

## West High School Summer Reading Book Choices for Summer 2016

The following list of books have been chosen by teachers, faculty, and others. [Here are the directions for the assignment.](#) Look over the list to inform your summer reading choice. **Note:** Locations of meetings will be posted on campus in September.

### 1. Anonymous. *Go Ask Alice*. w/ Mrs. Altenberg

**From Amazon:** A teen plunges into a downward spiral of addiction in this classic cautionary tale. It started when she was served a soft drink laced with LSD in a dangerous party game. Within months, she was hooked, trapped in a downward spiral that took her from her comfortable home and loving family to the mean streets of an unforgiving city. It was a journey that would rob her of her innocence, her youth -- and ultimately her life.

*Read her diary. Enter her world. You will never forget her.*

For thirty-five years, the acclaimed, best selling first-person account of a teenage girl's harrowing descent into the nightmarish world of drugs has left an indelible mark on generations of teen readers. As powerful -- and as timely -- today as ever, *Go Ask Alice* remains the definitive book on the horrors of addiction.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

*This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content.*

### 2. Arnold, David. *Mosquitoland* w/ Ms. Angell

**From Amazon:** After the sudden collapse of her family, Mim Malone is dragged from her home in northern Ohio to the "wastelands" of Mississippi, where she lives in a medicated milieu with her dad and new stepmom. Before the dust has a chance to settle, she learns her mother is sick back in Cleveland.

So she ditches her new life and hops aboard a northbound Greyhound bus to her real home and her real mother, meeting a quirky cast of fellow travelers along the way. But when her thousand-mile journey takes a few turns she could never see coming, Mim must confront her own demons, redefining her notions of love, loyalty, and what it means to be sane.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

*This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and*

*language that reflect mature content.*

**3. Gowda, Shilpi Somaya. *Secret Daughter*. w/ Mrs. Barricklow**

From Booklist -- In her engaging debut, Gowda weaves together two compelling stories. In India in 1984, destitute Kavita secretly carries her newborn daughter to an orphanage, knowing her husband, Jasu, would do away with the baby just as he had with their firstborn daughter. In their social stratum, girls are considered worthless because they can't perform physical labor, and their dowries are exorbitant. That same year in San Francisco, two doctors, Somer and Krishnan, she from San Diego, he from Bombay, suffer their second miscarriage and consider adoption. They adopt Asha, a 10-month-old Indian girl from a Bombay orphanage. Yes, it's Kavita's daughter. In alternating chapters, Gowda traces Asha's life in America—her struggle being a minority, despite living a charmed life, and Kavita and Jasu's hardships, including several years spent in Dharavi, Bombay's (now Mumbai's) infamous slum, and the realization that their son has turned to drugs. Gowda writes with compassion and uncanny perception from the points of view of Kavita, Somer, and Asha, while portraying the vibrant traditions, sights, and sounds of modern India.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**4. Stockett, Kathryn. *The Help*. w/ Ms. Burt**

From Penguin books: Aibileen is a black maid in 1962 Jackson, Mississippi, who's always taken orders quietly, but lately she's unable to hold her bitterness back. Her friend Minny has never held her tongue but now must somehow keep secrets about her employer that leave her speechless. White socialite Skeeter just graduated college. She's full of ambition, but without a husband, she's considered a failure. Together, these seemingly different women join together to write a tell-all book about work as a black maid in the South, that could forever alter their destinies and the life of a small town...

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**5. Larson, Erik. *Devil in the White City*. w/ Mrs. Cerda**

Erik Larson—author of #1 bestseller *In the Garden of Beasts*—intertwines the true tale of the 1893 World's Fair and the cunning serial killer who used the fair to lure his victims to their death. Combining meticulous research with nail-biting storytelling, Erik Larson has crafted a narrative with all the wonder of newly discovered history and the thrills of the best fiction

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**6. Chambers, Becky. *The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet*. w/ Mrs. Chambers**

Somewhere within our crowded sky, a crew of wormhole builders hops from planet to planet, on their way to the job of a lifetime. To the galaxy at large, humanity is a minor species, and one patched-up construction vessel is a mere speck on the stargate. This is an everyday sort of ship, just trying to get from here to there.

But all voyages leave their mark, and even the most ordinary of people have stories worth telling: a young Martian woman, hoping the vastness of space will put some distance between herself and the life she's left behind; an alien pilot, navigating life without her own kind. A pacifist captain, awaiting the return of a loved one at war.

