



Nyack School District
High School
Suggested Summer Reading
2011

GRADE NINE

Alvarez, Julia *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* (Fiction)

This humorous and sensitive first novel describes growing up in a new country.

Austen, Jane *Emma* (Fiction)

Young Emma Woodhouse is convinced that she will never marry but decides she has a gift for matchmaking after arranging her governess's match.

Cadet, Jean-Robert *Restavec: from Haitian slave child to middle-class American* (Nonfiction)

The author provides an account of his youth as a restavec--poor children in Haiti who are taken in as unpaid servants to the wealthy--and tells how he escaped his life of physical and emotional abuse to move to the U.S. where he put himself through college and found success as a teacher

Card, Orson Scott *Ender's Game* (Fiction)

Set in a future where mankind has barely survived two invasions by the "buggers," an insectoid alien race, the world's most talented children, including the extraordinary Ender Wiggin, are taken into Battleschool at a very young age to supply commanders for the expected Third Invasion.

Christie, Agatha *Murder on the Orient Express* (Fiction)

A Russian princess, a Hungarian count, a Swedish beauty, and an assortment of Americans, English and French are brought together on the elegant Orient Express. Any one of them seems to have had the motive, desire and opportunity for committing murder. But who actually did it?

Cormier, Robert *Eight Plus One: Stories* (Fiction)

Award winner Cormier writes these nine short stories dealing with issues such as divorce, friendship, family, and a lost baseball card.

Deuker, Carl *Painting the Black* (Fiction)

While catching for Josh during pitching practice, Ryan decides to try out for the team but finds himself in an ethical dilemma when he discovers his friend has a serious flaw.

Dickens, Charles *Great Expectations* (Fiction)

An English orphan named Pip rises to wealth, deserts his true friends, and becomes humbled by his own arrogance.

Gunther, John *Death Be Not Proud* (Nonfiction)

This deeply moving book is a father's account of his brave and gifted son's struggle against a baffling disease.

Hemingway, Ernest *The Old Man and the Sea* (Fiction)

Santiago, an old Cuban fisherman who is down on his luck, finds himself alone and far from shore with the biggest catch of his life — an 18-foot marlin.

Herriot, James *All Creatures Great and Small* (Fiction)

An English veterinarian works with people and animals in a small Yorkshire village and learns a lot about the similarities between the two.

Hersey, John *Hiroshima* (Nonfiction)

This compelling book describes the experiences of six survivors during the destruction of this Japanese city by the first atomic bomb at the end of WW II.

Stevenson, Robert Louis *Treasure Island* (Fiction)

Young Jim Hawkins goes on a quest for hidden treasure in this coming-of-age adventure novel.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit* (Fiction)

The Hobbit opens as the wizard Gandalf visits hobbit Bilbo Baggins and invites him on an adventure with Gandalf and a band of dwarves. The journey takes them through forests, across enchanted lakes, and over mountains, where Bilbo encounters trolls, goblins, a dragon, and treasure.

Adams, Douglas *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (Fiction)

Moments after the Earth is destroyed, Arthur Dent and his friend Ford Prefect take off on a trip around the universe full of absurd and hilarious adventures.

Wulffson, Don *Soldier X* (Fiction)

A German boy named Eric Brandt, who is unwillingly recruited into the Jugend, or Hitler's children's army, during World War II. Not all Germans were Nazis and Brandt does not share the Nazi's perspective. The book tells about the war from different perspective of the Nazis and the Russians, as well as the ways in which war can affect a person.

Author Focus: Sharon Flake

You may choose from the following titles: *Bang!*, *Begging For Change*, *Money Hungry*, *Who Am I Without Him?*, & *The Skin I'm In*.

GRADE TEN

Album, Mitch *Tuesdays with Morrie* (Fiction)

A busy, young journalist reconnects with his college professor, who is terminally ill, and through this reconnection learns to better appreciate his own life.

Anonymous *Go Ask Alice* (Non-Fiction)

This powerful diary follows the journey of a teenager as she is exposed to the world of drugs and street life in 1960s America. Though over 35 years old, the message of *Go Ask Alice* remains as powerful and relevant as ever.

Bradbury, Ray *The Martian Chronicles* (Fiction)

A collection of science fiction short stories that hold up a mirror to society, reflecting themes of isolation and struggle, yet hope and renewal.

Chevalier, Tracey *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* (Fiction)

Sixteen-year-old Griet works in the household of famed Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer, and through a shared understanding of art, becomes his assistant, and ultimately his model.

Chopin, Kate *The Awakening* (Fiction)

Passion and sensuality surface in Edna Pontellier, a wife and mother who seeks to explore her true self beyond the confines of her dull domestic life.

