

SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT

The English Department is pleased to present its summer reading program for the 2016-2017 academic year.

Each Middle School student (6-8) **must read ONE mandatory summer reading book** and **one selected summer reading book** before the school year begins.

Each Upper School student (9-12) **must read ONE mandatory summer reading book** and **one selected summer reading book** before the school year begins.

Students should annotate their selected books as they read. Students should be prepared to write about their selections once they return in the fall; they will also be asked to discuss these books in class.

So that students might have a clearer sense of each choice, teachers have included short descriptions of the books for their respective classes.

We look forward to seeing you in the fall!

ENGLISH 9th grade

Mandatory: **Things Fall Apart**, Chinua Achebe

Purple Hibiscus, by Ngozi Adichie

Choose one from the following:

Ordinary People, Judith Guest

A son's death in a freak boating accident leaves an "ordinary" family struggling to cope with devastating loss. Conrad Jarrett, the high school-aged protagonist, had grown up in the shadow of his more personable and athletic older brother, for whose death he feels responsible. Depression and a sense of isolation have led Conrad to attempting suicide, and as the novel begins, Conrad, recently released from hospitalization, and his parents must confront what each must do for genuine healing to occur.

A Prayer for Owen Meany, John Irving

In the summer of 1953, two eleven-year-old boys—best friends—are playing in a Little League baseball game in Gravesend, New Hampshire. One of the boys hits a foul ball that kills the other boy's mother. The boy who hits the ball doesn't believe in accidents; Owen Meany believes he is God's instrument. What happens to Owen, after that 1953 foul ball, is extraordinary.

Persepolis, Marjane Satrapi

This coming-of-age memoir portrays what it was like to grow up in Iran during a time of extraordinary political and religious turbulence. Urged by her grandmother to remember that there is “nothing worse than bitterness and vengeance,” Satrapi recounts in comic-book illustrations the seismic events of the Islamic Revolution that shaped her youth, threatened the safety of her family, and changed her destiny in unforeseen ways.

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan, Lisa See

As young girls in 19th century China, Snow Flower and Lily begin a life-long friendship, one that must be maintained through a form of secret written communication, the only kind of communication possible in the rigid patriarchal society in which they live. Over time, their exchange of letters chronicles both historical and personal events, as one woman escapes from class limitations by marrying a man of higher social status while the other finds her prospects dramatically and unexpectedly curtailed. Honoring long-held cultural traditions of family and clan impose sacrifice and even personal suffering on Lily and Snow Flower, whose secluded lives are enriched and sustained over the years by the bond of friendship.

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Rebecca Skloot

Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells—taken without her knowledge in 1951—became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, in vitro fertilization, and more. Henrietta’s cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet she remains virtually unknown, and her family can’t afford health insurance. From the “colored” ward of Johns Hopkins Hospital in the 1950s to stark white laboratories with freezers filled with HeLa cells, it’s a story inextricably connected to the dark history of experimentation on African Americans, the birth of bioethics, and the legal battles that have ensued.
