writing.

**Asher, Jay**  
*Thirteen Reasons Why*  
This novel by Jay Asher is guaranteed to keep the reader on the edge of their seat. Hannah Baker, an average teenage girl, commits suicide for thirteen reasons: thirteen different people. They each receive tapes explaining why they are on Hannah’s list. This book teaches readers that one’s actions can affect someone in an unexpected way. Although this story can be dark and depressing at times, it is intriguing and hard to put down. This novel is fit for high schoolers and older middle schoolers because it contains some mature content.

Reagen Haecker, class of 2019

**Aveyard, Victoria**  
*Red Queen*  
Not only did I instantaneously become absorbed into this book, but it was everything I love in a great novel. In a world where the wealthy Silvers with their own superhuman abilities force the common Red people to do the dirty work for them, one teenage girl shatters the social norm kept in the country for centuries. When Mare Barrow, a poor red thief, discovers she has superhuman abilities that rival those of the Silver Queen herself but blood that is still very much red, she is sucked into a never ending tsunami of raging politics, fierce romance, and an organization intent on doing whatever it takes to stop the Silver elites. With a riveting storyline and plot twists that come out of nowhere, *Red Queen* is a true masterpiece that fans of the *Hunger Games* and *Quantum Prophecy* alike will cherish.

Jeremy Gart, class of 2020

**Bowen, James**  
*The World According to Bob*  
*The World According to Bob*, written by James Bowen, is a fantastic true story about a homeless Londoner and the extraordinary cat that turned his life around. This is a very insightful book that gives readers a new perspective on how difficult life on the streets really is. Especially touching for animal lovers, this book gives the reader an overwhelming sense of thankfulness for the life they live. *The World According to Bob* is an incredible book for anyone who likes a humorous book about an important topic, where the main character is a ginger cat who wears hand-knit scarves.

Elsie Halvorsen, class of 2019

**Caletti, Deb**  
*The Six Rules of Maybe*  
Deb Caletti’s series are intriguing, beautifully written and are easy reads. One of her best novels is *The Six Rules of Maybe*. In the novel, Scarlet, the main character, has a hard time keeping her family together along with her best friend. A book targeted for girls, this is definitely a recommendation for most girls to read. There is a little romance and some adventure making for *The Six Rules of Maybe* by Deb Caletti, a great summertime, laid back read.

Caroline Kenyon, class of 2019

**Carter Aimée**  
*Pawn*  
The book *Pawn* by Aimée Carter is filled with drama and plot twists that keep you on the edge of your seat. This action packed novel takes place in the future where Kitty Doe, a teenage girl, gets surgically transformed into the president's niece, who has mysteriously died. Throughout the book you follow Kitty...
on your daring journey to get her identity back. I highly recommend this novel to people who love action, drama and romance.

Megan Elmer, class of 2019

Carter, Forrest

The Outlaw Josey Wales, by Forrest Carter, is a tale of western adventure and suspense. This book is about a young man whose family is taken from him. He is an ex confederate who still has a lot of fight left in him. He travels across the american frontier alongside a group of settlers. He travels with the thought that he has a price on his head and is a wanted man for not turning himself in. His adventure takes him from small Texas towns to crossing rivers and even negotiating with the Native Americans. If you love adventure books then this is the perfect book for you!

Luke Bosick, class of 2019

Clinton, Hillary

Hard Choices will captivate those who are intrigued by history, and want to read about in the form of exciting and engaging writing-this is no boring history lecture. This book eloquently describes the quandaries the United States found itself in and the hard choices Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton had to make to escape them. From high level talks with leaders in China to negotiating peace in the Middle East, this memoir chronicles the hard choices by location and in a refreshingly and surprisingly bi-partisan way. Whether you are a democrat, republican, independent, etc., you will enjoy Hard Choices.

Max Lewis, class of 2019

Coelho, Paulo

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho is a wonderful story following an Andalusian shepherd named Santiago, throughout his journey to find treasure. The young man encounters many different dilemmas, jobs, and even love. As Santiago struggles to pursue his personal legend, Coelho teaches us that the grass isn’t always greener on the other side. I recommend this book for those who love adventure and learning meaningful lessons in each captivating chapter.

Claudia Bautista, class of 2019

Collins, Suzanne

The Hunger Games, the book that started it all. The book follows a teenage girl, Katniss living in a dystopian society led by a dictator. The dictator forces 24 teenagers to fight to the death to avenge past crimes. Katniss is chosen and she decides to take a stand that she never would have imagined the consequences. If written by a different person this book would have been all gore, but Suzanne makes the book more interesting than that focusing on politics and the character development making this a unique book, proving that the author is what makes a book great. The Hunger Games has been turned into a movie, but I loved it so much that I would highly recommend reading the book before seeing the movie as it was just so incredible.

Cecily Coors, class of 2019

Collins, Suzanne

The Hunger Games is a dystopian thriller set in the future United States. Katniss Everdeen, the main character, lives with her mother and younger sister. Each year two tributes from each district are sent into an arena to fight to the death for the entertainment of the capitol. Each chapter is action-packed, and filled to the brim with drama and desperation. Katniss volunteers to go to the arena in the place of her sister, and meets many new characters. Read the book to find out who makes it out alive, and who doesn’t. If you are looking for an exciting read, then this is the book for you!

Sahara Hoff, class of 2019

Collins, Suzanne

The Hunger Games
In the book *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, the United States has been separated into 12 districts. Katniss Everdeen and 23 other tributes are chosen from the other districts to fight for their lives. Read and find out what happens and who makes it out of the Hunger Games and who ends their life there. If you are someone that loves books that are action packed and always have something new on each page, then this is the book for you.

**Taneen Davari, class of 2019**

**Condie, Ally**  
*Matched*  
The book, *Matched*, by Allie Condie, takes place in a city that is ruled by officials. Everyone is of equal status unless you do something wrong, then you become an aberration or an anomaly. The officials decide if you get matched and with whom. The main character Cassia changes the way the whole city works. When Cassia is matched, she gets a computer card that tells her details about who she is matched with. When Cassia looks at the card, another face pops up other than her match. Cassia falls in love with both of them, but the only problem, one of them is an aberration so he was never supposed to be matched. As the love triangle develops, Cassia breaks rules for both of them. Who will Cassia pick? Read the book and find out. If you liked Divergent or the hunger games, this is the book for you.

**Austine Jobe, class of 2019**

**Dashner, James**  
*The Maze Runner*  
If you are someone who loves the *Hunger Games* series or the *Divergent* series, then you can add this book to your collection. This thriller is about a boy named Thomas who has no memory of anything but his name. He arrives in a glade at the center of the labyrinth. Other boys and one girl in the same situation surround him. If you are interested in books that is action packed and very interesting, then this is a good read for you.

**Taneen Davari, class of 2019**

**Dashner, James**  
*The Maze Runner*  
*The Maze Runner* by James Dashner is the story of a young boy named Thomas who is left in the middle of a huge and dangerous labyrinth. Thomas is stuck in the maze with many other boys, none of which remember anything from before the day they got there. The boys try to find their way out of the constantly changing maze and eventually realize they were all put there for an important reason. I recommend this book to readers who love intense action and mysteries.

**Claudia Bautista, class of 2019**

**Dashner, James**  
*The Death Cure*  
This book is a wonderful addition to the library of any person who loves dystopian adventure books. This is the last book in the Maze Runner series, taking place after Thomas and the rest of the group have already faced the Maze and the Scorch. I loved this book and the many exciting plot twists and thrilling moments it threw at the reader. Each character is wonderfully intricate and relatable, and I found myself at the edge of my seat at all moments when reading the book, as the story was never dull.

**Jennifer Weiske, class of 2019**

**Sarah Dessen**  
*Dreamland*  
*Dreamland*, by Sarah Dessen will make you laugh, cry, and want to never put the book down. When the main character, Caitlin starts dating Rogerson everything in her life seems to be working out. However soon her relationship takes an ugly and dangerous turn and she is left with no where else to go. This book will continue to shock you as you read on, making you love the characters and hate them just as much. Read Dreamland if you are looking for a romantic drama and are feeling in the mood to laugh and cry. Dreamland will tug at your heart strings and make you want to read it over and over again.

**Emma Adelstein, class of 2019**

**Diamond, Jared**  
*Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*
Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed gives a comprehensive and detailed account of societal collapses of the past, present, and how the choices humanity makes today could lead to collapse in the future. Each collapse is viewed through the following five-point lens: environmental degradation, climate change, relations with hostile neighbors, interactions with friendly neighbors, and cultural responses. Through this framework, Diamond eloquently breaks down the most complex collapses in a methodical holistic manner. Everyone should read this book, as it discusses topics and lessons that will pertain to all of humanity in the coming years.

Max Lewis, class of 2019

Draper, Sharon Out of My Mind

Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper is an amazing novel that tells an inspirational story. Read about Melody, a powerful and smart eleven year old with an unfortunate disability. She is unable to walk or talk and is trapped in her own mind. Throughout the book, you will learn the way this strong girl lives her life and believes in herself when others around her didn’t. This novel will make you want to never put the book down.

Taneen Davari, class of 2019

Elston, Ashley The Rules of Disappearing

The Rules of Disappearing is a captivating book about a girl whose family is in a witness protection program. A new town, a new name, a new haircut. She’s starting over again, but she’s used to it by now. As the mystery of her past unfolds, you are drawn into the exciting plot. Can she take the risk and become involved with Ethan? Will her father finally tell her why they’ve been on the run for years? Filled with adventure and excitement, The Rules of Disappearing by Ashley Elston is a fantastic book I would recommend to anyone who loves a mystery.

Alice Noble, class of 2019

Farley, Walter The Black Stallion

In 1946, shortly after the end of World War II, ten-year-old Alec Ramsey and his father are traveling on a ship back to England. On the ship Alec meets a beautiful black stallion and feeds it sugar cubes and other treats. During the night the ship is struck by lightning and catches on fire. The ship goes down and Alec and the black stallion are the only survivors. They end up on an unknown island and have to survive without any resources and will have to cope with each other also. Will they survive? Will they get rescued? If you want to know read this exciting book that is full of action.

Joseph Coors, Class of 2019

Flynn, Gillian Gone Girl

Gillian Flynn’s Gone Girl is a book that has a bit of everything in it. Full of mystery, betrayal, secrets, and romance, once you pick this book up you won’t be able to put it down. When main character Amy Dunne goes missing from her small town, everybody is worried looking for her. Everybody that is, except her husband. As he becomes the prime suspect in her investigation, he has to find out what really happened to her. If you’re looking for something to keep you entertained and on the edge of your seat, I recommend this thrilling book.

Emma Adelstein, class of 2019

Forman, Gayle If I Stay

If I Stay is a heartwarming love story about a girl who loses everything. When the main character, Mia gets into a car crash that shatters her whole life and puts her on death’s doorstep, she is given a choice. Her choice is to stay for her grandparents, friends, and her boyfriend, Adam or die like her mother, father and, brother. As Mia goes through surgeries and the ICU she is able to see what is going on around her, but unable to interact with her loved ones. Through watching and listening to her loved ones reactions, conversations and, advice, Mia is forced to make the hardest decision of her life, to stay or die.

Claudia Melendez, class of 2019

Gibbs, Stuart Spy School
Spy School is another masterpiece by Stuart Gibbs. Spy School was a fantastic, action packed, and enjoyable read. When a twelve-year-old boy named Ben Ripley was accepted into a Spy School, originally he was excited by the glamorous idea of being a spy. As the book goes on, he struggles to stay alive while attempting to solve a mystery that revolves around the school. As I read this book I could not put it down, it was a non-stop thriller. I would highly recommend this book for anyone who is seeking an adventure.

Joseph Coors, class of 2019

Grant, Michael

Gone

Like Lord of The Flies, Gone, by Michael Grant contains horrors of today’s society. In the book all kids over the age of fourteen disappear leaving everyone jocular with new freedoms. Everyone is cheery until they realize without parents there could be a problem. Leaders rise up and take control. Blood is spilled through the pages, mystical powers are gained, and new creatures have arrived. Read Gone if you want a sci-fi book you can’t seem to tear your eyes from.

Danielle Norris, class of 2019

Green, John

The Fault in our Stars

In the book, The Fault in our Stars, two cancer patients, Hazel and Gus meet at cancer support group and begin to fall in love. Hazel has lung cancer so she has to have an oxygen tank with her, and Gus had his leg amputated and now has a prosthetic. Hazel introduces Gus to her favorite book, An Imperial Affliction and due to the unfinished book ending they decide they want to meet the author, Van Houten who lives in the Netherlands. I recommend this book for anyone who wants a good read with many unexpected twists and turns.

Lindsay Garner, class of 2019

Green, John

The Fault in our Stars

This is an exceptional novel written with love and pain in every line. This book is about the tragic, constant battle that every person with cancer must endure. Hazel Grace Lancaster tells her story of fighting the cancer within her and the even bigger battle, falling in love with the most handsome Augustus Waters, who is also dying. Once you read this novel, there is no turning back. If you are not afraid to feel the many emotions associated to this story, I strongly recommend you read it.

Josie Schaffer, class of 2019

Hillenbrand, Laura

Unbroken

Laura Hillenbrand’s Unbroken is the best book I have ever read. It tells the true story of Louis Zamperini, an Olympic runner, and a World War II prisoner of war survivor. He runs as a child to stay out of trouble as best he can, and carries it on to the Berlin Olympics. Louis is drafted into the Air Force to fight Japan, and soon is floating in a raft on the Pacific Ocean for forty-seven days after his plane crashed in the midst of combat. He then survived two years in horrific Japanese POW (Prisoner of War) camps. Zamperini was a true American hero, and Hillenbrand’s magnificent book tells his story. I would recommend this book to just about anyone, for it is a true inspiration.

Elsie Halvorsen, class of 2019

Holyoke, Polly

The Neptune Project

The Neptune Project, by Polly Holyoke is an intense, edge-of-your-seat read. It starts out slowly, with Nere and her friends just beginning their journey into life in the sea. When the government comes, however, searching for them and trying to steal back their freedom, life underwater becomes more than just a game. In some cases, it is gone altogether. A bit science fiction like, this book is very interesting for anyone who has ever wondered what it would be like to breath water and live like a fish. This is a book that I never wanted to put down, and read over and over again once I was finished, just to re-enter Nere’s world and her salt water breathing existence.

Elsie Halvorsen, class of 2019

Hutton, Robin

Sergeant Reckless

Sergeant Reckless is the story of the most incredible Marine that ever lived. Robin Hutton’s true story of the horse that could do anything, and was a greater hero than most men is truly shocking. I will never think
of a horse in the same way. This is a detailed, thorough book intended for horse lovers and others alike. There are pictures of Reckless preforming her duties as well as those to simply tell the story. They are in black and white to deepen the reader’s understanding of the time period. Sergeant Reckless is a book I would recommend to just about anyone, so they can share the beautiful story of a little Mongolian mare with the world.

Elsie Halvorsen, class of 2019

Lewis, Michael

The Blind Side

This is a tremendous book for people who love a thrilling underdog. This book tells the true story of the tough life of Michael Oher, who is tuned into a football player when he is adopted by a family. Oher grew up with barely a home, and a mother who was addicted to drugs and alcohol. Under a belt with a new family Oher tries to turn his life around both in school and on the field. This book will always keep you thirsty to keep churning through the pages, and ready for more!

Ben Filerman, class of 2019

Lorentz, Dayna

No Dawn Without Darkness

No Dawn Without Darkness is the third book in a thrilling trilogy. This book takes you into the lives of Shay, Marco, Lexi, Ryan, Maddie, and Ginger and their struggle to survive. For close to three weeks all of these teenagers have been quarantined inside of a mall and all of them struggle to survive as resources dwindle and their government fails. This book is perfect if you are looking for something that contains romance, action, and tragedy. No Dawn Without Darkness is an exciting thriller that takes you into a world of complete chaos and will leave you on the edge of your seat.

Emma Adelstein, class of 2019

Lowry, Lois

The Giver

The Giver, by Lois Lowry, is a good book for everyone. Filled with mystery, action, and heartbreak, this thriller has a little bit of everything in it. When the main character Jonas it assigned his job as the giver in an alternate future, he learns what real love is as well as real pain. As his society becomes wrong in his eyes, he needs to find a way to escape. If you are looking for a book that will keep you wanting more and more, The Giver is the one for you.

Emma Adelstein, class of 2019

Lowry, Lois

The Giver

This is a wonderful book for those who love science-fiction novels in the world of a dystopian society. This novel focuses on Jonas, the next receiver of memories, who after a few sessions with the Giver does not agree with the ways of his community. After seeing everything he has, he chooses to lead a different life away from the community. I recommend this book for anyone searching for a novel with a little bit of action and tales that make you realize how lucky we are.

Kate Bleyle, class of 2019

Lowry, Lois

The Giver

The book The Giver is a terrific book filled with mystery and excitement. The story of a young boy named Jonas who lives in a world of no war, no fear, no pain, and no emotion. Everything must always be the same, except for Jonas. Jonas was born with a special attribute where he could feel emotion and color. No longer does Jonas want to stay in this community. He comes up with a plan to escape the community and enter into the world of “difference”. Louis Lowry incredible story tells about a young man who makes a difference in his society.

Coby Gold, class of 2019

Lupica, Mike

Summer Ball

This is a great book to read if one is interested in basketball and overcoming obstacles. Danny Walker is always the smallest guy on the court, and has always played with a chip on his shoulder. Attending this extremely competitive basketball camp will be a difficult way for Danny to prove himself yet again. Danny despises his coach at the camp, but tries to lighten up in an attempt to gain a starting spot. Off the court,
Danny has issues with players he played against in previous years. With Danny having these troubles, can he ultimately achieve his goal?

**Augustine Kim, class of 2019**

**Lupica, Mike**

*Summer Ball*

This is an incredible book for those looking for a heartwarming sport story. Danny Walker is always the smallest kid on the court, but he never has the smallest game. This novel takes you on Danny’s Journey through an invite only summer basketball camp. Danny is forced to take his game to the next level because his coach isn’t respecting him because of his size. Fortunately Danny can overcome the height problem and make the game winning play. I recommend this story to someone who loves the last second thrills that make your heart stop.

**Josh Melvin, class of 2019**

**MacHale, D.J.**

*SYLO*

For anyone who enjoys science fiction, this is the book for you. The book introduces Tucker, a 14-year-old, whose life is pretty normal. It’s normal until the island he lives on is invited by SYLO, an United States government organization. Tucker and the rest of the people on the island have no idea who SYLO is and what they are doing on the island. In addition to this, a suspicious character on the island is giving out the “ruby” - a chemical that gives people abnormal, super-human powers. It is up to Tucker and his friends to uncover SYLO’s secrets and find out the truth of the island. The style of *SYLO* is definitely unique, as the story brings many questions to the reader.

**Chloe Kim, class of 2019**

**McMann, Lisa**

*The Unwanteds*

I read this book in seventh grade, and the story has stuck with me ever since. In a society named Quill, every year the 13-year-olds are divided into “Wanteds” and “Unwanteds.” The Wanteds go to a university, and the Unwanteds are eliminated. Alex, the main character, was classified as “Unwanted” for being creative. Just before he faces elimination, a magician named Mr. Today rescues all the Unwanteds. He takes them to a place called Artimé where the children learn to use creativity instead of disregarding it. However, Artimé is discovered by Quill, and now it is in danger. McMann’s style of writing is different, but once you get going, it’ll make lots of sense.

**Chloe Kim, class of 2019**

**Morpurgo, Michael**

*War Horse*

This book starts in 1914 with a horse named Joey and his owner Albert. Albert never wanted to sell his horse, but to extreme poverty Albert's father sold him to war. Since then Joey witnesses horror in the battlefield and because of Joey’s courage and bravery he touches all of the soldiers around him. Joey goes from army to army after being captured leading each and every one of them into battle and being the best horse of them all. From leading people into battle to pulling carts Joey always tries his best and has a positive attitude. Even through all of this Joey holds out hope that he will be able to see his beloved owner Albert again.