Set against a backdrop of curious cultures and distant worlds, this episodic tale weaves together the adventures of nine eclectic characters, each on a journey of their own.

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Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

### **7. Tolkien, JRR. *The Hobbit*. w/ Ms. Charlin**

Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit who enjoys a comfortable, unambitious life, rarely traveling any farther than his pantry or cellar. But his contentment is disturbed when the wizard Gandalf and a company of dwarves arrive on his doorstep one day to whisk him away on an adventure. They have launched a plot to raid the treasure hoard guarded by Smaug the Magnificent, a large and very dangerous dragon. Bilbo reluctantly joins their quest, unaware that on his journey to the Lonely Mountain he will encounter both a magic ring and a frightening creature known as Gollum.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

*This book should be acceptable to readers of all maturity levels.*

### **8. Benedis-Grab, Daphne. *The Girl in the Wall*. w/ Mr. Cheung**

From Amazon -- Ariel's birthday weekend looks to be the event of the season, with a private concert by rock star Hudson Winters on the grounds of her family's east coast estate, and all of Ariel's elite prep school friends in attendance. The only person who's dreading the party is Sera, Ariel's former best friend, whose father is forcing her to go. Sera has been the school pariah since she betrayed Ariel, and she now avoids Ariel and their former friends. Thrown together, Ariel and Sera can agree on one thing: this could be one very long night. They have no idea just how right they are. Only moments after the concert begins and the lights go down, thugs open fire on parents and schoolmates alike, in a plot against Ariel's father that quickly spins out of control. As the entire party is taken hostage, the girls are forced apart. Ariel escapes into the hidden tunnels in the family mansion, where she and Sera played as children. Only Sera, who forges an unlikely alliance with Hudson Winters, knows where her friend could be. As the industrial terrorist plot unravels and the death toll climbs, Ariel and Sera must recall the sisterhood that once sustained them as they try to save themselves and each other on the longest night of their lives.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

*This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content.*

**9. Bryson, Bill *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid* w/ Mr. Comparsi**

From one of the world's most beloved writers and *New York Times* bestselling author of *One Summer*, a vivid, nostalgic, and utterly hilarious memoir of growing up in the 1950s

Bill Bryson was born in the middle of the American century—1951—in the middle of the United States—Des Moines, Iowa—in the middle of the largest generation in American history—the baby boomers. As one of the best and funniest writers alive, he is perfectly positioned to mine his memories of a totally all-American childhood for 24-carat memoir gold. Like millions of his generational peers, Bill Bryson grew up with a rich fantasy life as a superhero. In his case, he ran around his house and neighborhood with an old football jersey with a thunderbolt on it and a towel about his neck that served as his cape, leaping tall buildings in a single bound and vanquishing awful evildoers (and morons)—in his head—as "The Thunderbolt Kid."

Using this persona as a springboard, Bill Bryson re-creates the life of his family and his native city in the 1950s in all its transcendent normality—a life at once completely familiar to us all and as far away and unreachable as another galaxy. It was, he reminds us, a happy time, when automobiles and televisions and appliances (not to mention nuclear weapons) grew larger and more numerous with each passing year, and DDT, cigarettes, and the fallout from atmospheric testing were considered harmless or even good for you. He brings us into the life of his loving but eccentric family, including affectionate portraits of his father, a gifted sportswriter for the local paper and dedicated practitioner of isometric exercises, and of his mother, whose job as the home furnishing editor for the same paper left her little time for practicing the domestic arts at home. The many readers of Bill Bryson's earlier classic, *A Walk in the Woods*, will greet the reappearance in these pages of the immortal Stephen Katz, seen hijacking literally boxcar loads of beer. He is joined in the Bryson gallery of immortal characters by the demonically clever Willoughby brothers, who apply their scientific skills and can-do attitude to gleefully destructive ends.

