



May 2011

Dear 11th Grade Students and Parents,

Summer reading is a great way to practice reading independently at your own pace. It should be enjoyable *and* useful: Summer reading is a way to prepare for the work that is expected of you during the school year.

For 11th grade summer reading, you are required to read *Slaughter House Five* by Kurt Vonnegut. *Slaughter House Five* is one of the world's great anti-war books. Centered on the firebombing of Dresden, Billy Pilgrim's odyssey through time reflects the mythic journey of our own fractured lives as we search for meaning in what we are afraid to know.

When we return in the fall, we will do several activities around the required text. You will write a learning log, or annotated bibliography, in Advisory on both the required book and a book of your choice. There will be an open-book demonstration of knowledge in your literature class to check for your understanding of content on *Slaughter House Five*. If you actively read the book, you will be successful on this demo. Doing good work with your summer reading will be a great way to successfully transition into your next year of upper school.

In addition to the required book, you should also choose one book from the attached list to actively read. There are many different options in terms of genre, style, and subject matter. Keeping in mind that each student has his or her own interests and is at a different reading and maturity level, the librarians have created a suggested summer reading list for all of upper school. The list allows for a broad range of books that appeal to a wide range of students. There are some books on the list that are relevant and appropriate for some students, and not for others. Consider reading reviews and exploring the bookstore to choose the best fit for you.

Have a restful, relaxing and restorative summer!

Best wishes for a great summer of reading and relaxing,

Senior Institute Literature Teachers

Upper School Suggested Summer Reading List

The suggested reading list includes titles for upper school students, keeping in mind that each student has his or her own interests and different reading and maturity levels. The list offers a broad range of books that appeal to a wide range of students. Some books on the list are relevant and suitable for some students, and not for others. Students may need guidance and support from parents to help determine which books might be good matches for them.

Abraham Lincoln, Vampire Hunter by Seth Grahame-Smith

When Abraham Lincoln was nine-years-old, his mother died from an ailment called the milk sickness. Only later did he learn that his mother's deadly affliction was actually the work of a local vampire, seeking to collect a debt owed by Lincoln's father. When Abe learned the truth, he vowed revenge and kept one passion hidden throughout his life: the brutal elimination of all vampires.

The Adoration of Jenna Fox by Mary E. Pearson

In the not-too-distant future when biotechnological advances have made synthetic bodies and brains possible but illegal, a 17-year-old girl who is recovering from a serious accident and suffering from memory lapses learns a startling secret about her existence.

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho

With the help of several enchanted strangers, an Andalusian shepherd boy learns to listen to himself.

The Art of Racing in the Rain by Garth Stein

A heart-wrenching but deeply funny and ultimately uplifting story of family, love, loyalty, and hope – a captivating look at the wonders and absurdities of human life . . . as only a dog could tell it.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X: As Told to Alex Haley by Malcolm X

If there was any one man who articulated the anger, struggle, and beliefs of African Americans in the 1960s, that man was Malcolm X. This is his story.

Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking by Malcolm Gladwell

How do we make decisions - good and bad - and why are some people so much better at it than others? Gladwell shows how the difference between good decision making and bad has nothing to do with how much information we can process quickly, but rather with the few particular details on which we focus. If you like *Blink*, try *Outliers*, *The Tipping Point*, and *What the Dog Saw*.

Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen by Christopher McDougall

Part adventure story, part extreme sports, *Born to Run* is a riveting story about one journalist's quest to discover the secrets of the world's greatest distance runners - a reclusive Indian tribe living deep in the Copper Canyon of northern Mexico.

A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes by Stephen Hawking

Professor Hawking shares his blazing intellect with non-scientists everywhere, guiding them expertly to confront the supreme questions of the nature of time and the universe.

The Cardturner by Louis Sachar

As the summer after junior year begins, Alton Richards finds himself becoming intrigued by his great-uncle Lester, by the game of bridge, and by a pretty and shy girl. Alton soon struggles to figure out what it all means, and ultimately to figure out the meaning of his own life.

Catch-22 by Joseph Heller

At the heart of Joseph Heller's bestselling novel is a satirical indictment of military madness, stupidity, and the desire of an ordinary man to survive it. First published in 1961, the book tells the tale of the dangerously sane Captain Yossarian, who spends his time in Italy plotting to survive.

City of Thieves: A Novel by David Benioff

A writer visits his retired grandparents in Florida to document their experience during the infamous siege of Leningrad. His grandmother won't talk about it, but his grandfather reluctantly consents. The result is the captivating odyssey of two young men trying to survive against desperate odds. A 2009 Alex Award winner.