**Joseph Coors, class of 2019**

**Mull, Brandon**

*Fablehaven*

This book is for anyone who loves reading fantasy. Go on an adventure with Kendra and Seth who go to visit their grandparents for two and a half weeks over the summer. They know their grandparent are strange, but how strange? Soon, their eyes are opened, and they see the unseen world full of faries, trolls, witches, and more magical creatures. However, with great power comes great responsibility. So when they break the rules, evil magic is released, and the lives of the family are in jeopardy. I recommend this book to anyone who wants a story so good it can’t be put down!

**Chloe Kim, class of 2019**

**Mylnowski, Sarah**

*Don’t Even Think About It*
Written by Sarah Mylnoski, *Don’t Even Think About It* is a must read for anyone with interest in teen fiction, romance and ESP. The story opens to a regular homeroom at a New York high school. After their homeroom is given an infected batch of a flu shot they develop the ability to read minds. Told from the viewpoint of the entire homeroom this is a funny, new take on high school. Now able to know what people really think, the homeroom, dubbing themselves the “Espies”, embark on a series of comic misadventures as their lives are changed forever.

**Maya Muwanga, class of 2019**

**Nielsen, Jennifer**  
*The False Prince*  
*The False Prince*, by Jennifer Nielsen is an amazing book that many people have not heard of. It starts out a little slow but as the plot goes on it builds and builds and finally, a great secret is revealed that no one could see coming. The main character is an orphan who has seemingly lived in poverty is whole life. He soon gets caught in a scheme that could eventually lead him on the path from rags to riches. What if he gets caught? Well that’s another story. The book is the first of an incredible trilogy so if you love it there is a lot more to read.

**Cecily Coors, class of 2019**

**Palacio, R.J.**  
*Wonder*  
*Wonder* for everyone who loved *The Fault In Our Stars*, Wonder is a great read. The tumultuous journey of Augustus Pullman comes to life as he braves the judgement of his peers, and the need to be viewed as a normal ten year old. Auggie was born with a facial abnormality, that causes his parents to home-school him for most of his life. For the first time Auggie is being sent to an actual school with other students, and he is afraid of what they will think of him. Will Auggie convince his classmates that he is just like them? Wonder is a moving and heart-warming novel that makes you fall in love with Auggie, and all of the people he meets along the way.

**Sahara Hoff, class of 2019**

**Paolini, Christopher**  
*Eragon*  
*Eragon* is the first book of the Inheritance Cycle. It is very well written and contains so many sub-plots and round characters. From the very start there are so many questions that begged to be answered. The main character is a 15 year old boy who struggles with poverty and hunts to save himself and his family. On one of his hunts he finds something that changes his life, his families forever, and possibly those of everyone in the poverty stricken kingdom. It shares many of the themes of the *Hunger Games* and *Divergent* series, but with an element of magic. It has been turned into a movie, but it is so great that I must recommend reading the book first.

**Andrew Goldblatt, class of 2019**

**Paolini, Christopher**  
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**Cecily Coors, class of 2019**

**Patterson, James**  
*Confessions: The Private School Murders*  
James Patterson managed to put three page turning mysteries and also combining romance with a twisted sense of darkness in *Confessions: The Private School Murders*. This quick read is detailed yet simple for teens and young adults by revolving a chain of mysteries that are linked by one teenage girl, Tandy Angel. After her parents recent deaths, Tandy faces bankruptcy and eviction from her billion dollar home, her football star brother has been accused of murdering his pregnant girlfriend, a private school girl killing psychopath is on the loose, and Tandy’s true love, James Rampling, is coming back to memory after Tandy’s mind was erased of him. But now she must find out if her brother really killed his girlfriend, who is killing the private school girls, and where did James go? All these questions are solved in the emotional
first person view of Tandy in a page-turner. I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves the elaborate mysteries of crime and disappearance.

Zach Koo, class of 2019

Paulsen, Gary

**Hatchet**

*Hatchet* is an exciting book that is about survival and how important it is to never give up. The main character is a 13-year-old boy with parents that are divorced. He is left in the Canadian wilderness equipped only with a hatchet and the clothes he is wearing. It spans the course of two months, and he learns to appreciate the things he never really paid that much attention to. It is a fast, intense, and exciting read and it is worth a person’s while.

Cecily Coors, class of 2019

Picoult, Jodi and Van Leer, Samantha

**Between The Lines**

This mother and daughter author duo has pushed the limits on the book *Between The Lines*. Delilah, a 15 year old girl, is obsessed with a fairytale book she has had since she was young. She spends endless days reading, and rereading this one particular book until one day she notices something out of the ordinary. One of the characters in the story book has moved from its ordinary place. The authors stretch the limit of reality when a character from the book falls in love with Delilah and attempts to contact her. Will this character ever speak to Delilah? Read the book to find out. If you enjoy fiction novels with a unique touch then you should read this book.

Sahara Hoff, class of 2019

Rich, Ben

**Skunk Works**

During the 1960’s and 70’s the US and Russia espionage ragged on. During this time, both sides of the conflict constantly tried to best each other’s spy technology and warplanes. The book is structured into sections that discuss every invention moving out of the Skunk Works program individually. The amazing depth and detail the book goes into transforms an average person into an aircraft know-it-all. This book caters to all, history lover and pleasure reader alike with very interesting and detailed stories of the legendary Lockheed Skunk Works Program.

Mark Walvoord, class of 2019

Riordan, Rick

**The House of Hades**

This is an incredible book for someone looking for exciting happy ending story. In this book you will follow the thrilling adventures of Percy Jackson and his friends. Percy and girlfriend, Annabeth are stuck in Tartarus with an almost impossible task to close the doors of death. Fortunately, Percy and Annabeth are able to overcome their task and save the world from monsters taking over. This book is a wonderful read that I guarantee you will like.

Josh Melvin, class of 2019

Roth, Veronica

**Divergent**

*Divergent* by Veronica Roth is a romantic and adventurous novel following the struggles of a teenage girl named Tris Prior. In a divided world where there are five factions, (groups) Tris thinks she knows where she belongs. But when Tris takes a coming of age test that determines where she will live the rest of her life, she finds out that she may not be who she thinks she is. Tris encounters danger, love, and uncovers many secrets of her seemingly perfect world.

Claudia Bautista, class of 2019

Roth, Veronica

**Divergent**

*Divergent*, a first rate book starting out a series about a utopian society gone dystopia. It starts out with a choice that will change the main characters life, the people around her, and even her government. This novel shares some of the same themes of *The Hunger Games*, making it a fast pace read with deeper meaning. *Divergent* has been turned into a movie, but I loved it so much that I would highly recommend at least reading the book before seeing the movie as it was just so incredible.
Roth, Veronica

Divergent by Veronica Roth tells the story of a girl named Tris who lives in a world where they are forced to move away from their families and choose a faction to join: Dauntless, Abnegation, Candor, Erudite, or Amity. Each group has a specific trait that they value and is chosen for each individual through the aptitude test. For Tris, however, it’s not so simple. She must fight against the government to ensure the safety of her family and break the confining rules of society. I recommend this novel to anyone seeking an adventurous and captivating story.

Reagen Haecker, class of 2019

Roth, Veronica

Insurgent, the sequel to Divergent perfectly continues with Tris’ sassy, determined, brave attitude. Tris, with help from her boyfriend Tobias, transforms from being carefree to responsible for her actions. She also becomes more appreciative of what she has. Through out the book Tris and her friends are faced with challenges that are life changing and life threatening. I recommend this book for a person who enjoys romance and action. It will make a reader cry, smile, laugh out loud, and want more!

Grace Faircloth, class of 2019

Rowell, Rainbow

Eleanor and Park

This is a fantastic book for young adults who enjoy love and romance. The story is about two teenagers that fall in love despite all their differences. Eleanor, a new girl at her school, meets a shy boy named Park on her school bus. Eleanor and Park slowly fall for each other and soon realize that they have more in common than they thought. This novel is a great story about first love, and from the moment you pick up the book, you will not be able to put it back down.

Claudia Bautista, class of 2019

Rowling, J.K.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone

Harry Potter, an orphan, finds himself living a life that would be any young person’s dream. This is the beginning of an exciting journey that changes the life of an eleven year old that had been ignored most of his life. The fascinating world of wizardry and camaraderie holds the readers attention and makes for exciting adventures. By the end of the book, Harry is no longer an ignored unfortunate child, but a curiosity to those around him and the center of attention in a place where secrecy, integrity and friendship are honored. I recommend this book to anyone looking for possibility and adventure in the world of fantasy.

Ben Flug, class of 2019

Rowling, J.K.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone was an enchanting read. Shortly into the story, the reader is thrust into a world of magic as the protagonist, Harry, attends the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. J.K. Rowling does a fantastic job of creating an intricate story with complex characters, but yet making it easy to follow along at the same time. Throughout the student body’s year at Hogwarts, they start to grow up, which makes them very easy to connect with and relate to. This book is a lot of fun, and I would recommend it to anybody.

Will Morland, class of 2019

Sachar, Louis

The Cardturner

This was a wonderful novel full of mystery, suspense, and it was hilarious as well. The story takes place with an awkward teen named Alton Richards. He has to go help out his blind uncle, Lester, who plays bridge, by being his cardturner. A cardturner is someone who reads off the cards for the person who is playing bridge and reads the cards off (a cardturner usually will be there for someone who is blind for example because they cannot actually see the cards). It sounds like an easy and pretty boring job (and book!), but it only escalates from there. The main character develops an insane amount throughout the
novel. I highly recommend this easy read to someone who enjoys mystery and suspense books, but also know that you will find yourself laughing all throughout the book.

Ellis Lawrence, class of 2019

Selden, George  
_The Cricket In Times Square_
This book is about the adventure and journey of Chester the Cricket. After growing up in the Connecticut meadows Chester was very satisfied and never intended to leave, but enticed by a wonderful smelling aroma and Chester finds himself on a train to New York in a picnic basket eating away. In Times Square, New York Chester meets a Cat named Harry and a mouse named Tucker. After Tucker and Harry take him in they live together. There also is a boy named Mario who sees something special in Chester, a talent Chester never even knew he had. What is Chester’s Talent? Will he make it back to his home in Connecticut? Read the book to find out and join Chester and Friends as the go on an exciting, magical, and thrilling Journey. Also personally I have read this book over and over as it is one of my all time favorites.

Joseph Coors, class of 2019

Shepard, Sara  
_Unbelievable: A Pretty Little Liars Novel_
This novel is a great read for those who like mystery and excitement. The life of four teenage girls who are being threatened by an anonymous source that watches their every move. Read about how they survive the complications they have to live through while trying to complete high school. This book is filled with humor, catastrophes, and suspense, so I recommend this novel to anyone who is fond of those things.

Taneen Davari, class of 2019

Sparks, Nicholas  
_The Lucky One_
_The Lucky One_ is a heartbreaking story that follows the life of Logan Thibault, a U.S. marine. After surviving war, Logan believes that his luck is all because of a picture he found of a woman at his camp. He soon searches for the woman to thank her and when he finds her, it is not what he expects. _The Lucky One_ has a little bit of everything in it, from romance, to action, to a thrilling and surprising ending. This book will definitely make you laugh and cry. _The Lucky One_ is a thrilling romance that you’ll never be able to put down.

Emma Adelstein, class of 2019

Yousafzai, Malala  
_I Am Malala_
This is a phenomenal eye-opening book. It was one of the best because it really expanded my American understanding of the world we live in today. It shows the troubles of a regular girl from Swat who just wants to go to school. She expresses and demonstrates that every person can make a difference no matter how big or small. The fear and exasperating struggles her family and city go through, leaves your heart in a loop and your stomach in a knot of sympathy.

Danielle Norris, class of 2019
The Upper School Program:
The Freedom and Pleasure of Choice

Everyone is encouraged to read at least THREE texts of his or her choice, and the faculty acknowledges an expansive view of what constitutes a text. Books, of course are texts but consider also newspapers, magazines, and blogs. Read anything, as long as you care about it, you enjoy it, and it makes you think.

Guidance is readily available by reviewing this booklet and by reading “How to Select a Book” on the last page of this booklet.

When you come back from the summer, the faculty hopes you will be rested and recharged. Be prepared to share in advisory and in your classes, your own reading experiences and recommendations. Also, we hope as you share your reading in advisory in the fall that you will consider contributing to next year’s Kent Denver 2016 Recommendations.

A note to students and parents...

Students and faculty have submitted the following Kent Denver recommendations; these titles are suggested as a way of offering choice for students. The titles offer a wide variety of reading interests, levels, and content.

Some inclusions have been edited for the purpose of clarity and space; however, we have tried to honor the student’s writing.
"The man who doesn't read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them." — Mark Twain

This document is edited, but leaves in repeat recommendations for Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*; Brown's *The Boys in the Boat*; Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*; Coelho's *The Alchemist*; Coffey's *Boys of Winter*; Crowley's *Graffiti Moon*; Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*, *Looking for Alaska*, and *Paper Towns*; Gwyne's *Empire of the Summer Moon*; Martel's *Life of Pi*; Pinker's *Sense of Style*; Rothfuss' *The Name of the Wind*; Rowell's *Eleanor and Park*; Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*; and Malcolm X's *Autobiography of Malcolm X*.

**Abrams, J.J. and Dorst, Doug**

*S*

This unique book may be one of the most interesting book I've ever read, if it can even be called a book. A book that is more a puzzle set behind a work of fiction than anything else, *S* is about two readers of the same book *The Ship of Theseus* with their notes in the margins making up a second story to layer on the first. With included materials to help you (and the original readers) solve the mystery of *S*, it's one of the most unusual books I've ever read, plus the idea came from the mastermind brain of JJ Abrams! An absolute must read for a lover of riddles, fantasy, and adventure, or for someone just looking for a breath of fresh air in a world of the mundane. It was absolutely fantastic.

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**Addario, Lynsey**

*It's What I Do: A Photographer's Life of Love and War*

This memoir is perfect if you are interested in photojournalism, and if not, it is still a great read. It brings a personal, in-depth look at being on the front lines of conflict and tragedy. She describes how foreign correspondents, drivers, US soldiers, and civilians become her family as she tries to shine light into the darkest corners of the world. Lynsey is an acclaimed photojournalist who has covered Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, and Libya. She beautifully writes about both the fear and excitement that fill her life. I strongly recommend this book to anyone curious about places racked with war and the beauty that can still exist in conflict.

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**Ahamed, Liaquat**

*The Lords of Finance: The Bankers Who Broke the World*

This Pulitzer Prize winning book is widely regarded as the definitive description of the decisions taken by a small number of central bankers who were the primary cause of the Great Depression, the effects of which set the stage for World War II and reverberated for decades. I found it to be a quick read. Ahamed is able to create an entertaining story by combining highly personal stories about powerful central bankers with major macroeconomic events. For those who are interested in better understanding the history of worldwide financial systems, this is a great read.

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**Allen, John**

*The Francis Miracle: Inside The Transformation of the Pope and the Church*

This is a relatively new book. John Allen explores the first two years of the papacy of Pope Francis. Painting a picture of Pope Francis's rise to the Throne of St. Peter, John Allen shows how Pope Francis is dramatically changing the Church and how he isn't at the same time. Using examples from Pope Francis's childhood and young life, we see the reasons why Pope Francis climbed to the top of Catholic Church and how he wants to lead the Church of 1.2 billion people.

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**Amis, Kingsley**

*Lucky Jim*

I don’t read this one with students anymore, either, but I still love it. For my money, *Lucky Jim* is, sentence for sentence, the funniest novel in the English language. Like *Under the Net* (see my other recommendation) it was published in 1954 (a very good year!) and is set in post-war England. It’s about one Jim Dixon, who is trying to keep his job as a history teacher at a university despite his virtuoso loathing of most of what that job entails. The novel won’t be everyone’s cup of tea. It feels a bit dated to me now,
benighted in its treatment of women, for instance, but it still makes me laugh out loud, a lot, on nearly
every page. I read Lucky Jim with Mr. Barrow some years ago, when he was my student and I was,
nominally, his teacher. You might ask him what he thinks. He’s a history teacher, after all.
Nick Lefferts, Faculty

Anderson, Laurie Halse
Speak
Have you ever wondered what goes on in the mind of other people? If you have, this book is for you.
Speak is a fantastic book that dives into the mind of Melinda Sordino and one emotional night that leads her
into a state of muteness. Through a crumbling family, atrocious grades, and backstabbing friends, Melinda
has many reasons to stop talking. The story takes you on the rollercoaster that is Melinda, and shows you
how even through tough times there is always hope. Melinda struggles as an outcast, but she breaks out of
her shell to save herself and to put a monster in his place. This book will leave you speechless not knowing
whether to cry or laugh, to be frustrated or to be glad. If you love stories that change your perspective on
life, you will love this book.
Esther Omegba, class of 2018

Armitage, Simon
Walking Home: A Poet's Journey
A few summers ago, I walked a long section of Offa's Dyke on the border of Wales and England, and I've
been reading about walks and hikers quite a bit since then. Simon Armitage hikes a famous and difficult
trail that runs from Scotland to southern England and challenges himself to pay for his lodgings and food
by giving poetry readings along the way. I enjoyed this modern take on an ancient idea: the wandering
poet or bard who learns as much about himself as he does about his land and the peoples in it.
Neil A. Batt, Faculty

Atwood, Margaret
The Handmaid's Tale
For anyone who likes books set in dystopian societies or future realities, this book is perfect for you.
Margaret Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale is set in a future where a religious revolution shook the United
States and an ultra-conservative, religious, and oppressive group called the “Sons of Jacob” took over,
abolishing the United States and establishing the Republic of Gilead. All women have been forced into
subservient roles to men. They aren’t allowed to read, and all signs are now pictures to enforce this. Offred,
forced to take the name of her master, Fred, is made into a Handmaid, only there to produce children for
couples who can’t and forced to veil her face at all times and wear long dresses to hide her body. This book
follows Offred’s life as a Handmaid, and is chilling, disturbing, and altogether grippingly interesting! I
highly recommend it!
Trent Smiley, class of 2017

Austen, Jane
Persuasion
For anyone who loves classic English literature, Persuasion is a must-read book. As Jane Austen continues
to amaze with her carefully crafted prose, Persuasion tells the story of Anne Elliot and Frederick
Wentworth, and is a tale of second chances and the passage of time. Anne reconnects with her former suitor
after many years, and both must learn to forgive before they can move towards the future. For any romantic
souls, this book is one that you will treasure.
Sarah Switzer, class of 2015

Austen, Jane
Sense and Sensibility
Jane Austen’s most famous book is Pride and Prejudice, and rightly so. It’s a delightful, funny story with a
feisty, humorous young woman at the center. I would like to draw attention, though, to the Dashwood
sisters, Elinor and Marianne, of Sense and Sensibility. Quickly dropped from their opulent estate home of
Norland, these two woman along with their mother and younger sister, move to a small cottage where
romantic predicaments ensue, ones that highlight the impetuous, romantic nature of Marianne and the stoic,
British reserve of Elinor. Dashing Willoughby sweeps Marianne off her feet while the admiring Col.
Brandon stands by in silent disapproval. Marianne gushes about her feelings to Elinor, who, by
circumstance and character, cannot fully open heart to anyone about Edward Ferrars, a man pledged to
another woman. Romantic poets were becoming all the rage in Austen’s time, and though no one portrays
the qualities and effects of passion like Austen, with this novel, she pushes back against the Romantic
Movement. This wonderful, endearing story will leave many readers yearning to read more books by Jane Austen, one of the most beloved authors in all of English literature.

**Neil A. Batt, Faculty**

**Baker Kline, Christina**

*Orphan Train*

In a creative and stirring way, this book opened my eyes to a heartbreaking time period in our history. Between 1824 and 1929, so-called orphan trains ran regularly from the cities of the East Coast to the farmlands of the Midwest, carrying thousands of abandoned children whose fates would be determined by luck or chance. Baker Kline weaves together a beautiful tale of two unlikely friends, brought together by their isolation and hardships. Beautifully written and well worth the read!