Warm and laugh-out-loud funny, and full of his inimitable, pitch-perfect observations, *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid* is as wondrous a book as Bill Bryson has ever written. It will enchant anyone who has ever been young.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**10. Sontag, Sherry and Drew, Christopher. *Blind Man's Bluff: The Untold Story of American Submarine Espionage* w/ Councilman Geoff Rizzo**

For decades American submarines have roamed the depths in a dangerous battle for

information and advantage in missions known only to a select few. Now, after six years of research, those missions are told in *Blind Man's Bluff*, a magnificent achievement in investigative reporting. It reads like a spy thriller -- except everything in it is true. This is an epic of adventure, ingenuity, courage, and disaster beneath the sea, a story filled with unforgettable characters who engineered daring missions to tap the enemy's underwater communications cables and to shadow Soviet submarines. It is a story of heroes and spies, of bravery and tragedy.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**11. Donoghue, Emma. *Room* w/ Councilwoman Ashcraft**

To five-year-old-Jack, Room is the world. . . . It's where he was born, it's where he and his Ma eat and sleep and play and learn. At night, his Ma shuts him safely in the wardrobe, where he is meant to be asleep when Old Nick visits. Room is home to Jack, but to Ma it's the prison where she has been held for seven years. Through her fierce love for her son, she has created a life for him in this eleven-by-eleven-foot space. But with Jack's curiosity building alongside her own desperation, she knows that Room cannot contain either much longer. *Room* is a tale at once shocking, riveting, exhilarating--a story of unconquerable love in harrowing circumstances, and of the diamond-hard bond between a mother and her child.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**12. Matheny, Mike. *Matheny Manifesto*. w/ Mr. Cueva**

Mike Matheny was just forty-one, without professional managerial experience and looking for a next step after a successful career as a Major League catcher, when he succeeded the legendary Tony La Russa as manager of the St. Louis Cardinals in 2012. While Matheny has enjoyed immediate success, leading the Cards to the postseason three times in his first three years, people have noticed something else about his life, something not measured in day-to-day results. Instead, it's based on a frankly worded letter he wrote to the parents of a Little League team he coached, a cry for change that became an Internet sensation and eventually a "manifesto."

The tough-love philosophy Matheny expressed in the letter contained his throwback beliefs that authority should be respected, discipline and hard work rewarded, spiritual faith cultivated, family made a priority, and humility considered a virtue. In *The Matheny Manifesto*, he builds on his original letter by first diagnosing the problem at the heart of youth sports--hint: it starts with parents and coaches--and then by offering a hopeful path forward. Along the way, he uses stories from his small-town childhood as well as his career as a player, coach, and manager to explore eight keys to success: leadership, confidence, teamwork, faith, class, character, toughness, and humility.

**13. Matheson, Richard. *I am Legend* w/ Ms. Cunningham**

**From Amazon: Robert Neville may well be the last living man on Earth . . . but he is not alone. An incurable plague has mutated every other man, woman, and child into bloodthirsty, nocturnal creatures who are determined to destroy him.**

**By day, he is a hunter, stalking the infected monstrosities through the abandoned ruins of civilization. By night, he barricades himself in his home and prays for dawn....**

Focus Question: How does the author show loneliness? How does the feeling of loneliness impact the character(s)? This novel has been made into three films, watch them as well: *The Last Man on Earth*; *Omega Man*; and *I am Legend*. Each director and screenwriter has focused on loneliness and demonstrated them in different ways. What does each film show about the interpretation of loneliness and what do they show you about the times they were made (60's, 70's and 90's)/?

#### **14. Ford, Jaime. HOTEL On the Corner of Bitter and Sweet w/ Mrs. Druten**

From Amazon.com: Henry Lee comes upon a crowd gathered outside the Panama Hotel, once the gateway to Seattle's Japantown. It has been boarded up for decades, but now the new owner has made an incredible discovery: the belongings of Japanese families, left when they were rounded up and sent to internment camps during World War II. As Henry looks on, the owner opens a Japanese parasol.

This simple act takes old Henry Lee back to the 1940s, at the height of the war, when young Henry's world is a jumble of confusion and excitement, and to his father, who is obsessed with the war in China and having Henry grow up American. While "scholarshipping" at the exclusive Rainier Elementary, where the white kids ignore him, Henry meets Keiko Okabe, a young Japanese American student. Amid the chaos of blackouts, curfews, and FBI raids, Henry and Keiko forge a bond of friendship—and innocent love—that transcends the long-standing prejudices of their Old World ancestors. And after Keiko and her family are swept up in the evacuations to the internment camps, she and Henry are left only with the hope that the war will end, and that their promise to each other will be kept.