Clockwork Angel (The Infernal Devices, Book 1) by Cassandra Clare

When 16-year-old Tessa Gray crosses the ocean to find her brother, her destination is England, the time is the reign of Queen Victoria, and something terrifying is waiting for her in London's Downworld, where vampires, warlocks, and other supernatural beings stalk the gas-lit streets. If you like this one, try the others in the series.

The Devil in the White City by Erik Larson

Bringing Chicago circa 1893 to vivid life, this story intertwines the true tale of two men - the brilliant architect behind the legendary 1893 World's Fair, striving to secure America's place in the world; and the cunning serial killer who used the fair to lure his victims to their death.

The Elegance of the Hedgehog by Muriel Barbery

Two girls live inconspicuous lives in the center of an elegant Paris apartment building. It is only when a stranger moves into their building - and sees through the girls' disguises - that Paloma and Rene discover their kindred spirits.

Finding Nouf by Zoe Ferraris

After a 16-year-old girl from a wealthy Saudi family is found dead in the middle of the desert, a devout Muslim guide and a young medical examiner seek to unravel the mystery while facing the sanctions of Middle Eastern society. A 2009 Alex Award winner.

Going Bovine by Libba Bray

All 16-year-old Cameron wants is to get through high school - and life in general - with minimum effort. But that's before he's given the news that he's dying. Hope arrives in the winged form of Dulcie, a loopy punk angel/possible hallucination with a bad sugar habit. She tells Cam there is a cure - if he's willing to go in search of it. Winner of the 2010 Michael L. Printz Award.

The Good Thief by Hannah Tinti

A Dickensian cast of characters in 19th century New England comes to life in this wondrous novel about an orphaned boy and the colorful con man who claims to be his brother. A 2009 Alex Award winner.

The Help by Kathryn Stockett

In Jackson, Mississippi, circa 1962, there are lines that are not crossed. With the civil rights movement exploding all around them, three women start a movement of their own, forever changing a town and the way women - black and white, mothers and daughters - view one another.

The Historian by Elizabeth Kostova

A young girl discovers her father's darkest secret and embarks on a harrowing journey across Europe to complete the quest he never could: to find history's most legendary fiend, Dracula.

The History of Love by Nicole Krauss

A lost book reappears, drawing together the lives of the irrepressible Leo Gursky, who has arrived at the end of his life; a locksmith searching for the son who's never known him; and young Alma Singer, who is desperate to find her namesake and a cure for her mother's loneliness. Gradually their stories merge into a single triumph of the imagination over loss.

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

Sixteen-year-old Katniss is smart, athletic, and fast. She can take down a rabbit with a bow and arrow, hitting it straight through the eye. Will these skills be enough to survive the Hunger Games? If you enjoy this book, try *Catching Fire and Mockingjay*.

I am the Messenger by Markus Zusak

Meet Ed Kennedy – underage cabdriver, pathetic card-player, and useless at romance. He lives in a shack with his coffee-addicted dog, the Doorman, and he's hopelessly in love with his best friend, Audrey. His life is one of peaceful routine and incompetence, until he inadvertently stops a bank robbery. That's when the first Ace arrives. That's when Ed becomes the messenger.

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot

Skloot brilliantly weaves together the story of Henrietta Lacks – a woman whose cells have been unwittingly used for scientific research since the 1950s – with the birth of bioethics, and the dark history of experimentation on African Americans.

In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

With the publication of this book, Capote permanently ripped through the barrier separating crime reportage from serious literature. As he reconstructs the 1959 murder of a Kansas farm family and the investigation that led to the capture, trial, and execution of the killers, Capote generates suspense and empathy.

Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster by Jon Krakauer

Journalist Krakauer, standing on the summit of Mt. Everest, saw nothing that "suggested that a murderous storm was bearing down." He was wrong. The storm, which claimed five lives and left countless more in guilt-ridden disarray, would also provide the impetus for this epic account of the May 1996 disaster. You may also like other Krakauer titles such as *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith* or *Where Men Win Glory: The Odyssey of Pat Tillman*.

Kindred by Octavia Butler

Dana, a modern black woman, is celebrating her 26th birthday with her new husband when she is snatched abruptly from her home in California and transported to the antebellum South.

Liar by Justine Larbalestier

Micah is a liar. That's the one thing she won't lie about. Over the years, she's duped her classmates, her teachers, and even her parents. But when her boyfriend Zach dies under brutal circumstances, Micah sets out to tell the truth. At first the truth comes easily - because it is a lie. Other truths are so unbelievable, so outside the realm of normal, they must be a lie. And the honest truth is buried so deep in Micah's mind even she doesn't know if it's real.