**Emily Danitz, faculty**

**Ballard, J.G.**

*Empire of the Sun*

Here’s another novel I don’t remember so well, except for the haunting power it exerted when I read it years ago in my apartment in Brooklyn. It’s about an English boy living in Shanghai who is separated from his parents when the Japanese invade. Steven Spielberg made a movie with a young Christian Bale as the boy, and it’s pretty good, but I liked the book better. Although I have forgotten a lot about the novel, it’s also true that I’ll never forget it; you know what I mean?

**Nick Lefferts, Faculty**

**Barnes, Jennifer Lynn**

*The Fixer*

Quickly after moving to Washington D.C., Tess Kendrick is presented with the job to fix her classmate’s social problems due to her sister’s occupation. Ivy conceals political leaders’ secrets and often sways United States elections. As Tess helps more and more people, she finds herself in an extensive conspiracy regarding much more than a past secret or money. This is a thrilling novel filled with scandals and mysteries. I recommend this for anyone wishing for an unpredictable, action-filled book.

**Trinity Rollins, class of 2018**

**Beah, Ishmael**

*A Long Way Gone*

*A Long Way Gone* discusses the reality behind child soldiers through the eyes of a twelve year old. It showcases the atrocities that these children experience. Be warned: it’s very intense and morbid; however, it is an eye-opener. I really enjoyed this memoir as its riveting story is similar to the novel *Unbroken*.

**Teddy Richardson, class of 2017**

**Berg, Elizabeth**

*Durable Goods*

This is a lovely young-adult book that takes place on an army base in rural Texas. The main character, Katie is trying to understand the world around her after the death of her mother. Her distant, abusive father, filled with inner pain and rage, cannot break Katie’s miraculously strong spirit. It’s a quick read that is hard to put down.

**Loni Desjardin, Faculty**

**Bradbury, Ray**

*Fahrenheit 451*

This science-fiction futuristic book is a great read for anyone. The plot is intriguing and interesting addressing the internal change of a "firefighter" and book burner in a society where any and all books are banned; the lives of many are occupied by the censored and commercialized television, oddly similar to much of our society today. However, while the emotional journey of the principal character is exciting, the idea that an individual's ideas and the spread of knowledge are contrary to American ideology (as the book presents it) is also captivating, stimulating and a bit scary! This is a great read and a fantastic story!

**Craig Petersen, Faculty**

**Bradbury, Ray**

*Fahrenheit 451*

Look around at modern life and you'll find a world that may not be as far from the dystopian world of *Fahrenheit 451* as we might wish. The parlor walls -- Bradbury's version of televisions -- consume the lives of its citizens. People go through their lives not questioning their path. Every time I read Bradbury's classic tale, I find some new parallel or link to our modern world. It's a worthwhile endeavor.

**Greg Chalfin, Faculty**
Bradley, Alan  The Flavia de Luce Series
Set in England in the 1950s, each of the seven books in the Flavia de Luce Series follows a precocious eleven year old with an extremely impressive knack for chemistry. Living with two older sisters and her widowed father, Flavia is constantly scheming ways to poison those who bother her until she discovers that her chemistry skills can be applied to more than simply tormenting her sisters. Between spending countless hours in her magnificent laboratory at Buckshaw, the inherited family residence, and soaring through the countryside of England on her bike, Flavia de Luce assists the local police with the investigation of various murders. With a quick wit and intelligence far beyond her age, Flavia ingeniously solves each mystery, leaving you baffled and craving more of Alan Bradley’s absorbing novels.
Portia Tieze, class of 2018

Brooks, David  The Road to Character
This book is thought-provoking, inspiring, humbling, and unique. David Brooks uses examples of real-life people who held rare qualities that set themselves apart from their peers. With characters ranging from Frances Perkins to Dwight Eisenhower, Brooks’ book masterfully illustrates the qualities that these people learned through various hardships and personal failures. Brooks challenges the reader to examine his or her own life and to take the opportunity to place the values of humility, courage, faith, love, and forgiveness over the superficial values of the 21st century such as self-indulgence, arrogance, malice, cruelty, and heartlessness. I highly recommend this book, as it is easy to read and leaves a lasting impact on the reader.
--Reilly Rastello, class of 2015

Brown, Dan  The Da Vinci Code
If you are in the hunt for an exciting, chapter-turning book that contains tons of historical content, problems, and accuracies, The Da Vinci Code is the novel for you. It is filled with so much suspense and so many plot twists that you will feel like a real detective trying to figure out what is taking place. It involves multiple religious members all trying to protect what they believe is the truth about Jesus Christ and his supposed children.
Casey Ross, class of 2017

Brown, Daniel James  The Boys in the Boat
Inferno is the fourth book in the Da Vinci Code series. It is about the most dangerous problem that humans face today, over-population. It follows Robert Langdon, a Harvard Professor who discovers a plot to infect the world with a plague to control population. It has a genius storyline that addresses the complicated problem of overpopulation and economic growth. I recommend this book if you are interested in climate change or mysteries.
--Ross Rainaldi, class of 2017

Brown, Daniel James  The Boys in the Boat
One of the books that I have recently read was The Boys in the Boat by Daniel Brown and Daniel James Brown. It is a good book for someone who likes thrillers, but it also has some history about rowing. It is about a group of boys at The University of Washington who row in the Olympics. It describes each boy’s journey and background to get to the Olympics. It is an overall amazing book and a very interesting one.
Zane Bjornerud, class of 2018

Brown, Daniel James  The Boys in the Boat
Did you know that crew—that’s right, crew, the team rowing of a boat called a shell—was among the most popular sports in the United States? Well, it was, and The Boys in the Boat in part tells the story of that sport in America from its origins through the 1930s. It does so through the experience of a University of Washington team that became the Olympic world champions in 1936 against striking odds. While the book has several intriguing characters, such as George Pocock who learned to build boats with his father in England, perfected a superior rowing stroke as a kid, and then went on to be the brilliant shell builder for the University of Washington. Daniel James Brown focuses his narrative on one of “the boys in the boat”
particular: Joe Rantz. His family abandoned Joe as a child not once but several times. At one point during high school, he lived alone in a half-built farmhouse and supported himself by poaching salmon from a nearby river, doing hard labor for a nearby farmer, and trying to play his guitar for street money. The Boys in the Boat also provides a fascinating social history of the United States around the time of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl. It's a good and compelling summer-reading book, for sure.

Eric Chandler, Faculty

Buck, Pearl S. The Good Earth

One of my favorite novels, The Good Earth has a rhythm and a feel that are distinct from those of the majority of all the novels that I read, old and new. Pearl S. Buck lets the story take its time, matching the writing to the rhythms of Wang Lung's life in rural China of the 1920s. For many of you, it'll be a leap into the unknown; take leap. The tale of this farmer in abject poverty who marries the slave woman O Lan and begins acquiring land is vital, beautiful, and heart-breaking. As a farmer, Wang Lung thinks all wealth and security comes from owning land, and for a time he seems right. The trials that come with droughts and famine, changing political times, and family difficulties make him pay a price for his beliefs. He undervalues his stoic and faithful wife, O Lan, the person who becomes the heart of the story for me. This gently moving story pulled me in with its graceful, honest portrayal of the emotional complexities -- for good and evil -- that can stir in all of us. It's a beautiful story.

Neil A. Batt, Faculty

Cahalan, Susannah Brain on Fire

I have just started reading this book, and I cannot put it down. Cahalan's memoir brilliantly documents the scariest month of her life when, at age twenty-four, she suddenly and without explanation spirals into a state of psychosis, paranoia, and ultimately catatonia. Just as she and her doctors are about to give up, she receives a controversial diagnosis that changes everything. A compelling reporter and diligent researcher, Cahalan strikes a perfect balance between recreating her thoughts and experiences during her time of madness, and explaining the science behind her condition in a clear and accessible manner. This book forces us to confront the brain chemistry that underlies not only our physical abilities, such as walking and talking, but also the formation and recall of all of our memories, how we perceive and respond to sensory stimuli, our emotional responses to life experiences, and ultimately our personality and sense of self. If your brain chemistry changes, are you still the same person as before?

Anna Ausubel, Faculty

Callahan, Steven Adrift: 76 Days Lost at Sea

Adrift is the story of Steven Callahan as he faces death on the ocean. If you love adventure and spontaneity, this is the book for you. Callahan takes you with him on his journey through the ocean, starting off with a sturdy boat as his only companion, and finishing the journey without it. He experiences complete solitude for seventy-six days, his only interactions with the fish bobbing below his boat. He is malnourished, frail, and afraid, but Callahan never gives up. The most powerful idea of the book is how Callahan recognizes his obstacles, dodges them, and moves on. His ability to keep pushing forward is absolutely remarkable, and makes for a very influential tale. I highly recommend it!

Kate C. LaMair, class of 2016

Camus, Albert The Stranger

The story in this slender volume, translated into English from the French by Matthew Ward, is gripping and alien. Mersault's mother has died, and his indifference and detachment are bizarre, shocking, and unfathomably callous to most readers at first. Keep reading. When asked by his girlfriend if he would like to marry her, Mersault replies, “I said it didn’t make any difference to me and that we could if she wanted to.” This strange character lives outside of the social norms that we expect; he is Camus' “absurd man,” one who shocks us in his behavior and actions, especially an intense incident with an Arab man on a sunny beach. This tale introduces readers to aspects of existentialism, awakening us to examine our assumptions about the basis of the morality, meaning, and even emotions that seem such a natural part of being alive.

While philosophical considerations abound, this brief tale is first a compelling story, one I recommend that you all experience.
Neil A. Batt, Faculty

Capote, Truman  
*In Cold Blood*

This book is good for anyone who is into crime and mystery. For me, crime and mystery are my favorite genres. The most intriguing part of this book to me is that it is non-fiction, but reads as if it were a fictional story. It follows the murders of all the members of a loved Kansas family in the mid 1900s who were killed by a pair of drifters. Capote researched the murder so thoroughly that he was able to write out every little detail about the entire crime (before, middle and afterwards) in a readable, interesting, climatic fashion. I recommend this to anyone in need of a little thrill.

Victoria Laws, class of 2017

Card, Orson Scott  
*Ender's Game*

The military sci-fi novel *Ender's Game* is a truly relatable book for many of its readers. The main character, Ender Wiggin, is born into a society in which the government monitors children in order to have the ability to select individuals to train in the military to fight in the war against the "Buggers," a race of insects. This captivating story takes you on an emotional thrill ride through the journey of Ender into the International Fleet, the military training facilities in space. As the reader you get to take a deeper look into how Ender copes with leaving his family: Valentine, his loving sister, and Peter, his abusive older brother. I recommend this book to any reader who has been placed under pressure to become successful because this book will become instantly relatable.

Wyatt Autterson, class of 2016

Carson, Ben  
*Gifted Hands*

This book is not your typical summer-reading fantasy or exciting adventure; it is an inspiration. While reading it you travel through the life of Ben Carson, a neurosurgeon who became the first surgeon to ever separate twins who were conjoined at the head, but getting here was not an easy path for him. He had a difficult childhood, full of wariness about where his next meal would come from, but his constant reading and dedication to his school work brought him to college, medical school, neurosurgery at John Hopkins, and to where he is today: saving lives of those considered hopeless. This book is a true inspiration of how nothing is impossible, reminding us to take full advantage of the opportunities that we have.

Mallory Garner, class of 2017

Cass, Kiera  
*The Selection*

Jump into a new world of princes and (soon to be) princesses. The selection is a dystopian world where there is unrest from the people; in order to calm them down the royal family offers up a selection. Thirty-five girls are chosen from around the country to compete for the hand of the prince. There is romance, friendship, and many plot twists! This is a fantastic book, and I recommend it to anyone who liked the *Divergent* series, or *The Hunger Games.*

Lyndsey Benes, class of 2017

Cather, Willa  
*One of Ours*

This Pulitzer Prize winning novel tells the story of Claude Wheeler, a Nebraska native around the turn of the 20th century. He is the son of a successful farmer and a devoutly religious mother, and grows up with the prospect of living an economically comfortable life. Nevertheless, Wheeler somehow feels trapped by these circumstances and finds only unease. I enjoyed this book because I find Cather's writing emotionally charged while also intellectually simple enough to make it an easy read. She draws beauty out of even the bleakest Nebraska windswept winter scenery and tells the compelling story of a man whose longing for a meaningful existence taints his otherwise comfortable, plain circumstances. I was mad at Cather for ending the book the way she did, but at the same time had to admit it was perfect.

Phil Klein, Faculty

Charbonneau, Joelle  
*The Testing*

If you like books similar to *the Hunger Games* or *Divergent* series, this book will definitely be a good read for you. It takes place in the future after a war has devastated the planet. The future is entrusted to the few that will be chosen through a series of tests, called the Testing. This Testing determines their future and is
the only chance at a college education and rewarding career. For those who don't pass, no one really knows what happens to them except that some of children are never seen again. Cia Vale is one of the main characters, one born into a high ranking family and expected to do very well in the Testing. Right before her testing day, her father tells her to trust no one. Is there a new meaning to the glorified idea of the Testing? She had looked forward to this day since she was little, but now her father has evoked a sense of worry in her, and to survive she must choose a life without trust.

**Abby Rifkin, class of 2016**

**Chbosky, Stephen**  
*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*  
This book is a heartbreaking yet amazingly relatable novel about a socially awkward teenage boy and his struggles through adolescence. Charlie is a wallflower, on the outside and on the inside. We travel through Charlie's mind as he observes his friends' and family members' lives. This novel is truly spectacular, in that it is like none other you have read before. The honesty in Stephen Chbosky's voice attracts the reader in such an earnest way that you won't want to put the book down!

**Émilie-Anne Choi, class of 2017**

**Chbosky, Stephen**  
*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*  
In this book, you truly learn what it means to be infinite. If you have only seen the movie, I encourage you to read the book because it explores even more real issues than the movie. This novel explores high school through a different lens than we might be used to, through the lens of a freshman boy struggling to find himself in his difficult life. Written in the form of letters from the main character Charlie, this book effectively involves you in the lives of every character as they try to find themselves. What makes this book even more intriguing is that it is technically a banned book. Who doesn't want to break the rules and read a controversial book? That is why I recommend *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* to those struggling to find themselves, or simply someone wanting to find a good book to read! Be infinite!

**Caroline Reid, class of 2016**

**Christopher, Lucy**  
*Stolen*  
A girl, Gemma, is at the airport on the way to a family vacation. Waiting for her plane, she catches a guy staring at her from across the airport. Later, the same guy buys her a coffee only to drug it before she takes a sip. He takes her before she even knows what's happening. Gemma finds herself in the middle of nowhere, with sand and heat, and emptiness. There is no way out, and he expects her to stay there forever, and to love him.

**Grace Hawkey, class of 2017**

**Circa 1605**  
*Circa News*  
The app, *Circa News*, provides succinct blurbs of news, pulling together quotations from reputable sources, across all noteworthy news categories. Customize your news, choosing the categories you care about, and follow stories of interest. Use *Circa* to remain informed without feeling burdened by taking the time to read a longer news article when time does not allow the luxury.

**Kavan Ossentjuk, class of 2015**

**Clare, Cassandra**  
*The Infernal Devices*  
This is sort of a prequel series to the Mortal Instruments series. It is set in the shadow-hunter world in the 1800s, with Will Herondale and Tessa Gray as the main characters. It is a story of demons and shape shifters and an evil mundane. Tessa Gray learns about the shadow-hunter world, even though she herself is not a shadow hunter. She is a mundane with special powers, and there are many people chasing after her. It is a very fun read and I recommend it to anyone who likes fantasy worlds and young-adult books!

**Lyndsey Benes, class of 2017**

**Coelho, Paulo**  
*The Alchemist*  
I read and taught this book years ago (in Spanish) when teaching a Spanish 4 class. It's a great story about following your dreams and seemed appropriate for young men and women who are about to embark on their next adventures. It's actually been long enough for me to read it again. I remember loving it!
Holly Smiekel, Faculty

Coelho, Paulo
The Alchemist
This simple story about a Spanish shepherd's adventure to the pyramids of Egypt had a huge impact on me. It has inspiring thoughts on life and spirituality, and it encourages you to find and follow your own life's adventure!

Eddie Young, Faculty

Coffey, Wayne
The Boys of Winter
If you like hockey or 'Merica, specifically the amazing story of the 1980 USA hockey team, this is the book for you. It goes deep into the pasts of each individual player and gives wonderful and intense insight about the game against the Red Army team. The format of the book is extremely interesting, splitting it into periods. Also, it switches a lot between the past and the game itself. During the flashbacks, it digs deep into the history of each of these tremendous icons. LIVE AND BREATH 'MERICA, USA! USA! USA! USA! USA!

Ben Scherman, class of 2018

Coffey, Wayne
The Boys of Winter
This book decrypts the story of the 1980 United States Men's Olympic Ice Hockey Team that pulled off the upset of the powerhouse Soviet Union en route to a gold medal. The novel tells the story before the team comes together and their long path to Lake Placid. The novel begins with a forward from goaltender Jim Craig who sheds a light on the story from his eyes.

George Kandel, class of 2018

Collins, Billy
Sailing Alone Around the Room; The Trouble With Poetry; The Art of Drowning; Picnic, Lightning (four separate books)
Here is poetry for the reader who is suspicious of poetry. These are conversational, light-hearted (do you ever imagine what your dog is thinking? Collins does, often), narratives that are easy to follow. Often funny (“Taking Off Emily Dickinson's Clothes”; "Why I Don't Keep a Gun in the House"). Always thoughtful.

Annie Hansen, Faculty

Collins, Susan
The Hunger Games
This book is packed with action. Many people have enjoyed this series as well as the movies. My sister recommended this book to me. I liked this book because of the action it never really gets boring which makes it an easy read. This book portrays a country with districts inside. Every year they go to the districts and choose two members to fight against two members from each of the other districts. There are thirteen districts, and they eventually come out with a winner who is praised for a year until he or she is put back into battle the following year. I would definitely recommend this book if you like action and adventure.

Beau Benson, class of 2018

Conan Doyle, Arthur
Brigadier Gerard
The main character in this fantastic book is like James Bond, but from the Napoleonic Era. He goes on adventures while serving Napoleon in a French cavalry regiment. He once avoided capture by beating his enemy in checkers. The book itself plays out like a TV series; each “chapter” is its own story, with the only overarching theme being that Gerard is an expert horseman, master swordsman, and clever womanizer who is ready to conquer the world for his friend and general, Napoleon Bonaparte.

Justin Reeves, class of 2018

Conan Doyle, Arthur
The Hound of the Baskervilles
Though the character of Sherlock Holmes is well known in modern times thanks to various spin-offs, movies, and references, his original literary adventures are often overlooked. It would be a shame to overlook The Hound of the Baskervilles. With a plot that is hastened along by suspense and intrigue, this relatively quick read’s ability to genuinely captivate and surprise its readers remains untarnished by
time. Additionally, the novel is very well written, a feature that many modern stories of mystery seem to lack. This classic story of the quintessential detective is well worth the attention of anyone looking for a thrilling summer read.

**Emily McDonald, class of 2015**

**Courtenay, Bryce**

*The Power of One* written by Bryce Courtenay, is a novel set in South Africa in the mid 20th century. The book addresses many different social-political issues that were present in the 1940s and to a lesser extent, today. The main character, Peekay, grows up within the novel and the character development is evident. One of the things I really look for in a book is the development and changing within characters. This book clearly displays the growing present in many teenagers. It discusses racism, sexism, and many other real issues, both fascinating and powerful. I recommend this book to mature young adults or teenagers who can handle a few curse words and deep content, and who enjoy a good, thought-provoking read.

**Lukas Drexler-Bruce, class of 2016**

**Croke, Vicki Constantine**

*Elephant Company* This book chronicles the true story of a remarkable individual: James Williams, a British veteran, who travels to the British colony of Burma in the 1920s to work in the lucrative logging industry. Williams, a life-long animal lover, develops intimate bonds with the industry’s most important workers: elephants, including one male, Bandoola, who feels life-long affection for the man. Initially a low-ranking supervisor, Williams rises up the totem pole, modernizing elephant treatment in the process. At the same time, he contends with unrest between colonial authorities and the native population, including *uzis*, the elephants’ beloved caretakers. Although the writing is sometimes inconclusive, the book paints an endearing picture of Williams’ life, an inspirational read for animal lovers. The book is also interspersed with helpful images, including many of Williams’ original sketches. The climax, no doubt my favorite part, comes towards the end, when the Japanese occupation of Burma in World War II literally places a refugee crisis at Williams’ feet. Never one to be defeated, he engineers an incredible escape, once again utilizing his beloved animal friends.