Dickens, Charles *A Tale of Two Cities* (Fiction)

The period from 1775 - the outbreak of the American Revolution - to 1789 - the storming of the Bastille - is the turbulent setting of this uncharacteristic Dickens novel that follows the lives of two men who love one woman.

Doyle, Arthur Conan *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Fiction)

Upon hearing Dr. James Mortimer's saga of the haunted Baskerville family and the recent death of family head Sir Charles Baskerville, apparently from the hound of the legend, Holmes and Watson begin their investigation in what is considered the best of the Sherlock Holmes series.

Draper, Sharon *We Beat the Street* (Non-Fiction)

Three African-American friends from Newark, New Jersey discuss their struggle to “beat the streets” and achieve their goals.

Finn, Alex *Breathing Underwater* (Fiction)

Written from the point of view of a popular and intelligent high school student who is in trouble with the law for hitting his girlfriend, this young adult novel also demonstrates how abused children learn to be violent.

Guevara, Ernesto *The Motorcycle Diaries* (Non-Fiction)

This travel diary follows the adventures of 23-year-old Ernesto Che Guevara, on a journey of self-discovery and friendship.

Kerouac, Jack *On the Road* (Fiction)

In what is considered the quintessential novel of the Beat Generation, *On the Road* is the story of Sal Paradise's (a semi-autobiographical character) travels through 1950s America. Kerouac manages to capture the spirit of small-town America, as well as the flavor of Beatnik culture.

Potok, Chaim *The Chosen* (Fiction)

Friendship between two boys, one Hasidic and the other Orthodox, begins at a baseball game and flourishes despite their backgrounds and beliefs.

Seabold, Alice *The Lovely Bones* (Fiction)

A fourteen-year-old girl is brutally murdered by a neighbor she knows, and in the afterlife, must watch her family deal with their grief.

Soto, Gary *Buried Onions* (Fiction)

When nineteen-year-old Eddie drops out of college, he struggles to find a place for himself as a Mexican American living in a violence-infested neighborhood of Fresno, California.

Remnick, David *King of the World* (Non-Fiction)

Recreates the Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali)-Sunny Liston title fight in which Clay first won the heavyweight title.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *Lord of the Rings* (Fiction)

When the hobbit Frodo receives the One Ring, forged by the evil Sauron, he joins Sam, Pippin, Merry, Gandalf, Aragorn, Legolas, Boromir, and Gimli on a dangerous quest to cast the ring into the fires of Mount Doom. The trilogy *Lord of the Rings* (*The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King*) was pivotal in the development of the fantasy genre as it appears today.

Pelzer, David *A Child Called It* (Memoir)

A heart-wrenching story of one boy's suffering at the hands of his abusive mother and his ultimate triumph over the abuse.

Author Focus: Walter Dean Myers

You may also choose from the following titles by Walter Dean Myers, who is an award winning young adult author: *Slam, Monster, Hoops, Fallen Angels, Scorpions, Shooter, Here in Harlem, Crystal.*

GRADE ELEVEN

Bauer, Marion Dane, editor *Am I Blue?: Coming Out from the Silence* (Fiction)

A collection of 16 original short stories about homosexuality by such authors as Bruce Coville, M.E. Kerr, William Sleator, and Jane Yolen. With their diverse settings, characters and styles these stories will entertain a wide range of readers.

Bradbury, Ray *Fahrenheit 451* (Fiction)

In *Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury's classic, frightening vision of the future, firemen don't put out fires--they start them in order to burn books. Bradbury's vividly painted society holds up the appearance of happiness as the highest goal--a place where trivial information is good, and knowledge and ideas are bad.

Brown, Marvelyn (with Courtney E. Martin) *The Naked Truth* (Nonfiction)

An inspirational and cautionary memoir written by a young woman who contracts HIV at nineteen years old. It chronicles her refusal to give up on herself, even as others forsake her.

Danticat, Edwidge *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (Fiction)

Born after her mother Martine was raped, Sophie is raised by her Tante Atie in a small town in Haiti. At 12 she joins Martine in New York, while Atie returns to her native village to care for indomitable Grandmother Ife. Neither Sophie nor Martine can escape the weight of the past, resulting in a pattern of insomnia, bulimia, sexual trauma and mental anguish that afflicts both of them and leads inexorably to tragedy.

Fisher, Robin Gaby *After the Fire: A True Story of Friendship and Survival* (NonFiction)

Chronicles the events surrounding a fire at Seton Hall University on January 19, 2000, in which three students were killed and others injured, focusing on the unique friendship between two of the burned victims, Shawn Simons and Alvaro Llanos, that developed as the men recovered from devastating burns

Griffin, John Howard *Black Like Me* (Nonfiction)

In the Deep South of the 1950s, journalist John Howard Griffin decided to cross the color line. Using medication that darkened his skin to deep brown, he exchanged his privileged life as a Southern white man for the disenfranchised world of an unemployed black man.