Set during one of the most conflicted and volatile times in American history, *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* is an extraordinary story of commitment and enduring hope. In Henry and Keiko, Jamie Ford has created an unforgettable duo whose story teaches us of the power of forgiveness and the human heart.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

#### **15. Catmull, Ed. Creativity, Inc. w/ Ms. Eriksen**

"Overcoming the Unseen Forces that Stand in the Way of True Inspiration". This book demonstrates how to tap into creativity. It reveals how Pixar used new ideals to bring out creativity and to become a very successful company which is admired by many. I'm reading this book to learn from the best and so should you. If you are going in ASB, in a leadership position, or going to run a business in the future, then this book is something you should read with me this summer so we can learn from it and share the best ideas together when we meet in September!

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**16. Alexie, Sherman. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* w/ Mr. Evans**

I found this book funny and also tragic--like life. The following is a paraphrase taken from the back of the book: Junior is a Spokane Indian with medical issues who is growing up on the reservation. He is smart but picked on by everyone and decides to leave the reservation to go to the all-white school in town. This causes conflict with people on the reservation and in the town.

In addition to the writing, this book has a lot of cartoons that are used to tell the story (Junior is an artist).

**Focus while reading:**, You can take notes on whatever strikes you. Here are a couple suggestions: What different functions do the cartoons play--how do they help the story? What issues of tolerance and belonging strike you? Things are complicated, especially relationships--what from this book is relevant to this

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**17. Hiaasen, Carl. *Double Whammy*. w/ Mrs. Evans**

R.J. Decker, star tenant of the local trailer park and neophyte private eye is fishing for a killer. Thanks to a sportsman's scam that's anything but sportsmanlike, there's a body floating in Coon Bog, Florida -- and a lot that's rotten in the murky waters of big-stakes, largemouth bass tournaments. Here Decker will team up with a half-blind, half-mad hermit with an appetite for road kill; dare to kiss his ex-wife while she's in bed with her new husband; and face deadly TV evangelists, dangerously seductive women, and a pistol-toting redneck with a pit bull on his arm. And here his own life becomes part of the stakes. For while the "double whammy" is the lure, first prize is for the most ingenious murder.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**18. w/ Mrs. Flaxman. *The Nightingale*. Hannah, Kristin.**

In love we find out who we want to be. In war we find out who we are. FRANCE, 1939 In the quiet village of Carriveau, Vianne Mauriac says goodbye to her husband, Antoine, as he heads for the Front. She doesn't believe that the Nazis will invade France ... but invade they do, in droves of marching soldiers, in caravans of trucks and tanks, in planes that fill the skies and drop bombs upon the innocent. When a German captain requisitions Vianne's home, she and her daughter must live with the enemy or lose everything. Without food or money or hope, as danger escalates all around them, she is forced to make one impossible choice after another to keep her family alive. Vianne's sister, Isabelle, is a rebellious eighteen-year-old girl, searching for purpose with all the reckless passion of youth. While thousands of Parisians march into the unknown terrors of war, she meets G etan, a partisan who believes the French can fight the Nazis from within France, and she falls in love as only the young can ... completely. But when he betrays her, Isabelle joins the Resistance and never looks back, risking her life time and again to save others. With courage, grace and powerful insight, bestselling author Kristin Hannah captures the epic panorama of WWII and illuminates an intimate part of history seldom seen: the women's war. *The Nightingale* tells the

stories of two sisters, separated by years and experience, by ideals, passion and circumstance, each embarking on her own dangerous path toward survival, love, and freedom in German-occupied, war-torn France—a heartbreakingly beautiful novel that celebrates the resilience of the human spirit and the durability of women. It is a novel for everyone, a novel for a lifetime.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**19. Jonasson, Jonas. *Hitman Anders and the Meaning of It All*. w/ Ms. Francioni**

Wildly funny and unexpected, this zany, feel-good adventure story about a born-again hitman who becomes business partners with a recently fired atheist priest tenderly and hilariously explores belief, redemption, and the fact that it's never too late to start again. Mischievous yet big-hearted, filled with Jonas Jonasson's trenchant humor and delightful twists, *Hitman Anders and the Meaning of It All* is a delightful comic adventure that reminds us it's never too late to start over—and to discover what truly matters. *This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content., This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content.*

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**20. Austin, Jane. *Northanger Abbey* w/ Mrs. Fraser**