**Jonathan Ort, class of 2017**

**Crowe, Julia**

*My First Guitar* Ms. Crowe has compiled narratives from many famous guitarists for this book, everything from Jazz, Rock, and Classical guitarists. Each player recounts the story of his first guitar and how it transformed his life, the challenges each faced when learning the instrument and the joy everyone found. This book is a great casual read for anyone who enjoys the guitar.

**Ted Reece, Faculty**

**Crowley, Cath**

*Graffiti Moon* is a fantastic novel about art, poetry, and Australian teenagers. It is a light read but still tackles meaningful subjects in a very realistic way. It takes place over the span of a single night, during which high school drop-out Ed and inspiring glass artist Lucy team up to hunt down Shadow, the mysterious graffiti artist who paints their suburb under the cover of night. Of course, things with Shadow are a bit more complicated than either of them imagine. This story is hilarious and truthful; the writing is colorful and brilliant, and if you listen to the audiobook, the Australian accents are pretty much the ultimate win. I really believe that anyone could read this and enjoy it, but I highly recommend this book especially to those even mildly interested in art, poetry, or Australians.

**Siena Fite, class of 2017**
Glennan Keldin, class of 2017.

Danielweski, Mark, Z. The Fifty Year Sword
Danielweski is not known for his accessibility. His first book, House of Leaves -- my favorite -- is a veritable tome: seven hundred pages of text that scrawls around the margins in differing fonts and with words turned upside-down. Naturally, this isn't for everyone. (My mother, for example, refused to buy me the book for a year, fearing its strangeness). For those curious about Danielweski but reluctant to plunge into a sea of confusion, The Fifty Year Sword is the perfect choice. It is the story of a story, of a children's tale told by a shadow of a man to five orphans. Perhaps the most charming qualities of the book (without spoiling any plot points) are the five narrators recounting the night's events without ever conversing and the woven illustrations stitched into every other page. The Fifty Year Sword is a short read of about 150 pages, but the love, fear, and hope contained within will forever be branded in my brain.

Stephen Hanley, class of 2016

Dashner, James The Eye of Minds
Anyone who loves either science fiction or video games will love this book. It's written by the New York Times best-selling author James Dashner, and it keeps you engaged throughout the entire book. There is a ton of action and a thrill the whole way. Anyone who likes books such as Maze Runner or Hunger Games will have a blast with this one.

Jackson White, class of 2018

Dashner, James The Maze Runner
In this thrilling adventure novel, Thomas finds himself in a maze without previous memory of his life before the Glade. As Thomas becomes accustomed to his new life, new surprises find Thomas around every corner in his struggle to survive and to solve the conflict within himself. I deeply enjoyed this book and would recommend it to anyone seeking a memorable experience.

Jordon Baum, class of 2018

Daumal, Rene A Novel of Symbolically Authentic Non-Euclidean Adventures in Mountain Climbing
This book was published in 1952, eight years after the death of the author. "The novel is both bizarre and allegorical, detailing the discovery and ascent of a mountain, the Mount Analogue of the title, which can only be perceived by realizing that one has travelled further in traversing it than one would by traveling in a straight line, and can only be viewed from a particular point when the sun's rays hit the earth at a certain angle." "Its summit must be inaccessible, but its base accessible to human beings as nature made them. It must be unique and it must exist geographically. The door to the invisible must be visible." The end of the book is unique -- frustrating, but in a good way if that is possible. I found this book many years ago and keep a copy on my bookshelf. There are a lot of symbols hidden in the text (for example Father Sogol is Logos spelled backward). Enjoy!

Rand Harrington, Head of School

Davis, Brooke Lost and Found
This book gives a fresh perspective on growing up, relationships, life, and death. It's creative and very well written. The story starts out with a young girl who finds herself all alone in a mall after her mother abandons her. It is all about her journey to find her mom and the friends she meets along the way. The book is written from the three different main characters' perspectives, letting us see the world through their eyes. This is a great fun quick read.

Allie White, class of 2017

Delillo, Don White Noise
Delillo takes a stab at quasi-dystopian literature with a book centered around the founder of "Hitler-Studies" at a rural liberal-arts college. The book is, first and foremost, hilarious. His presentation of the "College-on-the-hill" and the esoteric departments is pure, unadulterated satire. The professor's family and their response to the "Airborne Toxic Event" which envelopes the town is at once gorgeous, poignant, and righteously comical. You should read this book if you like postmodern dystopian literature satirizing the fluffy intellectualism of the twenty-first century.
Dave Snyder, Faculty

Díaz, Junot  
*The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

Oscar Wao is overweight, far from popular, and wildly in love...with every girl he meets. He struggles to make friends and is often bullied. Oscar believes he has been cursed, and will never find contentment. These troubles, however, don’t keep the boy from chasing his dreams. Díaz explores Oscar's life surrounded by the culture of his family in the Dominican Republic. He aspires to be like the Dominican men who are strong, confident, and popular with the ladies. His drive is in fact so strong that Oscar faces death to be like them. Díaz brings light to the struggles of youth, and to the uncertainty in discovering one's true self.

Kate C. LaMair, class of 2016

Doerr, Anthony  
*All the Light We Cannot See*

Told through a series of flashbacks, Anthony Doerr spins the beautiful tales of Marie-Laure, a blind French girl, and Werner, a German orphan, and their eventual serendipitous encounter in the midst of World War II. Despite Werner’s impoverished upbringing in an orphanage, he easily rises through Nazi ranks when his gift for electrical circuitry is discovered, allowing him to attend a brutally competitive Nazi academy for the elite. Marie-Laure, on the other hand, grows up with her loving father, who builds her models of their neighborhood, so she can maneuver the busy streets of Paris on her own. Both characters eventually journey to the enchanting city of Saint-Malo, France – Werner following his orders from the Nazi army and Marie-Laure fleeing Paris to live with her eccentric great-uncle. Intertwined with the legend of a cursed diamond, this adventure-filled novel is a perfect summer read.

Lucy Hsiao, class of 2016

Dos Passos, John  
*The 42nd Parallel*

This was my favorite book when I was in high school. I read it in the hot, humid summer between my sophomore and junior years, and I read it again my senior year in a course in American literature, but I almost didn’t want to take the course because I was afraid it would mess up my relationship with Dos Passos’ novel, but it didn’t. *The 42nd Parallel* is the first book in a trilogy called *U.S.A.* (the others books are *Nineteen Nineteen* and *The Big Money*). I read the whole big fat thing that summer and loved it. Dos Passos, a contemporary of Hemingway and Fitzgerald, and once nearly as famous as they, creates a history of America in the early decades of the 20th century that is both intimate and panoramic. It experiments with perspectives. I had never seen anything like it, and I still haven’t.

Nick Lefferts, Faculty

Dick, Philip K.  
*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

While it’s often easy to dismiss science fiction as pulp fantasy, Philip K. Dick's writing in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* unmistakably refutes that notion. Taking place in a dystopian future where Earth has been ravaged by radiation, Bounty Hunter Rick Deckard is tasked with killing the planet's remaining androids; these are humanoid robots deemed dangerous to society. Not your typical fantastical adventure, *Androids* opens poignant discussion of racism, social classes, and the desire for life. It's a philosophical conversation (not, however, a lecture) with the guise of a high-tech adventure. Mr. Dick masterfully weaves his ideas such that the reader is never bored when he or she finds a comparison between fiction and reality; rather, the reader's interest remains piqued throughout the entire novel.

Mark Bautista, class of 2016

Dubner, Stephen J. & Levitt, Steven D.  
*Freakonomics*

This book is fascinating! It’s very interesting if you like statistics. It is a fact-based book about history, and is analyzed through statistics and patterns. In it the authors connect major history trends in the world of economics to small events in the past, like a ruling on a small court case. They also analyze through data collected over many years how certain jobs and careers affect each other in ways you would never expect. Although the idea of reading about statistics may seem boring to some, the book is much more than that,
and the findings are truly incredible. It will make one think about the causes and effects of routine actions. I highly recommend this book for anyone, especially to those who are interested in economics, math, history, or political science!

Wyatt Itin, class of 2015

Dweck, Carol  
*Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*

If you are looking for a break from young-adult fiction or the abundance of contemporary literature, I suggest Carol Dweck’s *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. Carol Dweck, a psychology professor at Stanford University, breaks down two mindsets she has seen trend through her research: a growth mindset and a fixed mindset. She then argues the beneficial qualities of a growth mindset, providing a wealth of evidence through her research, athletes, and CEOs. As a student athlete, I found that this book allowed me to reevaluate my own mindset. I don’t recommend this book because it is compelling or well written, but because it altered the way I think.

Charner Ramsey, class of 2017

Eggers, David  
*Zeitoun*

The first time I was in Cambodia, I underestimated how much time I would have to read. The two books I brought were quickly finished, and I soon found myself without anything to read. A fellow teacher on the trip told me to read David Egger’s *Zeitoun*. The book was nonfiction, and normally I am not a big nonfiction fan; however, the topic interested me—a single account of one man’s experience during Hurricane Katrina. Zeitoun is the main character, and you follow him through his journey. Zeitoun decided to stay in his home when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. The rest of his family evacuated, but Zeitoun stayed to protect his home and his business. Of course, he, like so many others, did not believe the storm was going to be as bad as it was. His journey and account of what happened when the hurricane hit, when the levees broke, and when chaos ensued are powerful, unbelievable, and make you question and be in awe of humanity all at the same time. It gave me a fresh perspective on New Orleans and the struggles the city had when this nature disaster happened, and I appreciated its rawness. David Eggers wrote it in a way that did not overly glorify or down play any part of what common people experienced and endured when during this horrific storm. If you are like me and need to give nonfiction books a chance, start with *Zeitoun*. You will not be disappointed. You will cheer, laugh, question, and celebrate with Zeitoun's story.

Krista Sahrbeck, Faculty

Faulkner, Robert  
*The Case for Greatness: Honorable Ambition and Its Critics*

Written by a Political Science professor at Boston College, this book by Robert Faulkner defends the old meaning of ambition and honor. He systematically uses examples from Cyrus the Great to George Washington to defend the definition and validity of honor, virtue, and greatness. This book is a heavy read, but if you're looking for a book to challenge your view on honor or confirm your view, this book is for you.

Reilly Rastello, class of 2015

Fallows, Deborah  
*Dreaming in Chinese*

For all those language and culture lovers out there, *Dreaming in Chinese* by Deborah Fallows will inspire you beyond belief. What I find most appealing about this book is that it aims to break down the preconceived notions of China and its culture (a foreign country with a very foreign language and a very foreign diet) by diving into the grammar of the language and understanding the culture and humanity of modern China. Every chapter brings new stories and excitement to the image of China, and in the end, this book will make you want to travel to China and appreciate its language and culture for what it is.

Chandler Toffa, class of 2015

Ferrante, Elena  
*My Brilliant Friend*

Ferrante traces the lives of two young girls growing up together in the hard part of town in Naples, Italy in the 1950s. These girls define grit; they are smart, motivated, funny, and confident about their brains and their talents. It seems like they'll be at each other's side, fighting poverty, local gangs, and the crushing world around them at every turn, but as expected, they end up going separate ways. One continues her studies and one returns to a world where girls obey orders, work menial jobs, and refuse to consider moving up in society. The honesty and longevity of their friendship will simultaneously make you weep as
well as cheer for the girls; it’s a great read about a unique and fascinating time period.

**Ginna Halverson, Faculty**

**Fitzgerald, F. Scott**

Fitzgerald, F. Scott

*The Great Gatsby*

This novel follows the story of Nick Carraway and his summer in Long Island. Living in the 1920s in the rich suburb of West Egg, Nick meets his neighbor Gatsby. Gatsby throws lavish parties for the entire town to attend. Read this book for an enchanting tale about the mysterious Jay Gatsby and his long-lost love for Daisy Buchanan who lives across the Long Island Sound.

**Emily Munro, class of 2017**

**Flynn, Gillian**

Gone Girl

I read *Gone Girl* over the summer, and found it really intriguing! The plot was captivating but also pretty easy to read. It’s a combination of a mystery and romance novel, and it’s told primarily through journal entries by the two main characters. This alternation of perspectives kept me interested to see what happened next. There were many plot twists that made me want to keep reading until I found out what happened. Overall, I would definitely recommend this book.

**Carlin Laney, class of 2016**

**Flynn, Gillian**

Dark Places

If you like scary books, this is the book for you. After her best seller *Gone Girl*, Gillian Flynn yet again surprises us with a plot-twisting, nail-biting thriller. Trying to find the real murderer, Libby Day, the main character, goes back to the day when she witnessed while hiding in the closet the massacre of her family. Was it her brother Ben? Was it Ben's Satan-worshiping friend? Was it Ben's girlfriend? You will be astonished when you find out what actually happened on that day of the massacre.

**Joon Kim, class of 2015**

**Foer, Franklin**

How Soccer Explains the World

As a sports fan, I picked this book out because I thought it would be about sports. It is partly about sports, but it is really about Europe. It examines European History and cultural differences through the lens of local soccer teams. It is filled with fascinating stories and anecdotes as well as a lot of interesting insight as to why Europe is the way it is. It eloquently shows that sometimes sports are about more than the product on the field. I recommend this for anyone who loves sports and wants to know more about the world. If you are taking European History next year, read it.

**Daniel Hennes, class of 2015**

**Frei, Terry**

March 1939: Before the Madness

March 1939: Before the Madness tells the story of the Oregon "Webfoots" (original nickname) who became the first NCAA Men's Basketball Champion. In 1939, the NCAA tournament began as a coast-to-coast tournament that many believed would not last past a couple of years, let alone that it would grow to the cultural phenomenon that it has become today. While reading this book, you will get to know all the players on the team, their coach, and what it took to win it all. On top of all that, Mr. Frei uses the nation’s and world’s history as an added background to tell the "Webfoots" story. I cannot recommend this book highly enough as a quick read into some great sports history.

**Richard Judd, Faculty**

**Gabaldon, Diana**

Outlander

Although some might discount this book because of its somewhat questionable reputation as a Stars series, *Outlander* is a book stuffed chock full of humor as well as mystery with a wonderfully sassy heroine facing all odds. Claire Randall is transported through a circle of standing stones to 1745, in the middle of the rebellion of Bonnie Prince Charlie. As an empowered, strong woman, she is woefully out of place among the dour housewives of the Scottish Highlands. Claire must find her way back to her native time of 1945, in a long, but very worthwhile adventure. I highly recommend this book to anyone who likes adventure, as well as those who enjoy loosely based historical fiction.

**Sarah Switzer, class of 2015**

**Gaiman, Neil**

American Gods
Pulling from various types of mythology, *America Gods* twists different cultures into American fantasy. Ancient gods that came to the United States with the pioneers are in a war with the new gods that are created by the things that people in modern culture believe in. The reader follows the mysterious main character, Shadow, as he discovers this strange world full of even stranger gods. *American Gods* is your guide to the Native American gods, spirits, demons, and legendary monsters.

**Renata Starbird, class of 2017**

**Gammow, Igor**

The original series of books was written by Igor’s father, Physicist George Gamow, in the 1950s. The protagonist, Mr. Tompkins, attends a physics lecture and begins to experience a fanciful life where the bizarre world of quantum mechanics and relativity comes to life in the everyday world. Time becomes relative (even during a bike ride) and zebras experience wave-like properties; a herd is seen to “diffract” as they run through the forest. Caution, you must be a physics nerd to really enjoy.

**Rand Harrington, Head of School**

**Gibbons, Kaye**

Ellen Foster is a book about the coming of age of a young girl and her relationship to racism. She explores racism through her relationship with her dysfunctional family and her loving friends. In a struggle with her dad, grandma, and aunt, Ellen will need to figure out what she believes in order to know who her real friends are. I would highly recommend this book for anyone who loves an underdog and an adventure.

**Stephanie Kyser, Faculty**

**Gilbert, Elizabeth**

With papers to write, people to impress, and TV series to catch up on, it can be easy to forget that there is a whole world outside waiting to be explored. Elizabeth Gilbert’s *The Signature of All Things* is a reminder to look past the self and into the beauty of nature. Gilbert takes us on a century-long journey following Alma Whittaker. The daughter of a world-famous botanist and wealthiest man in Philadelphia, Alma seeks solace and intellectual life in the plants around her. As she draws nearer and nearer to the secrets of evolution, Alma also finds herself in love with a man whose every belief pulls her away from the reason and rationality upon which she has built her identity. Alma struggles to understand the essence of plants and people, and this struggle gives birth to an awakening of the body, the mind, and eventually, the soul.

**Ella Tieze, class of 2015**

**Gitomer, Jeffery**

If you are looking for a quick, easy read that opens your eyes to the business world, this is a great book for you. This book explores the world of corporations and business through the eyes of the author who shares great stories and tips for success. For any aspiring businessman this book has tips that are applicable to everyday life here at Kent, and it is a fascinating book that is a great opener to the world of sales and business.

--Mason Saeed, class of 2017

**Gladwell, Malcolm**

David and Goliath: Underdogs Misfits and the Art of Battling Giants

The latest lens through which Malcolm Gladwell looks at society allows him to investigate how perceived advantages aren’t always such an advantage. Looking at how small classes aren’t always better or why less-talented basketball teams should always press, Gladwell’s anecdotes were fluid and easy to read, and he made me think outside of the box about my own decision making and why societally we make the choices that we do.

**Greg Chalfin, Faculty**

**Gladwell, Malcolm**

Outliers

I listened to this book on audio in the car, and it was so interesting! It is important that one keep in mind that the conclusions set forth in this book are patterns and not the absolute rule. It gave me a completely different lens to look at success, whether it is success in creating your own business, in landing an airplane, or in hockey. I think this book is especially relevant to Kent students because we all have special talents, and it’s important to realize how we became so good at what we do. It’s not just our own intellect and drive; it is much, much more.
Lena Rutherford, class of 2015

**Gladwell, Malcolm**  
*The Tipping Point*

Another great book by Malcolm Gladwell! I picked different chapters to read each night before bed, depending on what I thought was interesting. This book explores how certain ideas or products “tip,” that is what sparks an epidemic, like a word-of-mouth epidemic. I loved learning about the different types of people that are crucial in epidemics such as the Salesman. The One Hundred and Fifty model was also fascinating, as it is highly applicable, I believe, to businesses today. This book would be great for kids who are interested in knowing why things become popular, how rumors travel, and why ideas “stick.”

Lena Rutherford, class of 2015

**Goodwin, Doris Kearns**  
*Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*

Awesome. Whether you love history, politics, and Abraham Lincoln or just want a picture of life back in the mid 19th century, this book is for you. It’s inspiring to see how one man could place all the petty grudges, insults, and lies behind him to lead the nation through our country's most brutal war. Goodwin paints a beautiful picture of the stress, hardship and harshness that the 16th President went through during his time as Commander in Chief. If you want a long book filled with facts about President Lincoln, the Civil War, and the founding of the Republican Party, this book is for you. I highly recommend it.

--Reilly Rastello, class of 2015

**Grant, Michael**  
*Gone*

If you want to jump into an entirely new world, this one is a great book for you. Michael Grant creates a beautiful fantasy in which a dome is dropped on a town and everyone over the age of eighteen is transported out. These teenagers must figure out how to keep the town running and learn to provide for themselves. This is a story of learning to be independent; with a mix of drama, romance, and violence, this book will open your mind to the world of possibility and make you appreciate the life that you have.

Logan Ossentjuk, class of 2017

**Green, John**  
*The Fault in Our Stars*

Though *The Fault In Our Stars* is a very popular teen book written by a popular teen author, this novel was one of the best I have ever read. I am not a big reader nor an emotional person, but once I was five pages into this book, I could not stop myself from shedding tears and feeling connections with the characters. Throughout the novel, one will discover the life of a teenager battling cancer, the possibilities of falling in love, and the ups and downs that come with it. I recommend this book to anyone who has not read this book yet because it is a must read!