Haddon, Mark *the curious incident of the dog in the night-time* (Fiction)

This murder mystery (of sorts) is told by an autistic teenager who is wrongly accused of impaling his neighbor's poodle on a garden fork. He decides to solve the mystery of the dog's murder himself.

Hurston, Zora Neale *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Fiction)

Janie Crawford marries three men and is tried for the murder of one of them. Her eventful life captures the universal experiences of pain and happiness, love and loss.

James, Henry *The Portrait of a Lady* (Fiction)

When Isabel Archer, a beautiful, spirited American, is brought to Europe by her wealthy Aunt Touchett, it is expected that she will soon marry. But Isabel, resolved to determine her own fate, does not hesitate to turn down two eligible suitors. She then finds herself irresistibly drawn to Gilbert Osmond, who, beneath his veneer of charm and cultivation, is cruelty itself. A story of intense poignancy, Isabel's tale of love and betrayal still resonates with modern audiences.

Levitt, Steven D. & Dubner, Stephen J. ***Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*** (Nonfiction)

Levitt argues that many apparent mysteries of everyday life don't need to be so mysterious: they could be illuminated and made even more fascinating by asking the right questions and drawing connections. For example, Levitt traces the drop in violent crime rates to a drop in violent criminals and, digging further, to the Roe v. Wade decision that preempted the existence of some people who would be born to poverty and hardship.

Marai, Sandor ***Embers*** (Fiction)

Two old men, once the best of friends, meet after a 41-year break in their relationship. They dine together, taking the same places at the table that they had assumed on the last meal they shared, then sit beside each other in front of a dying fire, one of them nearly silent, the other one, his host, slowly and deliberately tracing the course of their dead friendship to uncover the horrible secret that tore them apart.

Moaveni, Azadeh ***Lipstick Jihad*** (Nonfiction)

This memoir is a story about growing up Iranian in America and American in Iran.

Prejean, Sister Helen ***Dead Man Walking*** (Nonfiction)

A Catholic nun's compelling memoir about her encounter with a death row inmate.

Santiago, Esmeralda ***When I Was Puerto Rican*** (Nonfiction)

Memoir of a young girl born in Puerto Rico who moves to New York.

Seierstad, Asne ***The Bookseller of Kabul*** (Nonfiction)

After living for three months with the Kabul bookseller Sultan Khan in the spring of 2002, Norwegian journalist Seierstad penned this astounding portrait of a nation recovering from war, undergoing political flux and mired in misogyny and poverty.

Smith, Betty ***A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*** (Fiction)

Francie Nolan, avid reader, penny-candy connoisseur, and adroit observer of human nature, has much to ponder in colorful, turn-of-the-century Brooklyn. She grows up with a sweet, tragic father, a severely realistic mother, and an aunt who gives her love too freely--to men, and to a brother who will always be the favored child. Francie learns early the meaning of hunger and the value of a penny. Like the Tree of Heaven that grows out of cement or through cellar gratings, resourceful Francie struggles against all odds to survive and thrive.

Soto, Gary ***Canto Familiar*** (Nonfiction)

Twenty-five poems about the pleasures and woes Mexican American children experience growing up.

Spiegelman, Art ***Maus*** by (Nonfiction)

A memoir about Vladek Spiegelman, a Jewish survivor of Hitler's Europe, and about his son, a cartoonist who tries to come to terms with his father, his story, and with history itself. Graphic novel format portrays Jews as mice and Nazis as cats.

Tan, Amy ***The Joy Luck Club*** (Fiction)

Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* is the story of four women and their daughters. In a series of flashbacks we see how each woman came to America, fleeing their Chinese past of oppression and fear to build a better life for their children. Their stories are of war and ancestral pride, marriage and never losing hope.

Volponi, Paul **Black and White (Fiction)**

Marcus and Eddie are the stars of their high school basketball team. Marcus is black and Eddie is white, but they got past all that “racial crap” and have been best friends for years. Both boys are looking forward to bright futures, then one cold night something goes wrong and they make a big mistake. Now they can’t turn back and one of them will have to pay.

Wilde, Oscar ***The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Fiction)**

A lush, cautionary tale of a life of vileness and deception or a loving portrait of the aesthetic impulse run rampant?