Jane Austen has won legions of devoted fans in the 200 years since her death with her masterful parody of courtship and lightly moralizing critique of social mores in the early 19th century. *Northanger Abbey* was the first of her major novels to be completed, and though it was sold to a publisher in 1803, it was not released until 1817, months after her death. The tale of Gothic novel-obsessed Catherine Morland gives readers, particularly Austen fans that have only experienced her later works, an early point of reference by which to chart the sharpening of her famous wit.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**21. Bruni, Frank. *Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania*. w/ Mrs. Garcia**

Over the last few decades, Americans have turned college admissions into a terrifying and occasionally devastating process, preceded by test prep, tutors, all sorts of stratagems, all kinds of rankings, and a conviction among too many young people that their futures will be determined and their worth established by which schools say yes and which say no.

That belief is wrong. It's cruel. And in *WHERE YOU GO IS NOT WHO YOU'LL BE*, Frank Bruni explains why, giving students and their parents a new perspective on this brutal, deeply flawed competition and a path out of the anxiety that it provokes.

Bruni, a bestselling author and a columnist for the *New York Times*, shows that the Ivy League has no monopoly on corner offices, governors' mansions, or the most prestigious academic and scientific grants. Through statistics, surveys, and the stories of hugely successful people who didn't attend the most exclusive schools, he demonstrates that many kinds of colleges—large public universities, tiny hideaways in the hinterlands—serve as ideal springboards. And he illuminates how to make the most of them. What matters in the end are a student's efforts in and out of the classroom, not the gleam of his or her diploma.

Where you go *isn't* who you'll be. Americans need to hear that—and this indispensable manifesto says it with eloquence and respect for the real promise of higher education.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

## **22. Orenstein, Peggy. *Girls & Sex: Navigating the Complicated New Landscape*. w/ Ms. Hall**

From Amazon: A generation gap has emerged between parents and their girls. Even in this age of helicopter parenting, the mothers and fathers of tomorrow's women have little idea what their daughters are up to sexually or how they feel about it. Drawing on in-depth interviews with over seventy young women and a wide range of psychologists, academics, and experts, renowned journalist Peggy Orenstein goes where most others fear to tread, pulling back the curtain on the hidden truths, hard lessons, and important possibilities of girls' sex lives in the modern world.

While the media has focused—often to sensational effect—on the rise of casual sex and the prevalence of rape on campus, in *Girls and Sex* Peggy Orenstein brings much more to the table. She examines the ways in which porn and all its sexual myths have seeped into young people's lives; what it means to be the “the perfect slut” and why many girls scorn virginity; the complicated terrain of hookup culture and the unfortunate realities surrounding assault. In Orenstein's hands these issues are never reduced to simplistic “truths”; rather, her powerful reporting opens up a dialogue on a potent, often silent, subtext of American life today—giving readers comprehensive and in-depth information with which to understand, and navigate, this complicated new world.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

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## **23. *Go Set a Watchman* w/ Mrs. Hastings**

From Amazon: Maycomb, Alabama. Twenty-six-year-old Jean Louise Finch—“Scout”—returns home from New York City to visit her aging father, Atticus. Set against the backdrop of the civil rights tensions and political turmoil that were transforming the South, Jean Louise's homecoming turns bittersweet when she learns disturbing truths about her close-knit family, the town, and the people dearest to her. Memories from her childhood flood back, and her values and assumptions are thrown into doubt. Featuring many of the iconic characters from *To Kill a*

*Mockingbird*, *Go Set a Watchman* perfectly captures a young woman, and a world, in painful yet necessary transition out of the illusions of the past—a journey that can only be guided by one's own conscience.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

#### **24. Weir, Andy. *The Martian*. w/ Ms. Hecht**

Six days ago, astronaut Mark Watney became one of the first people to walk on Mars.

Now, he's sure he'll be the first person to die there.

After a dust storm nearly kills him and forces his crew to evacuate while thinking him dead, Mark finds himself stranded and completely alone with no way to even signal Earth that he's alive—and even if he could get word out, his supplies would be gone long before a rescue could arrive.

Chances are, though, he won't have time to starve to death. The damaged machinery, unforgiving environment, or plain-old "human error" are much more likely to kill him first.