Grace Lampert, class of 2017

**Green, John**  
*The Fault in Our Stars*

This is an engaging book that always keeps you on the edge. I like this book because it is not predictable, and you never know what's coming next. It is realistic and emotional and romantic. It is relatable for people in several different situations. The author portrays the characters emotions so well that you get so attached to them. It is an easy and enjoyable read. It is hard to put the book down because it's has cliff-hanger after cliff-hanger. I was never once bored while reading this book. I recommend this book to a younger teen generation who is looking for a heartbreaking and enthralling book.

Channah Reznick, class of 2018

**Green, John**  
*The Fault in Our Stars*

This novel includes love, despair, and many emotions to keep you captivated. It is about a girl with cancer and another disabled boy who fall in love. This book may sound cliché, but it is anything but that. Their journeys together across the globe bring them closer together and closer to their friends and family as well. As they try to find answers to an abrupt ending to a book they've both read, they learn new things about each other they never knew before. This book is not only intriguing and exciting, but involves an anything-but-normal relationship.

Brian Wittmer, class of 2018
Greene, John  

The Fault in Our Stars  

I truly enjoyed reading this book, though I recommend a box of tissues for any softies (like me) out there! I became very curious about this book when I saw previews for the movie. I always enjoy the books more than the movies and am once again very glad I read this one. Within the first couple of pages, I knew I would love the book. The authenticity of the author's voice impressed me immensely. He truly speaks as though he himself has fought a battle with cancer and lost loved ones to it. I was both moved to tears and laughed aloud during this reading. I thoroughly detested Van Houten and mourned along with the characters. I look forward to reading more of John Greene's works.

Cheryl Askay, Faculty

John Green  

The Fault In Our Stars  

This has got to be the saddest, but most inspirational book I have ever read. It is about teenagers fighting cancer. It is very graphic and has some descriptions that can be uncomfortable; however, it is a great summer read. Hazel, the main character, provides the reader with awareness of what it is like to live with cancer. I recommend this book to everyone.

Fritz Thompson, class of 2017

Green, John  

Looking for Alaska  

Having loved The Fault in Our Stars also by author John Green, I was taken once again by this beautifully written novel. The journey of teenager Miles Halter (Pudge) to find the “Great Perhaps” is full of humor, deeply intriguing characters, tragedy, and triumph. I find that Green’s writing style alone is enough to enthrall me in his stories, but Looking for Alaska is a truly delectable tale of its own. This book is intriguing for people of all ages looking for simply good reading material. I strongly suggest this book and any of John Green’s pieces to absolutely anyone looking to be satisfied by a good read.

Holly Bolt, class of 2016

Green, John  

Looking for Alaska  

I have read a few of John Green's novels now, and this one is by far my favorite as it touches all levels of the human spirit. The main character, last-words-obsessor Miles Halter, switches high schools to a boarding school in Alabama in search of a "Great Perhaps." There he finds his roommate, Chip (a.k.a. "The Colonel"), Lara, Takumi, and, of course, the endlessly fascinating Alaska Young. Miles discovers what it means to fall in love, helps pull off extravagant pranks, risks getting into all kinds of trouble, and explores some of life's most impossible questions. Green weaves a beautiful story of mischief, love, curiosity, heartbreak, and self-discovery that takes the reader on a roller-coaster of emotions and leaves him or her wondering, along with Miles, if the labyrinth of life, and all of its suffering, is even escapable.

Molly Murphy, class of 2016

Green, John  

Looking For Alaska  

This is one of my favorite books that I have read this year as it has a very powerful message about dealing with tragedy. When Miles is looking for “The Great Perhaps,” he moves to a boarding school where he meets some of his best friends. John Green depicts coming of age from a group of friends who are on their own in discovering themselves and the misfortunes they must face. It’s a heartfelt story that I would recommend to anyone who wants a good John Green novel!

Sibel Fite, class of 2016

Green, John  

Looking for Alaska  

Miles Halter is a teenage boy intrigued by famous last words. He leaves for boarding school to find what the dying poet Francois Rabelais called the "Great Perhaps." At Culver Creek, Miles meets Alaska Young. She is funny, daring and beautiful. Alaska takes Miles on an adventure and helps him realize his own Great Perhaps. It is a story about the power of grief, hope, and redemption and about the meaning of love. Looking for Alaska will make you laugh and cry.

Cordelia Lowry, class of 2018

Green, John  

Paper Towns  

This book, like all of John Green's work, was written beautifully and creatively. I have read a few of his books recently, and every time I am entranced by his unusual language, his connections to people of my
age group, and underlying messages about our existence as humans. This novel is about a boy named Q who falls in love with his neighbor, Margo, with whom he has lost touch since their childhood. One night, Margo runs away from home but leaves clues for people to find her. Q follows these clues on an adventure to find the girl he loves. Read this book to find out more about Q and his journey.

Isabelle Roseto, class of 2017

Green, John  
**Paper Towns**
I really enjoyed this book because it was a very quick read and written very well. I love John Greens books, and this one does not disappoint. This book is also being made into a movie soon, which is another reason you should read it. It chronicles the life of a teenage girl and her mysterious death through the view of her teenage neighbor.

Lacey Rifkin, class of 2016

Griffin, John  
**Black Like Me**
A heartbreaking combination of memoir and analytical essay, _Black Like Me_ tells the true story of John Griffin, a white, 1950s civil rights activists who dyes his skin black. Hoping to better understand the true nature of a conflict that plagues America to this day, John journeys to the Deep South where he experiences alienation, hatred, and violence based solely on the color of his skin. Smoothly interchanging between John’s journey and his analysis of human nature, _Black Like Me_ is a powerful story with as many moments to make you laugh as to make you cry, ultimately proving that you cannot judge a person until you have walked in their skin.

Noah Naiman, class of 2016

Grisham, John  
**The Firm**
Grisham takes you into the eyes of an out-of-college lawyer, Mitch McDeere, in a law firm in Memphis. Despite its normal appearance, the firm soon experiences odd occurrences such as a misfortunate death of one of its employees. Mitch soon uncovers the corrupt nature of his employer and uncovers its deepest secrets. If you like action, this legal thriller is for you!

Sunil Kumar, class of 2017

Gruen, Sara  
**Water for Elephants**
Gruen tells a heart-wrenching story that depicts circus life and all its complexities, struggles, and culture during the 1920s. Told by an elderly man in his nineties named Jacob Jankowski, this story takes the reader back in time to a time that he meets people and animals of all shapes and sizes. Gruen introduces us to clowns, trapeze artists, contortionists, prostitutes, tigers, dogs, and a sweet elephant, Rosie. We learn about Rosie and how she steals the Circus's show, ringing in the majority of the show's profit. It's not all fun and games, though, because Jacob takes it upon himself to look out for Rosie and protect her from unsympathetic, cruel trainers whose only interest is money. Gruen subtly reveals the angst and tensions of the early 20th century through an exciting, fun mask of America's circus culture.

Amanda Smiley, class of 2015

Guène, Faiza  
**Just Like Tomorrow**
This very young French author became famous with this book when she was nineteen, and she is now translated in twenty-four different languages. Doria, the fifteen-year-old daughter of Moroccan immigrants lives in a Paris suburb and tells it like it is. Her father went back to Morocco to marry another woman who could give him a son. Doria is left behind with her mother. Guène's style is funny and sarcastic, with great observations about her neighbors and life in an impoverished suburb of Paris. The book is fast, enjoyable read. For those who would like to read it in French, it is called _Kiffe Kiffe Demain._

Maud Sullivan, Faculty

Gwynne, S.C.  
**Empire of the Summer Moon**
This astounding history of the Comanche people tells the story of the most powerful and formidable Indian tribe in American history. Gwynne gives riveting accounts of the rise, apogee, and fall of the Comanche empire, which once stretched along the great plains from Mexico to Nebraska. By recounting the remarkable lives of the kidnapped Cynthia Ann Parker, the great chief Quanah Parker, the pioneer Kit
Carson, and many more, Empire of the Summer Moon paints detailed, horrifying, yet still beautiful vignettes of the war between the American settlers and the Comanche Indians, one of the largest in history.

Russell Stewart, class of 2016

Gwyn, S.C. Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History

This is an absolutely intriguing book, a New York Times bestseller and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. It tells the story of the Comanches, who created an enormous empire in the middle of the country that would become part of the United States. Stunningly successful in terms of warfare, the Comanches were able to accomplish what they did by essentially becoming the only Native American group that fully understood and expertly realized the possibilities of horseback combat. They became the bad boys of the plains, feared truly by all. They entirely stymied the Spanish, and the United States struggled mightily to defeat them. The Empire of the Summer Moon is hard to put down once you start reading it. Sections that describe the torture and brutality inflicted on the captives of the Comanches are hard to read, but nevertheless raise fascinating questions about human nature and the morality of warfare and conquest. This is an excellent summer read for you if you are interested in the history of the West, Native American history, or military history.

Eric Chandler, Faculty

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

This novel is an insight into the autistic mind of a young boy, who is humorous, intense, and above-all entertaining. His adventures in dealing with the toils of his disjointed family and misunderstandings with his neighbors bring a whole new prospective on how to view the world around you.

Bryne Carleton, class of 2015

Hardy, Thomas Far From the Madding Crowd

I just love the work of Thomas Hardy. Probably you’ve all seen the trailers for the movie of Far From the Madding Crowd that has been released this spring. Who can resist a great romance and period picture? Read the novel first! It’s a wonderful and rich story, filled with country life and complex, flawed, and competing characters; there is so much more in the novel than can ever be captured on the screen. Three men – a shepherd, a local military man, and a gentleman farmer – compete for the love of Bathsheba Everdene. Hardy sets his tale in the fictionalized area of southern England called “Wessex” (once an actual kingdom). The country life of the 19th century in that place comes to life in such beauty, while showing all its true hardships too, that you will be delighted and pleased by setting and era just as you will be with the romance.

Neil A. Batt, Faculty

Hardy, Thomas Jude the Obscure

My favorite Hardy is Jude the Obscure. I read it in senior English in high school and still have a fond, proud memory of writing a paper about it. I actually had something I wanted to say, and that was a revelation at the time. If memory serves, I lavished attention on this crucial moment: Jude Fawley, who desperately wants to go to university, is reading outdoors from a Greek text when he is hit in the head by a pig’s penis thrown by a robust young woman named Arabella. ‘Nuff said? I have since read the novel with students in a course I called “Bummer: Fictions of the Damned, Doomed, and Disdled.” Make no mistake: Jude Fawley is supremely disdled and disappointed, but it’s not a depressing novel, or it’s not a depressing experience to read it. It’s thrilling; it’s awful in the full sense of the word. It was and is among the most affecting books I know.

Nick Lefferts, Faculty

Hawking, Stephen George’s Secret Key to the Universe

Now most of us think of Stephen Hawking and think hardcore science, but George’s Secret Key isn’t exactly what you’d expect. Although technically a book for middle school readers, I shamelessly enjoyed George’s adventures through space in this vaguely scientific book. Using the most advanced computer in the world, George fights the forces of evil and anti-science by traveling around the universe through magical portals all the while learning about science! With beautiful pictures of the universe and some interesting tidbits about space, I love this book and highly recommend it to any lover of science!

Jarrek Holmes, class of 2016

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Hayes, Samantha | Until You’re Mine
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Ever since I finished all of Gillian Flynn's books (Gone Girl, Sharp Objects, Dark Places) I've been searching for other books to fulfill the need for creepy thrillers. This one ain't bad. It's got some nice twists and turns, and it keeps you guessing.

Jon Fortmiller, Faculty

Hemingway, Ernest | The Old Man and The Sea
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In my early childhood, my father took me fishing every summer. I was terrible. I was impatient; I was awful at watching my rod; and I could not for the life of me catch a fish. How in the world, I thought, did anyone ever sustain himself doing this? The Old Man and The Sea is the story of an old Havana fisherman's battle against a feisty swordfish, and his battle against his own body and years. The determination and nobility of Hemingway's excellently crafted protagonist are infectious, and will keep the pages turning through this moderately short, but gorgeous, read.

Tucker Smidt, class of 2015

Hemingway, Ernest | The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway
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I first discovered this book while working as an industrial insulator at a chemical factory. The coffee and lunch breaks were just the right length to gobble down punchy, elegant stories that were easy to read. The stories were just right for giving me a wheelbarrow of ideas and images and feelings to consider through the hours or hard labor ahead of me. Hemingway is a great novelist, but I believe that we can best enjoy his skill and talent in his finally crafted short stories. He is a master at the craft. From action of “The Snows of Kilamanjaro” and “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber,” to the quiet compelling moments in “A Clean, Well-lighted Place” and “The Big Two-Hearted River (parts 1&2),” Hemingway’s stories are just reading pleasure. Sitting on a beach or working in a factory, you’ll find it easy to dip into this collection and find a beauty to stir your heart and haunt your thoughts.

Neil A. Batt, Faculty

Hornby, Nick | Funny Girl
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Nick Hornby has written some fun novels that have been made into hit movies: High Fidelity, About a Boy, Fever Pitch. I like his light-hearted cleverness and relatable moments of gut-wrenching social and romantic awkwardness. I've read some of his lesser-known works, and of them this one is my favorite. It also takes you along on a historical fiction tour of the "Golden Age of Television." (Hornby loves to weave in his extensive knowledge of pop culture.)

Jon Fortmiller, Faculty

Huxley, Aldous | Brave New World
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If you want to discover the truth about human nature, then this book is for you. You’ll first be surprised at how lewd and comfortably open the book is, yet end up surprised at how easy it was to feel relaxed while reading about segregation, purposeful retardation, and casual sexuality. In fact, at some point you may find yourself wanting to travel to such a dystopian society. All in all, it's a good read.

Justin Reeves, class of 2017

Jandy, Nelson | I’ll Give You the Sun
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This is a wonderfully written, easy-to-read, and captivating book. The story is about two fraternal twins, Jude and Noah, and it goes back and fourth between their viewpoints. With equal parts of romance, humor, and drama, the story was wonderfully entertaining with great plot and interesting characters. I recommend this one if you liked any of John Green's books (ie: Fault in our Stars, Looking for Alaska...) or if you are just looking for an enjoyable read for the poolside!

Anna Cummings, class of 2017

Jandy, Nelson | I’ll Give You the Sun
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This is a great one for fans of John Green novels. It's got some entertaining "young adult," angst-ridden struggles with love, personal identity, and family relationships all woven together with poetic language and artistic imagery.
Johnson, Adam  

The Orphan Master’s Son

In the book *The Orphan Master’s Son* by Adam Johnson, we are taken on the journey of a young boy living in the hermit kingdom. What I found really cool about this book is that the main character, the son of the orphan master, has a conscience beyond the propaganda and the closed state of North Korea. Sneaking into Japan, Jun Do, the son, is mystified by a world that we see as all-too-common.

Jim Giltner, class of 2016

Joravsky, Ron  

Hoop Dreams

*Hoop Dreams* by Ron Joravsky is the story of two African American teenagers who travel many miles everyday to a predominantly white school, which is known for its successful basketball program. The book reveals their struggle with poverty, temptations of their neighborhood, and getting through school. It is one of the best books I've ever read; it always kept me interested throughout.

Zach Holz, class of 2017

Kahneman, Daniel  

Thinking Fast and Slow

Economic Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman has one of the most advanced understandings of our brain in the world. This non-fiction book dives into what he describes as our System One and System Two. Our system one is the fast, intuitive system that reacts based on intuitions and emotions, while our system two is the slower, more deliberate and logical system of our brain. He has devoted his life to research and experiments in uncovering trends about the way that we think. If you want to learn and grow as a person, this book will surely do that for you. He teaches us what we can trust from our intuitions and what we can't. He also delivers strategies for avoiding intuitive mistakes that are very easy to make. I am typically not interest in non-fiction books, but the information presented in this book has influenced my life a great deal. It is by far the most memorable and interesting book I have ever read.

Noah Adelstein, class of 2015

Kaling, Mindy

Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me (And Other Concerns)

Mindy Kaling is a very smart and funny comedian and actress. In her book, she talks about her very humorous life before she became famous, as well as voicing her opinions on numerous different topics such as what makes a good best friend, or what the perfect amount of fame is. Throughout the book, we learn a lot about Mindy's life, and begin to feel that we really know her, as she never leaves out details, no matter how embarrassing. The book is written in a way that makes it seem like the entire thing is a conversation with a friend; it will never fail to make you laugh.

Gretchen Grewe, class of 2017

King, Lily  

Euphoria

Simultaneously combining history, adventure, science, romance, and culture, this book engages many kinds of readers from the first page. By following the stories of three cultural anthropologists who immerse themselves in tribal New Guinea in the 1930s (this book is loosely based on the life of Margaret Mead), the reader learns much about early scientific discoveries of non-western, "primitive" societies and the trials and tribulations of jungle living. But it's also the story of an early feminist heroine (Nell Stone is a rock-star scientist and one tough adventurer), of unrequited love, and of friendship. The writing style is light and entertaining, but rich with inner meanings. I couldn't put it down.

Ginna Halverson, Faculty

King, Ross  

Brunelleschi’s Dome

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this novel, which provides an intriguing account into one of the Renaissance’s most enduring testaments: the spectacular dome of Florence’s cathedral. For a century, Florence had debated how to top its ancient cathedral when Filippo Brunelleschi entered the scene in the early 1400s. Brunelleschi produced a solution and pioneered an unparalleled feat, constructing a massive dome sans scaffolding, a revolutionary process. In order to facilitate his grand visions, Brunelleschi utilized a series of clever inventions, ranging from an advanced pulley system to linear perspective. In addition to detailing the
marvelous techniques behind the dome, the book also explores the city-state structure of Renaissance Italy and delightfully transports the reader into the chaotic, crowded streets of Renaissance Florence. This book caters to historians and architects alike; I strongly recommend it for anyone looking to learn about a remarkable tale of human ingenuity.

Jonathan Ort, class of 2017

Kinney, Jeff

Diary of a Wimpy Kid

This book series is really fun and an easy read! It's about a young dorky middle-schooler trying to figure out where he belongs. This is a comic-style book, and it is super entertaining.

Madison Karns, class of 2017

Kinney, Jeff

Diary of a Wimpy Kid

This is a great book if you are looking for a quick read and something funny. The main character Greg Heffley tells stories about what happens in his life, and the book is illustrated with cartoons. Greg is easy to relate to, and if you enjoy laughing, then this is the book for you.

Cole Corbett, class of 2017

Kline, Christina Baker

Orphan Train

This novel is an excellent example of finding friendship through both similarities and differences. Through the depiction of edgy teen, Molly Ayer in present time and though flashbacks of the past life of elder, Vivian Daly, two spectacular worlds collide. In reading into the all-too-relatable Molly and seeing the past of the Irish woman Vivian, this novel captures both historical meaning and ongoing issues with orphaned children and the complications within that life style. Kline beautifully created a story of loss and redemption in the spectacle that is Orphan Train.

Holly Bolt, class of 2016

Kissinger, Henry

World Order

From the rise of the Islamic State to nuclear proliferation to massive international crises, disorder and chaos seem to govern our global system. In this masterful geopolitical treatise, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger unravels the forces that drive nations and their roles in an international order. Relevant and eye-opening, this book is a must-read for anyone who seeks a greater understanding of current events and how the world order can function with so many moving parts.

Grace Chao, class of 2015

Krakauer, Jon

Into the Wild

If you are looking for an adventurous and thrilling read, Into the Wild is the summer book for you! Its plot is intriguing, and the story offers many life lessons for all age types. As the reader, you will feel like you are on the journey with the main character. The plot follows the story of a young man who drops everything from his past, materialistic life and goes on a backpacking trip in remote Alaska. He encounters many challenges, meets lots of new people, learns life lessons, and soon finds himself making life-threatening decisions.