A Lesson Before Dying by Ernest J. Gaines

Set in a small Cajun community in the late 1940s, this novel is about a man condemned to die for a crime he did not commit and a young man who visits him in his cell. In the end, the two forge a bond as they both come to understand the simple heroism of resisting - and defying - the expected.

Little Bee by Chris Cleave

A haunting novel about the tenuous friendship that blooms between two disparate strangers: one an illegal Nigerian refugee, the other a recent widow from suburban London.

The Long Goodbye by Raymond Chandler

Marlowe befriends a down on his luck war veteran with the scars to prove it. Then he finds out that Terry Lennox has a very wealthy nymphomaniac wife, who he's divorced and re-married and who ends up dead. And now Lennox is on the lam and the cops and a crazy gangster are after Marlowe.

A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Beah

This absorbing account by a young man who, as a boy of 12, gets swept up in Sierra Leone's civil war, goes beyond even the best journalistic efforts in revealing the life and mind of a child abducted into the horrors of warfare.

Luka and the Fire of Life by Salman Rushdie

Luka's father, Rashid, the legendary storyteller of Kahani, falls suddenly and inexplicably into a sleep so deep that nothing and no one can rouse him. To save him from slipping away entirely, Luka must embark on a journey through the world of magic.

The Luxe by Anna Godbersen

Beautiful sisters Elizabeth and Diana Holland rule Manhattan's social scene but are soon caught up in a whirlwind of scandal when a family secret threatens their position. This novel is the first of an exciting series about five compelling teens in 1899 Manhattan, where appearance matters over everything. If you enjoyed this one, try the others in the series: *Rumors, Envy, and Splendor*.

The Odyssey by Gareth Hinds

Fresh from his triumphs in the Trojan War, Odysseus, King of Ithaca, wants nothing more than to return home to his family. Instead, he offends the sea god, Poseidon, who dooms him to years of shipwreck and wandering. Battling man-eating monsters, violent storms, and supernatural seductions, Odysseus will need all his strength and cunning to make his way home and seize his kingdom. Award-winning graphic artist Gareth Hinds masterfully reinterprets a story of heroism, adventure, and high action that has been told and retold for more than 2,500 years - though never quite like this.

The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals by Michael Pollan

Pollan writes about the ecology of eating to reveal why we consume what we consume in the 21st century. Discussing industrial farming, organic food, and what it is like to hunt and gather food, this book is an honest and self-aware account of the evolution of the modern diet. You may also like Pollan's other books such as *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's Eye View of the World*, *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*, or *Food Rules: An Eater's Manual*.

On the Road by Jack Kerouac

This indisputable bible of the Beat Generation fictionalizes Kerouac's years traveling the North American continent with his friend, Neal Cassidy. If you like this, you also might like *The Dharma Bums*.

One Amazing Thing by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

When an earthquake traps nine characters together, their focus first jolts to their collective struggle to survive. There's little food. The office begins to flood. Then, at a moment when the psychological and emotional stress seems nearly too much for them to bear, a young graduate student suggests that each tell a personal tale, "one amazing thing" from their lives, which they have never told anyone before.

Papertowns by John Green

Quentin Jacobsen has spent a lifetime loving the magnificently adventurous Margo Roth Spiegelman from afar. So when she cracks open a window and climbs back into his life - dressed like a ninja and summoning him for an ingenious campaign of revenge - he follows. After their all-nighter ends, and a new day breaks, Q arrives at school to discover that Margo, always an enigma, has now become a mystery. But Q soon learns that there are clues - and they're for him. If you like this book, try *Looking for Alaska*, *An Abundance of Katherines* or *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*.

People of the Book by Geraldine Brooks

A rare book expert is offered the job of a lifetime: the analysis and conservation of a mysterious illuminated Hebrew manuscript created in 15th century Spain and recently saved from destruction during the shelling of Sarajevo's libraries. When Hanna discovers a series of artifacts in the book's ancient binding, she begins to unlock the mysteries of the book's past and uncovers the stories of those who risked everything to protect it.

The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver

In 1959, Nathan Price, a fierce, evangelical Baptist, takes his four young daughters, his wife, and his mission to the Belgian Congo - a place, he is sure, where he can save needy souls. But the seeds they plant bloom in tragic ways within this complex culture. Set against one of the most dramatic political events of the twentieth century - the Congo's fight for independence from Belgium and its devastating consequences.