Wright, Richard ***Native Son* (Fiction)**

Bigger Thomas is doomed, trapped in a downward spiral that will lead to arrest, prison, or death, driven by despair, frustration, poverty, and incomprehension. As a young black man in the Chicago of the '30s, he has no way out of the walls of poverty and racism that surround him, and after he murders a young white woman in a moment of panic, these walls begin to close in.

GRADE TWELVE

Brown, Dan ***The DaVinci Code* (Fiction)**

An art curator is murdered and the only clues that might reveal the murderer appear to be in the paintings of Leonardo DaVinci. But how does this murder connect with the life of Christ? This is the mystery the reader must solve.

Camus, Albert ***The Stranger* (Fiction)**

This existentialist novel depicts a young Frenchman’s sense of alienation in the modern world.

Capote, Truman ***In Cold Blood* (Non-Fiction)**

A disturbing tale about the murder of an entire family and the legal process that brought those responsible for it to justice.

Conrad, Joseph ***Heart of Darkness* (Fiction)**

An adventure story of a trip down the Congo River in Africa and into the darkness of the human soul.

Dostoyevsky, Fedor ***Crime and Punishment* (Fiction)**

This classic Russian tale is the powerful story of one man’s struggle with guilt.

Heller, Joseph ***Catch 22* (Fiction)**

Set in World War II, this darkly comic tale depicts the absurdity of war.

Hesse, Herman ***Siddhartha* (Fiction)**

A coming of age novel that parallels the life of Buddha.

Jin, Ha ***Waiting* (Fiction)****

Against the backdrop of Communist China, this is the story of a man in love with a woman he cannot have.

Kingston, Maxine Hong ***Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* (Nonfiction)**

A memoir of the American-born daughter of Chinese immigrants who lived within the traditions and fears of the Chinese past, as well as the realities of the alien modern American culture.

Kafka, Franz *The Trial* (Fiction)

As K is accused, tried, and convicted of an unspecified crime, the author effectively portrays man's sense of paranoia in the twentieth century.

Krakauer, Jon *Into Thin Air* (Non-Fiction)

A personal account of a disastrous attempt to climb Mt. Everest.

Marquez, Gabriel Garcia *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Fiction)

This novel of love and loss depicts one hundred years in the life of a fictional Latin American village.

Mortenson, Greg *Three Cups of Tea* (Nonfiction)

After a climbing accident Mortenson was sheltered for seven weeks by the small Pakistani village of Korphe; in return, he promised to build the town's first school, a project that grew into the Central Asia Institute, which has since constructed more than 50 schools across rural Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Satrapi, Marjane *Persepolis* (Nonfiction)

Satrapi's great-grandfather was Iran's last emperor, the one overthrown by the father of the shah overthrown in the 1979 Islamic revolution. Doubtless their pedigree of former greatness somewhat shielded her leftist family from the Ayatollah Khomeini's authoritarian regime, and her extraordinary autobiography in graphic novel form, which reflects her perspective from ages 10 to 14, probably understates the violence that swirled around her, cresting in the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war. Satrapi's cursive, geometrical drawing style eloquently conveys her ingenuousness and fervor as a child.

Shakur, Tupac *The Rose that Grew From Concrete* (Nonfiction)

A collection of poetry written by the rapper between 1989 and 1991, before he became famous. The poems are passionate, sometimes angry, and often compelling. Selections are reproduced from the originals in Shakur's handwriting, personalized by distinctive spelling and the use of ideographs (a drawing of an eye for I, etc.), and complete with scratch outs and corrections.

Sheff, David *Beautiful Boy: A father's Journey Through His Son's Meth Addiction* (Nonfiction)

"I'll be fine. I've stopped using." That lie is told again and again in this memoir of a father's heartbreaking struggle with his son's addiction to methamphetamines. The clearly charming and talented Nic first tried marijuana in high school and subsequently went through a decade of using, rehabilitation and relapse. Expanding on a 2005 article in the New York Times Magazine, journalist Sheff (China Dawn, 2002, etc.) takes readers along on the grim roller-coaster ride.

Sheff, Nic *Tweak: growing Up on Methamphetamines* (Nonfiction) **

This graphic and detailed memoir painfully depicts the author's addiction to methamphetamines and his tortuous, tentative journey to health. It is a companion to his father's searing and guilt-ridden memoir of witnessing Nic's gradual slide into drugs, *Beautiful Boy: A Father's Journey through His Son's Meth Addiction*. The author, in recovery (though not for the first time), nonetheless ends his memoir on a note of hope.

Wolfe, Tom *I Am Charlotte Simmons* (Fiction)**

A cautionary tale of a young woman during her first year of college.

Zindel, Paul *My Darling, My Hamburger* (Fiction)

A story of love and confusion during high school years.

**** Note: contains adult content and language**