Jayne Fraser, class of 2018

Langewiesche, William

Inside the Sky: A Meditation on Flight

The cool thing here, I felt, was the book’s presenting the sky as a strange place, like the ocean, where we can go, but only with the help of special machines. Langewiesche is a pilot, and he really wants us to know how it is to be in the sky in an airplane. The chapter that stays with me is called “The Bank,” about what happens when an airplane banks. It sounds simple, perhaps, but all kinds of terrifying stuff can happen. Also fascinating is how challenging it was, and is, to fly inside a cloud; that is, to fly when you can’t see anything, including the ground, and can’t really tell by feel what your plane is doing. Yikes.

Nick Lefferts, Faculty
Larson, Erik  
*Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania*

This is a compelling true story of a giant British passenger ship that is torpedoed by a German submarine during World War I. As the ship gets ready to leave New York, we are introduced to many fascinating characters whose lives and work we begin to care about. As they make their way across the Atlantic, Larson details the extravagant meals consumed, activities undertaken to pass the time, and the growing anxiety among a handful of passengers that they will be targeted by a German U-boat (submarine). What makes this an even more interesting read is that Larson switches back and forth between the perspective of the U-boat captain “hunting” in British waters and that of the captain and passengers aboard the Lusitania. The conditions in and abilities of the U-boat are also fascinating details for those interested in the technology of war and ships. As with his other bestselling works of narrative nonfiction, such as *Devil in the White City*, *Thunderstruck*, and *In the Garden of the Beasts*, Erik Larson teaches history through his thoroughly engaging writing.

Audrey Imhoff, Faculty

Lee, Alexander  
*The Ugly Renaissance*

Alexander Lee explores the not-so glamorous sides of the Renaissance and its contradictions. His well-researched book is fun to read and will take you inside the depravity and greed of the Vatican, the rich and powerful families of Florence, and how some great masterpieces came about.

Maud Sullivan, Faculty

London, Jack  
*The Sea Wolf*

Jack London is most well known for his novel *Call of The Wild*, but one of his lesser known novels, *The Sea Wolf*, is not to be overlooked. *The Sea Wolf* is staged in the late 1800s starting in the San Francisco Bay. The book gets off to a running start with the protagonist, Humphrey van Weyden, being involved in a maritime accident from which he narrowly escapes alive. He awakes to find himself the captive of a whaling ship captained by one of the most notoriously brutal men in the North Pacific, Wolf Larsen. You embark with Humphrey on his journey and experience the evil and cunning ways of Wolf Larsen and his men. *The Sea Wolf* is a classic American Novel written by a literary icon. I recommend this book to anyone looking for a good read this summer.

Lincoln Rychecky, class of 2017

Lopez, Barry  
*Arctic Dreams*

In the midst of *Arctic Dreams*, the reader is dwarfed by the precipice of an iceberg, impressed by robust musk oxen so well insulated that snow on their backs does not melt, and amazed at the near perfect map an Eskimo can draw from memory. Lopez’s scientific analysis of Arctic ecosystems is intriguing. The stories he explores of ambitious explorers who perished or persisted in the Arctic are tales of unbelievable tenacity. The writing on the nomadic Dorset and more sedentary Thule peoples, and the former’s disturbing art and carvings, is haunting. On engrained Western philosophies that are narrow in scope, Lopez is brilliantly evocative. With the Eskimo, one gets the sense that the world perceived is totally different from that of a Western observer’s understanding. In the book, the Eskimo language, interaction with the landscape, and perception of time (the rigid past, present, and future that Western society enforces shouldn’t be assumed universal), are impossible for a Western mind to fully grasp, yet also seem vaguely familiar. The personal impact this enigmatic land has had on Lopez imubes him with a sanguine and awed appreciation. Lopez is sure of the meaning of his own life, and that certainty is reassuring to the reader. The Arctic beckoned to the fascinated author, and his own dreams, desires, and imagination have been molded from time spent there. The book is so rich and so real that I think one would have a deeper understanding of the land reading it than actually traveling to the Arctic on any strictly short and superficial tourist trip.

Joseph Ort, class of 2017

Love, Lindsey S.  
*Dolly and Oatmeal*

Feeling a taste for something sweet? Salty? Maybe just delicious? This website I found, *Dolly and Oatmeal*, not only has a delicious selection of DIY recipes, but also follows the life of one food blogger, Lindsey S. Love; she is simply passionate about making life more delicious. Love cooks with all-natural ingredients, including organic fruits and veggies, and she even includes vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free recipes! If you're bored at home, or need a quick pick-me-up, this is the site for you. Every week brings a new treat! Last(ish) but not least....a quick recipe: Two Minute Chocolate Cake. Impossible? Lindsey Love
can prove you wrong! Check out this site to find out how to make

Paula Petit-Molina, class of 2016

Maclean, Norman

* A River Runs Through it

I watched the film version of this book in my Nature vs. Nurture seminar, and I really liked the film, and so I decided that I would write my seminar paper about it. My teacher gave me the book to use, and I read it and fell in love with it. It combines themes of family and brotherhood and strongly emphasizes how important fishing is to this author and his family. The story starts with two brothers who live in rural Montana; you watch as they grow up and become older and wiser. The younger brother, Paul, however, still makes some childish mistakes that are obviously going to be a problem for him down the road. He battles two addictions, while Norman watches and doesn't know what to do. The end is bound to make your heart throb.

Ben Melvin, 2016

Mack, Gary


For any athlete who's ever struggled with mental toughness; for any athlete who's ever experienced self-sabotaging negative thoughts like "I'm not good enough," "don't miss," "I'm tired," etc.; this book tackles the tough topics in sports psychology. This book is mental training. It is a quick and easy must-read for any serious athlete who wants to improve his or her mental game. You've heard the phrase: "Mental is to physical as 4 is to 1." If you work hard to train and improve your skills and your fitness, you should also work at training your mindset.

Stephanie Kyser, faculty

Martel, Yann

* Life of Pi

Although the movie of *Life of Pi* has made quite the hit, it can't reach the depth of true belief that the book does. With stunning descriptions to horrid events, this book will leave you filled with fear, love, and fright. The first few pages may be a little boring, but as the book progresses it will become your favorite book. It centers around a little boy named Piscine Patel who is inquisitive in the world of religion and the power of trust and belief. As his family is forced to move to Canada, a large storm hits the ship, and he is stranded on a life boat with a Bengal Tiger. All the way until the very end, you will want to keep reading, fascinated with the dreadful and, at the same time, marvelous adventures of Pi and his tiger.

Fahim A. Choudhury, class of 2017

Martel, Yann

* Life of Pi

*Life of Pi* is a great movie, but even better book. A mix of adventure, humor, and religion, this is a fantastic book to read for reflection during the summer break. It follows the journey of a castaway who finds himself alone on a life-raft with a 400-pound tiger he names Richard Parker. Through their time together on the raft, they develop a friendship that overpowers the differences between their intrinsic natures. This book is both thrilling and life-changing. You will not want to put it down once you have started it!

Isabel Tangel, class of 2016

Martin, Ann

* Everything for a Dog

I liked this book because it is two completely separate stories that come together in a very cool way in the end. You would never guess how it is going to end and it keeps you excited.

Emma Billings, class of 2018

Martin, George R.R.

* A Game of Thrones

I started this book over spring break, and was a little weary of it at first. There were so many characters introduced in such a short amount of time, so it was had to keep up at first. After I could remember which character was who, I just couldn't put the book down! This is a book from many different characters perspectives, so you get to see into the eyes of the loyal subjects and the traitors. It's a story about betrayal and family. If you are a fan of knights and traitors and war, then this is definitely a book for you. I absolutely loved this book!

Lyndsey Benes, Class of 2017

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Martin, George R.R.  

_A Song of Ice and Fire: Game of Thrones series_  
As a long-time fan of the fantasy genre, I'm not sure why it took me so long to pick up a copy of George R.R. Martin's _Game of Thrones_, but I'm glad I did. This medieval fantasy epic follows the noble Starks and Lannister families as they battle for the Iron Throne of the Seven Kingdoms. Full of castle intrigue, gory battles, and exciting tales of honor and woe, _Game of Thrones_ is a new fantasy classic surely worth a read. Whether you're a fan of the HBO show or have never even heard of the series, _Game of Thrones_ will be an excellent choice to tear through over the summer.  

Hope Giometti, class of 2015

Mass J. Sarah  

_Throne of Glass_  
Here is a story about the most fearsome assassin in a distant, magical world being taken into a competition to become the King's Champion. She must overtake evil, corruption, magic and love to do this. I loved this book and in a matter of days finished the series.  

Christopher Chandler, class of 2017

McDougall, Christopher  

_Born to Run_  
Christopher McDougall introduces a vibrant and eccentric cast of characters that he met trying to learn more about the super-human athletes of the ultra-marathon world. He wants to discover who these people are and why they endure the pain and danger they do all in name of the finish line. He encounters everyone from dropout college students who set off to jog and don't stop for more than twenty hours to an elusive man who abandoned his life to train with the tribe of the Tarahumara in the Copper Canyon of Mexico. McDougall writes with a vibrancy and excitement about running that makes you want to get up and find the feeling yourself. The author himself ends up training to compete against the worlds best known and unknown runners in a culminating race of more than 100 miles in the Mexican desert... and his experience is one you'll have a hard time believing.  

Grace Greenwald, class of 2015

McDougall, Christopher  

_Natural Born Heroes: How a Daring Band of Misfits Mastered the Lost Secrets of Strength and Endurance_  
It would be hard to produce another page turner like _Born to Run_ (if you haven't read it, do it! It's not just for runner geeks like me); this book still does a great job intermingling WWII military history with exercise science and nutrition. The central story casts a bunch of resistance fighters who successfully kidnapped a Nazi commander from under the nose of thousands of troops. They spent the next month eluding would-be captors by running up and down the cliffs and mountains of Crete subsisting on little more than what could be gathered while on the move. McDougall then mixes in thoughts and research about things like Parkour, whole body movement and training, the role of fat in our diet, and incredible reserves of human willpower.  

Corky Dean, Faculty

Meyer, G.J.  

_The Tudors: The Complete Story of England's Most Notorious Dynasty_  
I've been dipping into this page-turner while also reading Hilary Mantel's _Wolf Hall_, which is about Thomas Cromwell's efficient and Machiavellian scheming behind the scenes of Henry VIII's court. Short chapters, saucy stories, and a very readable style make this book a great read. (Plus it will help you learn - finally! - how to differentiate between all sorts of Thomases: More, Wolsey, Boleyn, Cromwell, Cranmer, etc.)  

Matt Bentley, Faculty

Meyer, Scott  

_Off to Be the Wizard_  
This one's for fans of the _Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy_ series. A bunch of Internet geeks discover how to acquire magical powers and decide to travel back in time to become wizards in medieval England. Hilarity ensues. It's the first of a trilogy, so if you like it, you should check out all three.  

Jon Fortmiller, Faculty

Meyer, Stephanie  

_Twilight Saga_  
Obviously, the movie series based on these books was very popular, but the books are definitely something
that anyone interested in both the genres of fantasy and young-adult fiction will like. The author is incredible in the way she is so descriptive and is able to really bring the characters to life. I personally became so hooked on the series that I finished a couple of the books within a week. For those who aren’t familiar with the story, it’s about a girl who falls in love with a vampire, and she finds herself in the middle of a big rivalry between two incredibly dangerous creatures she never thought could actually exist! This saga intrigued me for the longest time; hopefully it will do the same for anyone else who decides to read it!

Jennifer Murillo, class of 2017

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Miller, Frank

The Dark Knight Returns

Widely considered to be one of the most influential Batman stories of all time, The Dark Knight Returns transcends the term “comic book.” Of course, there’s really nothing comic about Batman, but this story is especially dark, containing several elements of the 1980s: street violence, communist fears, and corruption of the government. Despite being in retirement for ten years, Bruce Wayne is forced to put on the cowl once more to continue his battle against crime. I really enjoyed the massive scope of this story; even though it really takes place inside the city of Gotham, the story spans months, all encompassing Batman’s intense determination to purge felons from the streets. Surprisingly, this is really an intricate crime thriller disguised as a comic book; yes, there are pictures (stylistically drawn, by the way), but the characterization is so rich that I over-looked any pre-conceived notions that I had of reading a Batman story.

--Mark Bautista, class of 2016

Murakami, Haruki

IQ84

This book, translated from its original Japanese, is in fact two separate books put together. It’s definitely not a light undertaking, as it is over 1000 pages long, but it’s worth it in the end. In a play on George Orwell's 1984, this book chronicles two simultaneous stories about a female assassin who is unsure whether world is real, and a male author who gets caught up in his translation of a book about the mysterious “little people.” There’s a little romance and a lot of adventure, and it holds the ability to make you question a word that seems unchanging. If you have some spare time, it’s definitely worth the effort!

Victoria Clark, class of 2015

Murakami, Haruki

Kafka on the Shore

Murakami is one of the greatest living novelists; His writing has resonated with me like no other author. His novels are the type you think about for hours after you finish them, trying to understand the themes and nuances. While not as well known as his most famous efforts like Norwegian Wood and The Wind-up Bird Chronicle (books I would also recommend) Kafka on the Shore is a brilliant and moving novel. The story's two interrelated plots, one which follows a teen runaway and one which follows an old man, unfold into a story which explores the mix of Eastern and Western cultures as well as what it means to be conscious. Kafka on the Shore is a great and relatively short novel that will stick with you long after you finish the last page.

Nicholas Fotopoulos, class of 2016

Murakami, Haruki

The Wind-up Bird Chronicle

I think of Murakami as a 'Harry Potter meets Girl with the Dragon Tattoo.' Did you happen to watch "Twin Peaks"? This book, like that TV series, is a bit fantasy, a bit adventure, a bit subconscious exploration, a bit 'this character is twisted,' and ALL amazing writing and story telling; it sticks with you and keeps you thinking. I first read this book years ago and my perception of red hats, wells, and counting bald heads when at the mall was forever changed. I recommend this book for faculty and older students who like weird stuff, and especially if you like weird Japanese stuff.

Miya M. Dickman, Faculty, class of 1994

Murdoch, Iris

Under the Net

For reasons I can’t quite explain, I’m no longer reading this novel with students in the Kent Denver English course called “The Writing Life.” So I offer it here: one of my all-time favorites. It’s a comic novel published in 1954 about a would-be writer making his way in a gently, even magically, conceived post-World War Two London (and Paris). Its charms — intellectual, aesthetic, moral—are so many that I won’t begin to describe them here. There’s this, though: Among the novel’s endearing characters is a dog, a
German shepherd named Marvelous Mr. Mars, once a movie star and now a loving friend to the novel's hero, Jake Donaghue.

Nick Lefferts, Faculty

Nietzsche, Friedrich *On the Genealogy of Morals*
If you are tired of light reading and want to ponder the origins of good and bad, the impact of religion on our daily lives, and the fundamental values that have guided western society for centuries, then this is the book for you! In three very heavy essays, Nietzsche explores these deep questions and makes you rethink your very existence as a human.

Alexandra Sevo, class of 2015

Niven, Jennifer *All the Bright Places*
As a John Green fan, I am instantly skeptical of any book claiming to be a good-yet-heart-wrenching story in the genre of YA fiction. No one can write relatable characters and melancholy stories like John, right? Wrong! *All the Bright Places* is a hugely relatable novel brimming with wit, charisma, and all the feelings you could possibly desire. Violet and Finch will steal your heart as they attempt to determine what they want out of life, each other, and themselves. Finch navigates a state of being he terms "the awake," trying to run from his past, literally, while Violet fights to find herself in what is left of her sister after a horrible car crash. Not only is this a great story, but it's also written beautifully, which is something I truly admire in a book. If you're a lover of language and a fan of young-adult fiction, don't hesitate to pick up this novel.

Lane Baumgarten, class of 2015

O'Brien, Flann (pseudonym of Brian O'Nolan) *At Swim-Two-Birds*
A very funny, bizarre, and challenging book, *At Swim-Two-Birds* is essentially about a man writing a novel whose characters rebel against him and decide to go their own amusing ways; the supposed villain, for instance, sells cats to old ladies and starts to attend church secretly, and the romantic hero wants a quiet life of marriage and the civil service. This book has the best jacket-blurb recommendation ever, from the poet Dylan Thomas, who wrote of it, "This is just the book to give your sister -- if she's a loud, dirty, boozy girl."

David Rollman, Faculty

O'Brien, Keith *Outside Shot: Big Dreams, Hard Times, and One County's Quest for Basketball Greatness*
Set in Scott County, Kentucky, O'Brien's narrative follows the story of the Scott County Cardinals, one of the most highly touted and famous high-school basketball programs in the state of Kentucky, basketball's heartland. Much like *Friday Night Lights* by Buzz Bissinger and *The Miracle of St. Anthony* by Adrian Wojnarowski, O'Brien's book follows the story of Scott County's high-school basketball season and the high drama that comes with it. It's a really good read.

Greg Chalfin, Faculty

Orwell, George *1984*
I initially took on this book independently for an English-class seminar paper, assuming that it wouldn't change me, challenge me, and push me to question society and almost everything I know. If you want a book that may cause paranoia but also force you to re-evaluate government, censorship, and language, *1984* will thrill you. I found myself identifying with Winston Smith, the main character, throughout his journey in secret rebellion and his complex, lustful relationship with Julia, a woman whom Winston initially fantasizes about violently murdering. When you gain a sound understanding of the futuristic society of *1984* (for me it didn't happen until a good fifty pages in), you are able to invest in the characters and their deeply political internal conflicts. The idea of language, 'word crime,' and censorship enforced by Big Brother also fascinated me as a budding journalist facing some censorship issues of my own. I became immersed in the world of *1984* and, in many terrifyingly real moments, I felt like I was being watched, recorded, and monitored. This book is eerily accurate and was obviously ahead of its time, as many of its haunting aspects are relevant in our society today. A must read!

Darcy Neureiter, class of 2015
Orwell, George

I don’t remember the details of the story, but I remember being wholly absorbed in this novel about British people sweating away in Burma, exerting their paltry power as colonists and finding themselves overmatched and exhausted by the comprehensive foreignness of the place, among other human problems. It’s a genre I love (the British abroad), and Orwell’s novel immediately earned a place in my pantheon, beside novels by Graham Greene and others.

Nick Lefferts, Faculty

Paolini, Christopher

I have plowed through Paolini’s first three of four books in less than a month. While I am late to the Eragon craze, this book makes it well worth jumping on the band wagon a little late. The world Paolini creates is incredible. It is an amazing story that is wonderful to follow. The movie is a poor representation of the book, and I highly discourage watching the movie ever. The book has everything a fantasy should have: dragons, magic, swords, masters, love interests, and battles.

Tom Kourlis, class of 2015

Patterson, James

This is the story of an FBI researcher named Emma Dockery whose sister dies in a fire just like any other fire. Even though it seems like an accident, Emma refuses to believe it. She looks into the situation further and finds hundreds of fires across the country that were staged in the exact same way. Emma knows that there is a brilliant serial killer at work, creating the perfect crime all over the country: one that looks like an accident. All she needs to do is convince the director of the FBI that there is in fact a killer at large and then find him and stop him. This story is suspenseful and exciting, and you will definitely not see the end coming.

Jessica Grewe, class of 2015

Perkins, Stephanie

Being a romantic love-story enthusiast, Isla and the Happily Ever After is a perfect book. A shy and sheltered girl, Isla, crushing on the outgoing artistic boy narrates the story. To her surprise this boy had been crushing on her since he laid eyes on her as well, which only makes them even more perfect for each other. The two extremely privileged students fall in and out of love during their time away in France at their prestigious boarding school. Isla finds her way through high school and learns to open her heart to love something other than her schoolwork.

Sarah MacKenzie, class of 2017

Phillips, Donald

This book is a great read for anyone looking for advice on dealing with other people, especially in the corporate business world. Using specific examples of Lincoln's leadership, including his ability to persuade others to do their jobs to the best of their ability while at the same time engendering their love and support to him, Abraham Lincoln is the quintessential example of a near-perfect leader.