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

This is the story of lively and rebellious Elizabeth Bennet, one of five unmarried daughters living in the countryside of 19th century England. In a world where obtaining an advantageous marriage is a woman's sole occupation, Elizabeth's independent manner threatens her family's future. Will her romantic sparring with the mysterious and arrogant Mr. Darcy end in misfortune, or will love's true nature prevail? Also, try other Austen books such as *Sense and Sensibility* or *Emma*.

Reckless by Cornelia Funke

For years, Jacob Reckless has been escaping to another world - a world behind the mirror, where witches haunt the forests and fairies and dwarfs roam. A world for treasure hunts and magnificent quests - but also a world locked in a deadly war. Jacob's secret seems safe, until one day his younger brother Will follows him, to disastrous consequence. Faced with a curse that is quickly turning Will to stone, the Reckless brothers are thrust into a race against time to find a cure before one of them is lost forever. Inspired by the Brothers Grimm.

Revolution by Jennifer Donnelly

This story weaves together the lives of Andi Alpers, a depressed modern-day teenager, and Alexandrine Paradis, a brave young woman caught up in the French Revolution. While in Paris with her estranged father, a Nobel geneticist hired to match the DNA of a heart said to belong to the last dauphin of France, Andi discovers a diary hidden within a guitar case - and so begins the story of Alexandrine, who herself had close ties to the dauphin. Also try *A Northern Light*.

Sacred Hoops: Spiritual Lessons of a Hardwood Warrior by Phil Jackson

Phil Jackson, coach of the three-time national champion Chicago Bulls, explains his thoughtful approach to nurturing a positive group dynamic, revealing a deeply soulful outlook based on Eastern and Native American thought.

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Set in an early New England colony, this novel shows the terrible impact that a single, passionate act has on the lives of three members of the community: the defiant Hester Prynne; the fiery, tortured Reverend Dimmesdale; and the obsessed, vengeful Chillingworth.

A Short History of Nearly Everything by Bill Bryson

Taking on everything from the Big Bang to the rise of civilization, Bryson seeks to understand how we got from being nothing at all to being us. Sometimes profound, sometimes funny, and always entertaining; this is an adventure in the realm of human knowledge as only Bryson can render it. Try other books by Bryson such as *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid: A Memoir* or *A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail*.

To the Lighthouse by Virginia Woolf

Serene and maternal Mrs. Ramsay, the tragic yet absurd Mr. Ramsay, their children, and assorted guests are on holiday on the Isle of Skye. From the seemingly trivial postponement of a visit to a nearby lighthouse, Woolf constructs a moving examination of the complex tensions and allegiances of family life and the conflicts within a marriage.

Tropical Truth: A Story of Music and Revolution in Brazil by Caetano Veloso

Rebelling against the Elvis-based, American-imported rock scene in late 1960s Brazil, Caetano Veloso suffused lyrical Brazilian folksongs with fuzz guitar, avant-jazz, and electronic music. In doing so, he blew apart the status quo of Brazilian culture. Caetano catalyzed a movement called Tropicalia, urging an adoption of personal freedom in politics, music, and lifestyle. This is his story.

Unaccustomed Earth by Jhumpa Lahiri

Eight stories take readers from Cambridge and Seattle to India and Thailand as they enter the lives of sisters and brothers, fathers and mothers, daughters and sons, and friends and lovers. You might also like Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* or *The Namesake*.

The Vanishing of Katharina Linden by Helen Grant

After Pia's grandmother dies in a freak accident, the neighbors in her little German hometown glance at Pia with wary eyes. But then something else captures the community's attention: the vanishing of Katharina Linden. Katharina was last seen at a parade, dressed as Snow White, and then she disappeared. Ten-year-old Pia and her only friend suspect that Katharina has been spirited away by the supernatural. They start an investigation and then another girl vanishes...

White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son by Tim Wise

Wise offers a highly personal examination of the ways in which racial privilege shapes the lives of most white Americans - overtly racist or not - to the detriment of people of color, themselves, and society. Using stories instead of stale statistics, Wise weaves a narrative that is at once readable yet scholarly, analytical, and accessible.

The World Without Us by Alan Weisman

If human beings disappeared instantaneously from the Earth, what would happen? How would the planet reclaim its surface? What creatures would emerge from the dark and swarm? How would our treasured structures survive the unmitigated impact of a planet without our intervention?

Zeitoun by Dave Eggers

The true story of one family, caught between America's two biggest policy disasters: the war on terror and the response to Hurricane Katrina.