But Mark isn't ready to give up yet. Drawing on his ingenuity, his engineering skills—and a relentless, dogged refusal to quit—he steadfastly confronts one seemingly insurmountable obstacle after the next. Will his resourcefulness be enough to overcome the impossible odds against him?

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

#### **25. Bauman, Jeff. *Stronger*. w/ Mr. Hettinger**

When Jeff Bauman woke up on Tuesday, April 16th, 2013 in the Boston Medical Center, groggy from a series of lifesaving surgeries and missing his legs, he asked for a pad and paper and wrote down seven words: "Saw the guy. Looked right at me," setting off one of the biggest manhunts in the country's history.

Just thirty hours before, Jeff had been at the finish line of the 2013 Boston Marathon cheering on his girlfriend, when the first bomb went off at his feet. As he was rushed to the hospital, he didn't know that a photograph of him in a wheelchair was circulating throughout the world, making him the human face of the Boston Marathon bombing victims.

Up until the marathon, Jeff had been a normal 27-year-old guy, looking forward to moving in with Erin and starting the next phase of their lives together. But when his life was turned upside down, Jeff did not give up.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**26. Arcos, Carrie. *There Will Come a Time* w/ Mrs. Hettinger**

**From Amazon:** Mark grapples with the loss of his twin sister in this heart-wrenching novel of grief and resilience from National Book Award finalist Carrie Arcos.

Mark knows grief. Ever since the accident that killed his twin sister, Grace, the only time he feels at peace is when he visits the bridge where she died. Comfort is fleeting, but it's almost within reach when he's standing on the wrong side of the suicide bars. Almost.

Grace's best friend, Hanna, says she understands what he's going through. But she doesn't. She can't. It's not just the enormity of his loss. As her twin, Mark should have known Grace as well as he knows himself. Yet when he reads her journal, it's as if he didn't know her at all.

As a way to remember Grace, Hanna convinces Mark to complete Grace's bucket list from her journal. Mark's sadness, anger, and his growing feelings for Hanna threaten to overwhelm him. But Mark can't back out. He made a promise to honor Grace—and it's his one chance to set things right.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**27. Ruiz, Don Miguel. *The Four Agreements*. w/ Ms. Imbarus**

In *The Four Agreements*, bestselling author don Miguel Ruiz reveals the source of self-limiting beliefs that rob us of joy and create needless suffering. Based on ancient Toltec wisdom, *The Four Agreements* offers a powerful code of conduct that can rapidly transform our lives to a new experience of freedom, true happiness, and love.

- A *New York Times* bestseller for over 8 years
- Over 6 million copies sold in the U.S and translated into 40 languages worldwide

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**28. Magoon, Kekla. *How It Went Down* w/ Ms. Kahlon**

When sixteen-year-old Tariq Johnson dies from two gunshot wounds, his community is thrown into an uproar. Tariq was black. The shooter, Jack Franklin, is white.

In the aftermath of Tariq's death, everyone has something to say, but no two accounts of the events line up. Day by day, new twists further obscure the truth.

Tariq's friends, family, and community struggle to make sense of the tragedy, and to cope with the hole left behind when a life is cut short. In their own words, they grapple for a way to say with certainty: This is how it went down.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

### 29. **The Beginning of Everything** by **Robyn Schneider** w/ Ms. J. Kim

Gr 9 Up-Ezra Faulkner believes that everyone has a tragedy waiting to happen that will be their life-changing moment. In the summer before seventh grade, his best friend, Toby, had his moment when he inadvertently caught the severed head of a boy who was decapitated on a ride in Disneyland. Ezra ended his friendship with Toby after that. Now 17, Ezra encounters his own tragic watershed event: he finds his girlfriend cheating on him and then has a car accident that ends his tennis career. He returns to school for his last year a broken boy who has shunned his jock friends and just wants to make it through life unnoticed. By reconnecting with Toby and developing a relationship with Cassidy, a new girl who has a secretive past and home life, Ezra gets the chance to remake himself into someone who lives rather than just exists. Though Ezra's old friends are depicted as stereotypes, they help to emphasize the attributes of his new friends, who are quirky, smart, and funny. This is a wonderfully told story. The dialogue moves the plot along at a fast pace, and Ezra, with all his flaws, is a character to whom readers can relate. Teens won't want to put this one down until the mystery of Cassidy is unraveled at the end. -Elizabeth Kahn, Patrick F. Taylor Science & Technology Academy, Jefferson, LAa(c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --*This text refers to the [Hardcover](#) edition.*