Reilly Rastello, class of 2015

Picoult, Jodi

Jodi Picoult is one of my favorite authors; her books are one of the reasons I want to be a lawyer when I grow up. Plain Truth is about an Amish teenager who hides her pregnancy from her family and denies she knew anything about the baby when its dead body is found on her family's property. The story depicts the court case that follows, and how the principles and values of her attorney differ from those of the culture she has grown up in. One of the reasons I fell in love with this book was that I had had a previous impression of what Amish culture was like, but the book directly juxtaposed typical American and Amish culture with regards to a controversial topic in both worlds, and I saw a new perspective of Amish culture and values. I enjoyed how invested I became in the story, even though I didn't think I could relate to it when I first picked it up.

Anshu Agarwal, class of 2015

Pinker, Steven

Pinker is a cognitive scientist who rightly uses his interests and intelligence to think across fields of study.
In this lucid, trenchant exploration of how we teach writing, Pinker is bold, though kind, in knocking down more than a few icons of writing, including some of the examples in the ubiquitous book, Strunk and White’s *The Elements of Style*. He does not moan, as so many critics do, about the state of language today (a complaint echoing for centuries, he shows); instead, he argues that good writing first requires a good deal of reading and the use of our imagination. His idea is to cast aside outdated, perfunctory rules that inhibit clarity and grace, taking instead a pragmatic approach to writing based on an understanding of language and how readers absorb and comprehend the written word. This book is rich and compelling, challenging and convincing. Give it a try. *The Sense of Style* is a landmark book; even if you don’t read it, its ideas may very well come to influence how you experience and practice writing.

Neil A. Batt, Faculty

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**Pinker, Steven**  
*The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century*

If you like writing, language, or fighting about grammar, this one's for you! This really opened up my eyes -- and changed my thinking -- about lots of things we think are wrong in English, including split infinitives, ending sentences with prepositions, and misplaced modifiers. Pinker debunks lots of old-fashioned ideas about language, and he has little tolerance for the elitism associated with certain grammar practices.

Matt Bentley, Faculty

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**Pollan, Michael**  
*The Omnivore's Dilemma*

This book will make you think twice about food. It is one of the most meaningful books I have read about environment, diet and politics. The author, a Berkeley journalist, explains how the food industry has manipulated the conditions in which our plants are grown and our animals feed so that our food is no longer healthy--in fact, it is no longer "food," it is food by-product. These manipulations (for example, the creation of massive CAFOs where cows are fed unnaturally) also create public-health hazards. Pollan has also appeared in many interesting documentaries such as "Food Inc." but this book is certainly his masterpiece because it goes into detail, and it also proposes a SOLUTION for our health and diet woes.

Daniel Gilden, Faculty

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**Powers, Richard**  
*Orfeo*

Composer Peter Els has striven all his life to write music that surprises, is beautiful, and won't become worn or outdated, and when we meet him, he is in his homemade, basement laboratory trying to encode music into bacterial DNA, which would allow his music to evolve, ever renewed, for eternity. But when his lab draws the attention of Homeland Security, he finds himself a wanted man, suspected of bioterrorism. As Els runs from the authorities, he encounters his personal and musical past, and in his ongoing tweets begins to make sense of it all, becoming his own ever-changing composition. This beautifully written work explores the meaning and future of music, the meaning and future of technology, the role of artists, and the relationships that inform and are informed by them all.

Ruth Burnham, Faculty

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**Pratchett, Terry**  
*Wyrd Sisters*

The passing of prolific Sir Terry Pratchett in 2015 has inspired me to tackle his wonderfully satiric *Discworld* novels with a new vigor, and this one proved to be one of my favorites thus far. A newly formed coven of three witches, including recurring series character Granny Weatherwax, grudgingly involve themselves in affairs of State when the ghost of the recently murdered King of Lancre appeals for protection for his infant son from an usurping Duke and his ambitious Duchess. If all that sounds a bit Shakespearean, it is, with winks to *Macbeth, Hamlet* and other works by the Bard present throughout this delightfully humorous tome. Pratchett's work is no mere parody, however, as the plotting and character development are all first-rate. Especially poignant to me as the father of a graduating senior was one character's reflection whether to pursue a career that is expected of him rather than the one with which he is passionate. I have yet to encounter a Pratchett novel that has failed to delight. Read him soon!

Jeff Bleyle, Staff

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**Preus, Margi**  
*Shadow on the Mountain*

This is a book about a teenager in Norway during WWII. He joins a rebellion against the Nazis and delivers anti-Nazi newspapers.

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Keelan Woodard, class of 2017

Quammen, David  
_The Song of the Dodo_
At first glance _The Song of the Dodo_ has the possibility to be an abstruse doorstopper of a book; however, having already read another thoroughly compelling and readable book by Quammen, I gave this one a try. Fortunately, it proved not only to be compelling, but on several occasions it revealed poignancy and sense of place that few other pieces of literature I have read can offer. The premise of Quammen’s thesis centers on the alarming disappearance of many of the world’s organisms. If the first half of the book elucidates the theory of evolution in a comprehensive format, the second half applies this concept to the crises facing the world’s ecosystems today. Ecosystem decay, the idea that geographically isolated and genetically fragmented environments unravel with a net loss of species and are unable to recover from that loss, is the prominent issue addressed. In today’s world, this phenomenon is intensified by human operations. Quammen meditates on this subject with an oftentimes humorous and relatable narrative, as he has traveled to many of the locations he discusses. Imperfect, hand-worked, and detailed maps of the islands add a worldly character to the book. The book is compulsively readable while building a greater appreciation for island biogeography.

Joseph Ort, class of 2017

Remarque, Erich M.  
_All Quiet on the Western Front_
I picked up this book last summer as a possible read for ninth-grade English. I thought the timing would be appropriate, as we are a hundred years out from World War I. Told from the perspective of a German soldier, this is the story of Paul Bäumer, a young man who joins the army with many of his other classmates at the encouragement of his teachers and as a show of national pride and belief in his country. All the young men are initially enthusiastic and embrace the cause, but their commitment and belief in the war and the justification for their suffering breaks down as they experience bombardment and horrors in the trenches. Vividly describing the meaningless tragedy of war, Paul holds out as his classmates begin to die all around him. His poignant narrative illustrates the ridiculousness of a war that pits young men of the same generation but different countries against one another.

Katie Hurley, Faculty

Riggs, Ransom  
_Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children_
In the beginning of this book, I found it quite odd and confusing. There are many photographs in the book that could be found creepy. As I kept reading, however, I fell in love with the characters in the story and couldn't put the book down. Instead of a horror story, it is a bizarre but incredibly intriguing mystery. The main character, Jacob, desires an adventure. When his grandfather dies, he finds exactly that after finding a cryptic message from his deceased grandfather that sends him on a journey. The handwritten letters and vintage pictures add a grabbing element to the story. I recommend this book to anyone looking for a fantastical adventurous mystery; this is definitely an enjoyable read.

Mariah Le Beau, class of 2016

Rinaldi, Ann  
_An Acquaintance with Darkness_
Some of my favorite books when I was younger were Ann Rinaldi’s historical fiction novels. This one is set in the Civil War era and describes the life of Emily Pigbush, a teenage girl whose mother is dying. Her mother’s one request is that Emily not live with her uncle, a suspected grave robber, in the event that she dies. Emily instead wants to live with her neighbors, the Surratts, but this becomes complicated when the Surratt family is accused of conspiring in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Emily’s only option is to live with her uncle, and the life of a “grave robber” is exposed, surprising Emily and leading her in a completely different direction in her own life.

Ginnie Kurtz, Faculty

Rothfuss, Patrick  
_The Name of the Wind_
I love this book. I first heard of it from my Aunt freshman year. Since then I have read the series three times. This book is full of wonder, adventure, love, hope, revenge, and fantasy. It is a narrative story of a boy becoming one of the legends in an old, hard world.

Christopher Chandler, class of 2017
Rothfuss, Patrick

*The Name of the Wind*

It wouldn’t be accurate for me to simply say this is my favorite book. I am a huge lover of fantasy novels, and this one is the best one I have ever read. This novel takes you into the life story of the famed outcast Kvothe Kingkiller. The book opens with a man named Kote, owner of a local inn, rescuing the Chronicler after he is attacked in the woods. The story continues as Chronicler discovers Kote is really the great Kvothe Kingkiller, and asks to record his story. The book is day one of the three-day story of miraculous and intriguing life of Kvothe, and the path that he took through life, with more twists and turns than a mountain track.

**Ben Carpenter, class of 2018**

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Rothfuss, Patrick

*The Name of the Wind*

This is a fun, fantasy story about an innkeeper and his assistant. After meeting a chronicler, the innkeeper shares his story of his time at the University. He tells of his travels, studies, love life, and friends. This story is a lot like *Harry Potter* books so if you enjoy those novels, definitely read this!

**Kendall Crawford, class of 2015**

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Rowell, Rainbow

*Fangirl*

So being one myself, the title "Fangirl" immediately caught my eye. The novel, showcasing the emotional journey of a freshman in college named Cather, provides an interesting perspective on how people approach relationships, careers, and passions they have in life. All of her life, Cather has been dedicated to the Simon Snow series, sharing this dedication with her twin sister Wren, but once they reach college, Cather is more focused on the fandom and her sister is more focused on frat parties. Never having to stand apart from Wren, Cather struggles to deal not only with college courses but with her roommate's boyfriend, whose energy exhausts her, and of course the stress of keeping up with her fan fiction. With the awkward moments, the silly things said, the attitude that we are so used to seeing with teenagers, this novel not only allows you to fall into a world that is realistic, but it also allows you to fall in love with the characters, the story, and of course the fandom.

**Kara D'Alessandro, class of 2017**

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Rowell, Rainbow

*Eleanor and Park*

*Eleanor and Park* is an unusual teenage love story about two misfits experiencing a storybook relationship. The overweight, redheaded Eleanor meets the half Korean and stick-thin Park on the school bus on the first day of school. They bond over their love for 80s rock music and comic books. Their spark creates a movie-like love story that they didn't believe they could have, although, nothing is perfect for too long. Quickly the reader will see issues of domestic violence, bullying, racism, and body image appear in the novel as tests to see if this odd couple can survive the negativity that surrounds them. Can a high-school fling stand the test of time, or is this just a story of the first of many loves?

**Bridget Dubus, class of 2015**

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Rowell, Rainbow

I could not put this book down! I have recently discovered Rainbow Rowelle, and I simply love her books! She creates such captivating characters that you wish existed in real life. In *Eleanor and Park* we meet two characters that can't be anymore different. We fall in love with their love story as they battle social pressures, parental pressures, and the simple confusion that is falling in love. There are funny moments of biting sarcasm and sweet moments of protection. This book captures your heart, and you don't really get it back.

**Kara D'Alessandro, class of 2017**

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Rowell, Rainbow

This book is about two teenagers, Eleanor and Park, who fall in love while having to face issues such as bullying and racism. I really enjoyed this book!

**Caroline Oudet, class of 2018**
Rowell, Rainbow

Eleanor and Park

This book is by far one of my favorites. The love story of Eleanor and Park is unique and all-too-relatable at once. I was genuinely moved by the entrancing yet quirky love story between the two oddest high-school students I could have imagined. Rainbow Rowell does a fantastic job with her words, convincing the reader to appreciate the characters and their specific oddities. I strongly recommend this novel to anyone who loves a good tale of two completely different people learning how to love. Through reading this book, I realized the great depth that certain people can possess, and that simple looks cannot define a person or their capacity to love and be loved.

Holly Bolt, class of 2016

Salinger, J.D.

The Catcher in the Rye

This book is about a kid named Holden who struggles to find comfort in life. He goes on a journey to attempt to make sense of society. You will not want to put this book down!

Brandon Pike, class of 2017

Salinger, J.D.

The Catcher in the Rye

The Catcher in the Rye is a great book that explores the struggles of a teenage kid who had a bad childhood. It is cool to see a kid grow up a lot over a short period of time. The book is very quick read. Great book!

Sophia Reynolds, class of 2018

Salinger, J.D.

The Catcher in the Rye

I really recommend this book because it has an interesting plot. It keeps you thinking about the underlying meaning of the main character's actions. He has a good story on why he acts so awkward. I enjoy this book and finding more about the main character and his interactions with other people.

Seven Lindsey, class of 2018

Salinger, J.D.

Nine Short Stories

I recommended Hemmingway as a short-story master, and I must include Salinger under that appellation. The control and economy of these stories that can capture the emotional turmoil of a person in a few pages stun me. I am particularly fond of two stories about veterans, “A Perfect Day for Bananafish” and “For Esmé—with Love and Squalor.” With veterans of recent wars returning home in our time, Salinger's art is a fine reminder of their pain and feelings of confusion and displacement. You will find jewel and gem with each new story in this collection, stories of all kinds, with a particular eye to adult-children relations (sort of like Holden to Phoebe). If you are a fan of The Catcher in the Rye, don’t miss this book.

Neil A. Batt, Faculty

Sandberg, Sheryl

Lean In

As the chief operating officer of Facebook, one of Fortune’s 50 Most Powerful Women in Business, and one of Time’s 100 Most Influential People in the World, Sheryl Sandberg clearly proves the stereotype of women belonging in the kitchen wrong. Unfortunately, however, Sandberg is a gross anomaly in a world in which men still hold the vast majority of leadership positions in government and industry. Urging readers to believe in a world where all genders' voices are heard equally in positions of power, Sandberg asks women to be more confident in their professional lives and men to support their wives, sisters, and coworkers in reaching a world of equality. Written with both humor and hard data, Sandberg's book changes the conversation from what women can't do to what they can.

Maggie Lou, class of 2015

Scheeres, Julia

Jesus Land

Julia offers her story of growing up in the Midwest under her parent's watchful and very religious scrutiny. High school is hard enough, but having two fundamentalist, white parents and two adopted African American brothers in the 1980s made life very challenging. When she and one of her brothers begin to challenge her parents more frequently, they are sent away to Escuela Caribe. This prison-like boot camp tests Julia and her brother David, but they have the resolve and determination to make it out of there together.

Danielle Webber, Faculty
Sepetys, Ruta  
*Between Shades of Gray*

Lina is just like any other fifteen-year-old Lithuanian girl in 1941. She lives with her family and loves to paint, until one night when Soviet officers barge into her home, tearing Lina and her family from the life they've always known. Separated from her father, Lina, her mother, and her brother are forced into a small train car and travel across the Arctic Circle to work camps in Siberia. Forced to dig for beets in the cruelest conditions while deprived of food, Lina must fight for her own life and her family's lives. *Between Shades of Gray* follows Lina's family as they struggle through the reign of Stalin and show what it takes to survive.

Grace Hawkey, class of 2017

Shepard, Sara  
*The Lying Game*

This book is about twin sisters, one who dies and one who lives, living in a foster family and then looking for her sister. The search has now has to take over her life. She has to find her sister's killer and follow his rules or else she will be killed. I could not put this book down and continued to the next book in the series.

Alexa Trujillo, class of 2017

Silver, Nate  
*The Signal and the Noise*

This is a book about making predictions by using data. If you are interested in how "big data" will impact the future, you'll enjoy this book. The discussion of statistics is light and very digestible, so don't be scared off.

Arty Smith, Faculty

Simsion, Graeme C.  
*The Rosie Project*

The genre of this Australian novel is romantic-comedy. The novel is about a socially-awkward genetics professor who has decided that it's time for him to find a wife. He, therefore, created a "Wife Project" in search for the ideal wife. In the process, he meets Rosie, who doesn't fit any of his criteria, but he can't help but be attracted to her feisty personality. This is a wonderful novel that leaves the readers sympathizing for the main character's social struggles as well as cheering him on to succeed in his pursuit of finding a soulmate.

Ngan-Ha Ta, Faculty

Skinner, David  
*The Story of Ain't*

Language lovers, listen up. We all speak and write and read at Kent, and so language tends to be one topic on which everyone has an opinion, and rightly so. This book covers a seemingly narrow topic about a famous dictionary, but through that topic, the author explores fascinating cultural changes in America through the 20th century and into the 21st. Dictionaries for centuries were the expression of what was considered correct usage and form with a suggestion of moral authority too, as if their declarations came from the heavens. The change from Webster’s 2nd edition in 1934 to Webster’s famous 3rd edition in 1961 was profound, but why the change happened, ahhh, therein rests a tale. No longer would Webster’s declare how language should be used; rather, it would record how language actually was used. Critics declared the end of civilization (believe it or not), and arguments and debates about how language and writing should be taught and valued have raged the stronger since the publication of that seminal dictionary. This book is readable, engaging, and delightful. The writer pulls together aspects of cultural and social history that many of us consider as distinct, discrete ideas, stirring readers to think of what has shaped our own usage of and beliefs about words and language.

Neil A. Batt, Faculty

Sparks, Nicholas  
*The Last Song*

Although somewhat cheesy, this book is an extremely easy summer read. After picking it up I finished it in less than two days. The plot isn’t particularly riveting, nor does the book have any deeper meaning, but if you have nothing else to do it’s a light book that will occupy your time. It’s had a typical romance plot, but it is something that’s fun and that you’ll get through quickly. If you don’t have anything else to do and want a book that involves cheesy romance and family, then *The Last Song* is the book to read.

Romy Petre, class of 2017
Sparks, Nicholas  
*The Lucky One*

This book is my favorite Nicholas Sparks novel, one that I read over winter break this year. This book is about a man named Logan who is in the military, and one day he finds a picture of a woman half buried in the dirt. Logan keeps the picture in his pocket and from that day on, good things happen to him. He keeps the picture for years and calls it his good luck charm. One day, he comes home and decides that he needs to find the woman from the picture. Read this book, and join the adventures of Logan and his dog, Zeus, to find the woman who has changed Logan’s life forever.

Adelaide Hanson, class of 2018

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Stanley, Bob  
*Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! The Story of Pop Music from Bill Haley to Beyoncé*

Only Bob Stanley could have fit an encyclopedia’s worth of knowledge into a single tome, which, importantly, does not read like an encyclopedia! Arranged chronologically, this book’s five main sections, each covering a decade or so, comprise brief chapters on the artists, groups, and trends that were born, lived, and either died or morphed into something else during those decades; moreover, each of these chapters reads like a fresh, snappy pop song that keeps you listening and then ends before getting tiresome! Because the author is British, his take on American groups is often surprising, as are his insights into British trends that never caught on stateside. Stanley is an expert, and his book is the work of someone who not only knows, but clearly loves, music – a highly entertaining and rewarding read!

Ruth Burnham, Faculty

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Stark, Peter  
*Astoria*

This historical account is so riveting that it could be an adventure novel, except that if it were, it would be a three-volume saga. As it is, Stark has told the astonishing story of John Jacob Astor’s attempt to create a trading empire on North America’s west coast in under 400 pages. And what a story it is! In the early 1800s, Astor, then the richest man in the world, procured the enthusiastic support of Thomas Jefferson for capitalizing on west coast. Astor sent two expeditions – one by sea, around Cape Horn, and the other overland – assuming that they’d meet in what is now Washington State. This book chronicles both forays in enough detail to make the events and people real and captivating, and it provides an unbiased and thought-provoking focus on how individuals’ varied responses to all they encountered ultimately shaped the outcome. If you’re interested in U.S. History, this is a must-read, for it addresses just about every factor in play during our country’s early westward expansion and reveals a little known but highly influential chapter of American history!

Ruth Burnham, Faculty

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Stegner, Wallace  
*Crossing to Safety*

This is one of my all-time favorites. It centers on the remarkable friendship between two couples, the Langs and the Morgans. It is filled with wisdom about solid marriages, academic promotion, and writing for money. The reader examines not only what makes life worth living, but also that survival can be a grace rather than a grim necessity.

Loni DesJardin, Faculty

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Stein, Garth  
*The Art of Racing in the Rain*

Denny is a race-car driver who has mastered the delicacy and balance of racing on the track, and who attempts to obtain the same balance with his wife Eve and Daughter Zoe. The unlikely narrator, Denny's lifetime dog Enzo, who believes that "when a dog is finished living his lifetimes as a dog, his next incarnation will be as a man" has the wisdom and insight to relay the human experience with a candidness and vulnerability more moving than any book I've ever read. Enzo tells Denny's story of passion for sport and the internal struggle with fatherhood and illness. It is a story of the wonder and absurdity of human life, unbearably beautifully written, as only an animal could tell.