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**30. Gruen, Sara. *Water's Edge*. w/ Mrs. Lange *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER • In this thrilling new novel from the author of *Water for Elephants*, Sara Gruen again demonstrates her talent for creating spellbinding period pieces. *At the Water's Edge* is a gripping and poignant love story about a privileged young woman's awakening as she experiences the devastation of World War II in a tiny village in the Scottish Highlands. After disgracing themselves at a high society New Year's Eve party in Philadelphia in 1944, Madeline Hyde and her husband, Ellis, are cut off financially by his father, a former army colonel who is already ashamed of his son's inability to serve in the war. When Ellis and his best friend, Hank, decide that the only way to regain the Colonel's favor is to succeed where the Colonel very publicly failed—by hunting down the famous Loch Ness monster—Maddie reluctantly follows them across the Atlantic, leaving her sheltered world behind. The trio find themselves in a remote village in the Scottish Highlands, where the locals have nothing but contempt for the privileged interlopers. Maddie is left on her own at the isolated inn, where food is rationed, fuel is scarce, and a knock from the postman can bring tragic news. Yet she finds herself falling in love with**

the stark beauty and subtle magic of the Scottish countryside. Gradually she comes to know the villagers, and the friendships she forms with two young women open her up to a larger world than she knew existed. Maddie begins to see that nothing is as it first appears: the values she holds dear prove unsustainable, and monsters lurk where they are least expected. As she embraces a fuller sense of who she might be, Maddie becomes aware not only of the dark forces around her, but of life's beauty and surprising possibilities.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**31. Ung, Loung. *First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers* (P.S.). w/ Ms. Lau**

One of seven children of a high-ranking government official, Loung Ung lived a privileged life in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh until the age of five. Then, in April 1975, Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge army stormed into the city, forcing Ung's family to flee and, eventually, to disperse. Loung was trained as a child soldier in a work camp for orphans, her siblings were sent to labor camps, and those who survived the horrors would not be reunited until the Khmer Rouge was destroyed. Harrowing yet hopeful, Loung's powerful story is an unforgettable account of a family shaken and shattered, yet miraculously sustained by courage and love in the face of unspeakable brutality.

\* Note - contains scenes of intense violence

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**32. Dellaira, Ava. *Love Letters to the Dead*.w/ Ms. Lee (J)**

**From Amazon:** It begins as an assignment for English class: Write a letter to a dead person. Laurel chooses Kurt Cobain because her sister, May, loved him. And he died young, just like May did. Soon, Laurel has a notebook full of letters to people like Janis Joplin, Amy Winehouse, Amelia Earhart, Heath Ledger, and more -- though she never gives a single one of them to her teacher. She writes about starting high school, navigating new friendships, falling in love for the first time, learning to live with her splintering family. And, finally, about the abuse she suffered while May was supposed to be looking out for her. Only then, once Laurel has written down the truth about what happened to herself, can she truly begin to accept what happened to May. And only when Laurel has begun to see her sister as the person she was -- lovely and amazing and deeply flawed -- can she begin to discover her own path in this stunning debut from Ava Dellaira, *Love Letters to the Dead*.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**33. Shin, Kyung Sook. *Please Look After Mom*. w/ Mrs. Lee (K)**

From Amazon: A million-plus-copy best seller in Korea—a magnificent English-language debut poised to become an international sensation—this is the stunning, deeply moving story of a family’s search for their mother, who goes missing one afternoon amid the crowds of the Seoul Station subway. Told through the piercing voices and urgent perspectives of a daughter, son, husband, and mother, *Please Look After Mom* is at once an authentic picture of contemporary life in Korea and a universal story of family love.