Grace Greenwald, class of 2015

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Stewart, David O.  
*American Emperor*

Aaron Burr killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel. Under arrest and immensely unpopular for killing a lionized Hamilton, Burr withdrew from the public eye. Rather than becoming depressed, however, Burr journeyed down the Mississippi, befriending frontiersmen along the way. With this clandestine network of
allies, he plotted to launch a militia against the weak Spanish crown and its holdings in North America. Crucially, though, the plot was actually considered treason against the United States, and Burr’s plan was uncovered. The writing on the ensuing trial is superb, the drama the attorney used exquisite. Furthermore, the book’s historical details and usage of primary sources are incredible. In retrospect, Burr’s vision seems quixotic, unrealistic, and traitorous; yet, at the time, that vision captivated the imaginations of some of the preeminent men in American politics and wealth. Aaron Burr’s goals appear obscure today, but one can’t help but wonder what America would have become if they were achieved.

Joseph Ort, class of 2017

Stoker, Bram  
**Dracula**

So for people who haven't taken the English seminar Culture Clash, *Dracula* is a great book to read! The themes about believing in the unbelievable and having faith in the people you care about are very well represented through Stoker's characters and scenes. The writing is excellent, and the ideas about humanity are fascinating! Definitely read it!

Ashlin Cross, class of 2015

Strayed, Cheryl  
*tiny beautiful things: Advice on Life and Love from "Dear Sugar"*

This is a series of essays from an advice column called "Dear Sugar" that appeared on a literary message board called The Rumpus; however, Cheryl Strayed, the author of *Wild*, takes the advice column and transforms it into literature. Her candor and "radical empathy" makes the mundane and the tragic equally universal. I was able to see myself in a mother who blamed herself for her own miscarriage, a teenager trying to decide whether to tell her friend that her boyfriend is cheating on her, and a bride trying to decide whether to invite her formerly abusive father to her wedding. This was an easy read, but it struck deep chords that spoke to the common struggle for meaning we all experience.

Eddie Young, Faculty

Strayed, Cheryl  
**Wild**

This is a wonderful book of self-discovery, perfect for Colorado hikers. Following the story of Cheryl Strayed, this memoir tracks her as she hikes the Pacific Crest Trail, woefully unprepared for the challenges she will face. It is a great, quick read, and perfect for a long vacation!

Grace Rainaldi, class of 2015

Strycker, Noah  
**Among Penguins**

Who doesn’t love penguins? After reading Stryker’s *The Thing with Feathers*, I was eager to read more of his work. *Among Penguins* discusses Stryker’s experiences from an extended research trip to Antarctica, during which he lives in an isolated hut with two companions, collecting data on a colony of hundreds of thousands of Adelaide penguins. The book describes the trip in fastidious detail, in addition to exploring an eclectic mix of topics: the biology of penguins, the history of Antarctic exploration, and Strycker’s own personal reflections on his life. These various stories come together to create an enjoyable combination of memoir, scientific research, and humor. Unlike other books in this genre, *Among Penguins* is very approachable, written almost in the style of a diary (for good or bad, the writing is somewhat informal). *Among Penguins* is a succinct, entertaining, and novel read that I very much enjoyed.

Jonathan Ort, class of 2017

Strycker, Noah  
**The Thing with Feathers**

In this book, Noah Strycker, a veteran ornithologist, takes the reader on a wide-ranging, chapter-by-chapter journey that explores the amazing capabilities of a variety of species of birds. Each chapter focuses on one species’ unique (often times unbelievable) attributes, providing a succinct overview of the bird before delving into biological considerations and entertaining anecdotes. The topics range from pigeons’ ability to fly hundreds of miles to a pre-selected location and hummingbirds' aggressive territorial disputes, to magpies’ unique ability to recognize their own reflection in a mirror. In addition to enumerating these incredible traits, the book explores the connections between these birds and humanity, usually offering a thought-provoking parallel at the end of each chapter. The chapters are ordered in no particular way, making it easy to skip around and read individual chapters. Altogether, I found this book to be a compelling, intellectual, and ultimately inspiring read.

Jonathan Ort, class of 2017
Stuart, Trenton Lee  
*The Mysterious Benedict Society*  
If you love a book full of adventure and unordinary plot twists, then *The Mysterious Benedict Society* is the book for you. It follows the journey of four children with hard pasts, all under the age of twelve, who are faced with ethical and personal dilemmas that they must solve. A man named Mr. Benedict, who is anything but ordinary, adopts them and trains them to be able to solve highly complicated tasks. The thing most people do not know though, is that these children are brilliant and each has a special gift to bring to each task. Their journeys are full of adventure and twists that bring up questions and unresolved issues from their pasts, but the children must overcome them in order to survive and outsmart their competitors, the Ten Men. This novel is a fun and interesting way to look at children’s intelligence and how to problem solve in the world.  
*Meryl Jobe, class of 2016*

Tartt, Donna  
*The Secret History*  
This is a fantastic book! Set at a college in the northeast, this novel tells the story of six classics students who find a way of living that is far different from normal college students. They are in all ways isolated from the rest of their peers by choice, and Richard, the narrator finds his way into the secretive cult. In this inverted detective story, you'll hear of the murder of Bunny, and come to discover how easy it can be to kill.  
*Rachel Prokupek, class of 2015*

Tharp, Tim  
*The Spectacular Now*  
I loved *The Spectacular Now* because it was funny, relatable, and told a great story. It is written from the perspective of Sutter Keeley, the funny party boy, who recounts how he meets the quiet and reserved Aimee. It is a wonderful story that talks about love and happiness, but also about the hardships of being in high school and being a teenager. This book was also made into a movie in 2013 that features Shailene Woodley and Miles Teller. So after you read this lovely and captivating novel, you can watch the movie that highlights the rich story of book wonderfully.  
*Audrey McDonald, class of 2017*

Thiel, Peter  
*Zero to One: Notes on Startups, or How to Build the Future*  
One of the most compelling analyses I read this year, *Zero to One* is a book about the development of new ideas. Contrarian in nature, Thiel argues in favor of the conventionally undesirable market structure of monopoly, reasoning that disruptive innovations will not be the result of incremental improvements due to competition. Thiel relates his philosophy on innovative companies to his experiences as a founder of PayPal, early investor in Facebook, and head of a fellowship that pays college students to drop out of college and start a business, among other occupations. Not to be construed as merely a book about business, *Zero to One* draws on philosophy, natural sciences, history, and the arts to present an absorbing narrative on how new ideas come about and why they matter.  
*Wesley Dencker, class of 2015*

Thomas, Leah  
*Because You’ll Never Meet Me*  
When two boys cut off from society begin to write letters to each other, life stories unfold as well as secrets. Oliver has an unusual allergy to electricity, but Moritz's weak heart beats with the assistance of a pacemaker, so the two could never meet. Despite the distance separating them, they support each other through troubles like bullying and loneliness. This is a fantastic and beautifully written novel encompassing the comforts of long-distance relationships and friendship. I recommend this story to anyone wishing for an intense, nerve-wracking but heartfelt book.  
*Trinity Rollins, class of 2018*

Tolkien, J.R.R  
*The Hobbit*  
I have always loved fantasy books since I was little, but never before have I truly wanted to live in a fantasy world as I do when I read this book. This story is filled with many adventures and panders to all audiences. It is truly rare to find yourself not enjoying this book even if you have not been a huge fan of fantasy in the past. I cannot recommend this book enough.
Sebastian Radecki, class of 2018

Trigiani, Adriana
Lucia, Lucia
Reading Adriana Trigiani's novels has the same affect on my soul as a hot cup of chicken-noodle soup does for my body on a cold winter day. It is utterly relaxing and peaceful. Though I love all of Adriana Trigiani's books, this one is my favorite since it was the first of her novels that I read. Her books take me into the Italian-American culture, in what was a simpler time. She speaks to love, learning, growth, personal struggles, and choices. Lucia is a strong woman, and I feel privileged to know her (fictional) story. In fact, after writing this recommendation, I may need to go pick it up again tonight!

Cheryl Askay, Faculty

Twain, Mark
A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court
Whimsical, absurd, and at times harsh, Twain's Connecticut Yankee delivers both in terms of original narrative and his trademark sarcasm. As the title might suggest, the novel follows a modern man's journey after finding himself in Medieval times. From the more inventive and amusing events, like the hero Hank predicting an eclipse or teaching knights to ride bicycles, to the more devastating, like the repercussions of his introduction of modern warfare to a medieval setting, the book is never uninteresting. Twain's unique voice and perspective, too, would be enough to make Connecticut Yankee a triumph even without the intrigue. This story is a great Twain piece for all, regardless how you felt about reading Huckleberry Finn sophomore year.

Jeremy Poley, class of 2015

VanderMeer, Ann and Jeff (editors)
The Weird
If you want a crash course in the strange and supernatural, yet at the same time want to experience fiction that pushes the limits of categorization, this book is for you. It's exactly what the title suggests--weird (no other way to put it)--but it's also wonderful. Weird is a world anthology with authors from the beginning of the 20th century to 2010, and though you might have nightmares after reading some of these tales, they'll also be some of the coolest nightmares you'll ever have.

Eric Dawson, Faculty

VanderMeer, Jeff
Annihilation
I highly recommend all three books in the “Southern Reach” trilogy (the other two are Authority and Acceptance), but Annihilation is the first, so clearly start there. The premise is that of the existence of “Area X,” a region of pristine wilderness, some time in the not-so-distant future. Distressingly, however, the borders of Area X are expanding, and human expeditions sent to investigate all end in unnaturally haunting or bloody ways. The details in this book are nothing short of spectacular. VanderMeer actually comes immensely close to unraveling all of Area X’s secrets, especially as the trilogy progresses, but the world he creates is so monumentally detailed, vast, and deep that he himself, as the author, does not, and indeed cannot, explain it all. There is an ineffable, evocatively beautiful quality to the book that gives the impression that nobody and nothing will ever fully understand Area X. That thought, like the rest of the book, is amazing. This novel is so stunning that it is all but impossible to do it justice without reading it, so do just that.

Joseph Ort, class of 2017

Vizzini, Ned
It's Kind of a Funny Story
You may have already seen the movie for this book, but personally, I enjoyed the book much more. Although it is a little dark and twisted at times (it is a book about teen depression and mental illness), this book has an amazing message with interesting characters. A teen named Craig, who is overly stressed out, checks himself into the mental hospital after deeply considering suicide. Because the teen ward is shut down, he stays with all the adults and all of the teenagers. During his short time there, he meets a variety of people and learns something deeper about himself. With a good sense of humor and a touch of romance, this book is inspiring and touching, and definitely a must read.

Mariah Le Beau, Class of 2016

Yudkowsky, Eliezer
Harry Potter and the Methods of Rationality
This epic work of “fan fiction” examines an alternate reality in which Harry Potter was exposed to the
scientific method prior to matriculating at Hogwarts. The author tries to stay loyal to the fictional world that Rowling imagined while his character constantly tests the new rules of the magical world. If you ever wanted to read a Harry Potter story with more plotting, more science, and more philosophical quandaries, then this is the work for you. The entire text is available online in various formats at http://hpmor.com/.

Alex Clement, Faculty

Watching America (website)
The Watching America website provides a perfect way to bring alternative perspective into your life without investing a great deal of time all at once. This site translates newspaper articles from around the world that speak to events involving the United States (both domestically and internationally). It literally shows the perspectives of the world as it watches America. To ensure that you see the new headlines as they arise each day and to help boost their funding, make it your homepage: http://watchingamerica.com/WA/

James Covi, Faculty

Weir, Andy

The Martian
One of my friends lent me The Martian, saying it was one of the best books he has ever read—and I can’t agree more! Astronaut Mark Watney was one of the first people to walk on Mars, and now, “he’s sure he’ll be the first person to die there.” Watney was abandoned on the red planet after his crew (thinking him dead) was forced to evacuate due to a dangerous dust storm. Now, he has to dream up ways to survive (like figuring out how to make food and finding a way to signal NASA) with all of the odds against him. This book is hilarious, fascinating, exciting, and a complete page-turner! I’m definitely going to be picking it up again (maybe multiple times) this summer!

Christine Anderson, class of 2016

Wetzel, Dan

Glory Road
Glory Road by Dan Wetzel is a terrific book that combines basketball and the racial tensions in the United States in the 1960s. It tells the story of the first college basketball team to ever start five black players, and it happened in the Deep South; it is quite a struggle for the coach and the players, white or black.

Zach Holz, class of 2017

Winspear, Jacqueline

Birds of a Feather
Windspear’s Maisie Dobbs series tracks the life and work of the brilliant Maisie Dobbs, an English criminal investigator who worked her way from a young, book-loving servant to the university and eventually to her own private investigation office in London’s Fitzroy Square. The second novel of the Maisie Dobbs series, Birds of a Feather chronicles Maisie’s search for a runaway heiress. As Maisie becomes more involved in the case, she discovers a connection between the heiress and a murder investigated by Scotland Yard. Peppered with Maisie’s subtle epiphanies and engaging details of 1930 London life, this national bestseller intrigued me and gave me a window into the gloomy yet exciting interwar English world.

Ilinca Birlea, class of 2015

Woods, Beatrice

I Shock Myself
I Shock Myself is an autobiography of Beatrice Woods. This is an amazing read about a woman before her time. Beatrice Woods was an American potter who found clay late in her life and worked in her studio everyday until the ripe age of 104. She was a free spirit who gives us a glimpse into her world as an independent female artist and into her connection to Surrealism and Dadaism.

Margaret NeJame, Faculty

Wroblewski, David

The Story of Edgar Sawtelle
This book is about a mute boy living on a rural farm in Wisconsin. His family breeds dogs and his family responsibilities include naming the newborn puppies, taking care of the dogs, and training them basic obedience skills. It's really interesting not only if you are an animal person, and the plot becomes really intriguing. He gets wrapped up in trying to solve his father's murder and save his family's business.

Amanda Smiley, class of 2015
X, Malcolm & Haley, Alex

The Autobiography of Malcolm X
This is one of the most honest and interesting books about U.S. History I have read. Malcolm X (with the aide of his biographer, Alex Haley) narrates the history of the turbulent 1960s from the unique perspective of someone who ultimately dedicated his life to justice for African-Americans, but also of someone who changed his political views and perspectives over many years. Malcolm X's tragic childhood life is certainly eye-opening for many Americans who lived a more sheltered and privileged life; what the author does so well is explain how his story is not unique, and how the political and social structures (schools, hospitals, social agencies, jails) of this country have created generations of young African-American males who have suffered the same story as Malcolm.

Daniel Gilden, Faculty

X, Malcolm & Haley, Alex

The Autobiography of Malcolm X
It's been a while since I read this book, but I find myself thinking of it and referring to it often. One reason for this is that I get frustrated when I hear people describe Malcolm X as violent. Yes, Malcolm X for a time was militant in his belief that African Americans needed to look within their own communities to combat the effects of racism in America. And yes, he did give a speech in 1964 titled, "The Ballot or the Bullet," but the bullet in the title was not a call to arms, but part of a larger metaphor about the power of the vote and the long denial of that power to African Americans. Soon after this speech, Malcolm X experienced a personal transformation that entirely changed his views about the Civil Rights Movement and the potential for an integrated America, but you will have to read this book to learn more about that. This last chapter of his story never made it into the history textbooks. A second reason I relate to this story is that it is so raw and vibrant and honest. Even in his occasional arrogance and foolishness, Malcolm X is impossible to judge. His life was full of real failures, successes, disillusionment, and epiphanies. When his story ends (both on the page and in reality, to an assassin's bullet), you will mourn the loss of this courageous and truly exceptional man.

Sarah Campbell, Faculty

Yanagihara, Hanya

The People in the Trees
I read this novel last summer and still find myself wrestling with whether I liked it or not. It's certainly entertaining; a young doctor travels to a remote Micronesian island as part of an expedition to contact a lost tribe of people. In the process, he discovers a species of turtle that, when ingested, gives the people a much longer lifespan (although their minds continue aging). The story moves back and forth between the doctor's laboratory experiments and his continued association with the islanders, as the doctor becomes world-famous and pharmaceutical companies start to compete with him for access to the rapidly declining turtle population. It's quite fascinating! To add to all of this, there is an undercurrent lurking as repeated references are made to the doctor's eventual fall from grace amid scandalous circumstances. It's probably that element of the story that has me still hesitant, but it certainly makes the novel memorable and emotionally conflicting.

Lee Barrow, Faculty

Yancey, Rick

The 5th Wave
If you love science fiction novels, this is the perfect book for you. Aliens have finally taken over the world in five waves. First, there is a power outage, planes falling from the sky, no electricity; second, a actual wave kills all those who lives on the coast; third, a plague, known as the "blood plague," kills off the majority of the human race; fourth, silencers arrive. The silencers are aliens who have taken over humans' bodies, and they only have one goal: to kill all humans. The fifth and final wave, no one knows yet knows what it is, but its coming. In The 5th Wave, you follow Cassie through her adventure to find her younger brother, who has been taken to the only military base that still operates. Though this exhilarating, life-altering novel, you'll be on the edge of your seat as Cassie discovers something the government has been hiding all along.

Matison Miller, class of 2017

Zander, Rosamund Stone & Zander, Benjamin

The Art of Possibility
I've appreciated this book because of its emphasis on personal expectation and possibility in people's
lives. Two great performers talk about seeing what we can become rather than measuring where we've been, and then they translate that understanding into every day life and relationship.

David Hodel, Faculty

Zweig, Stefan

I became interested in Stefan Zweig while looking at the end credits of the movie The Grand Budapest Hotel, where Wes Anderson said that the film was inspired by the works of Stefan Zweig. I picked up a couple of Zweig's books and started with The Post Office Girl, mostly because it was short. Zweig wrote it in 1925, but it wasn't published until after his death. It's fabulous. The characters are vivid (and character is always the most important thing to me in fiction), and the plot takes all manner of strange and surprising turns; just when you're anticipating where the story is going, it takes off in a new direction. The story is also a powerful critique of society in the 1920s, which means, as you know from reading The Great Gatsby, that it's still sharp and pointed today.

David Rollman, Faculty

The Post Office Girl

I became interested in Stefan Zweig while looking at the end credits of the movie The Grand Budapest Hotel, where Wes Anderson said that the film was inspired by the works of Stefan Zweig. I picked up a couple of Zweig's books and started with The Post Office Girl, mostly because it was short. Zweig wrote it in 1925, but it wasn't published until after his death. It's fabulous. The characters are vivid (and character is always the most important thing to me in fiction), and the plot takes all manner of strange and surprising turns; just when you're anticipating where the story is going, it takes off in a new direction. The story is also a powerful critique of society in the 1920s, which means, as you know from reading The Great Gatsby, that it's still sharp and pointed today.
How to Select a Book

"Tell me what you read," observed Goethe, "and I will tell you what you are."

“I love to read – I just don’t know what to read!” This is a fairly common statement, and explains the power of book reviews, book clubs and One Community readings. The following tips and resources may also assist you in choosing a great book.

1. Ask a friend – there is the reason why book clubs are so popular- friends come together to read shared interests.

2. Ask a librarian or a faculty member – it’s what we do; it’s what we love. We can offer you multiple perspectives.

3. Follow your passions and interests – you have waited nine months to read in your area of interest; have fun in choosing.

4. Explore your curiosities – now is also the time to explore ideas and discover things you have QUESTIONED over this past year.

5. Try Book Lists - most public libraries sponsor teen reading councils; these councils generate wonderful reading lists for their peers. (Did you know Denver metropolitan area is considered to be one of the top library communities in the USA!) Other noteworthy lists are generated by: the American Library Association; the New York Times; national and international literary awards- such as the Michael Printz Award; bookstores – Tattered Cover, The Bookies, Barnes and Noble, Amazon; and finally, bloggers.

6. Browse the shelves and explore for yourselves - many students find a favorite book when browsing for a title, so browse the shelves often. Once you select a book off the shelf, read the back jacket to see if the commentary piques your interest. Don’t forget to read the reviews inserted inside the book cover or on the book jacket. After you select the book, if after fifty pages or so, you aren’t excited about the book – PUT IT DOWN! It is time to find another book – life is too short; read what excites you.