You will never think of your mother the same way again after you read this book.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**34. Stedman, M. L. *The Light Between Oceans* w/ Mrs. Lopez**

From Amazon: Tom Sherbourne is a lighthouse keeper on Janus Rock, a tiny island a half day’s boat journey from the coast of Western Australia. When a baby washes up in a rowboat, he and his young wife Isabel decide to raise the child as their own. The baby seems like a gift from God, and the couple’s reasoning for keeping her seduces the reader into entering the waters of treacherous morality even as Tom—whose moral code withstood the horrors of World War I—begins to waver. M. L. Stedman’s vivid characters and gorgeous descriptions of the solitude of Janus Rock and of the unpredictable Australian frontier create a perfect backdrop for the tale of longing, loss, and the overwhelming love for a child that is *The Light Between Oceans*. This book is CLOSED to HONORS II and AP LANG STUDENTS who have already read it.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**35. Gibney, Michael. *Sous Chef: 24 Hours in the Line*. w/ Ms. Luhmann**

From Amazon: *The back must slave to feed the belly. . . .* In this urgent and unique book, chef Michael Gibney uses twenty-four hours to animate the intricate camaraderie and culinary choreography in an upscale New York restaurant kitchen. Here readers will find all the details, in rapid-fire succession, of what it takes to deliver an exceptional plate of food—the journey to excellence by way of exhaustion.

Told in second-person narrative, *Sous Chef* is an immersive, adrenaline-fueled run that offers a fly-on-the-wall perspective on the food service industry, allowing readers to briefly inhabit the hidden world behind the kitchen doors, in real time. This exhilarating account provides regular diners and food enthusiasts alike a detailed insider’s perspective, while offering fledgling professional cooks an honest picture of what the future holds, ultimately giving voice to the hard work and dedication around which chefs have built their careers.

In a kitchen where the highest standards are upheld and one misstep can result in disaster, *Sous Chef* conjures a greater appreciation for the thought, care, and focus that go into creating memorable and delicious fare. With grit, wit, and remarkable prose, Michael Gibney renders a

beautiful and raw account of this demanding and sometimes overlooked profession, offering a nuanced perspective on the craft and art of food and service.

**“A terrific nuts-and-bolts account of the real business of cooking as told from the trenches. No nonsense. This is what it takes.”—Anthony Bourdain**

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

*This book addresses controversial issues of interest to many adolescents and includes scenes and language that reflect mature content.*

### **36. Viramontes, Helena Maria. *Under the Feet of Jesus* w/ Ms. Machado.**

**From Google Books:** At the center of this powerful tale is Estrella, a girl about to cross over the perilous border to womanhood. What she knows of life comes from her mother, who has survived abandonment by her husband in a land that treats her as if she were invisible, even though she and her children pick the crops of the farms that feed its people...from the aging but iron-bodied man who reluctantly becomes the head of the family, even as dreams of his youth in Mexico are calling him home...and from the endless highways and vast fields of California, where they travel and work together.

But within Estrella, seeds of growth and change are stirring. And in the arms of Alejo, only a few years older than herself, they burst into full fierce flower, as she tastes the joy and pain of first love. Estrella begins to listen to her own inner voice in giving herself to that love. She comes to learn the value of life and discovers her own power to defy a system that would otherwise keep her down.

Pushed to the margins of society, she learns to fight back and is able to help the young farmworker she loves when his ambitions and very life are threatened in a harvest of death. Infused with the beauty of the California landscape and shifting splendors of the passing seasons juxtaposed with the bleakness of poverty, this vividly imagined novel, so observant and full of wisdom, is worthy of the people it celebrates and whose story it tells so magnificently.

The simple lyrical beauty of Viramontes' prose, her haunting use of image and metaphor, and the urgency of her themes all announce *Under the Feet of Jesus* as a landmark work of American fiction.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

### **37. Fallada, Hans. *Every Man Dies Alone* w/ Mr. Martin**

**From the book cover: Based on a true story, this sweeping saga tells the tale of a working class couple in Berlin who decides to take a stand against the Nazis. More than an edge-of-your-seat thriller, more than a moving romance, even more than literature of the highest order, it's a deeply moving story of two people who stand up for what's right, and for each other.**

**Hans Fallada wrote *Every Man Dies Alone* in a feverish twenty-four days, soon after the end of World War II and his release from a Nazi insane asylum. He did not live to see its publication.**

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

*This book is for mature audiences only and includes drinking, sex, profanity, and graphic descriptions of violent acts, all of which serve to define character, give style to voice, and develop theme.*

### **38. No Choice.**

### **39. Green, John. *Looking for Alaska w/ Ms. Metz***

From Common Sense Media: Miles convinces his parents to send him away to boarding school in Alabama. There he meets his soon-to-be best friend, Chip, and Alaska Young, the moody, gorgeous, wild girl who instantly becomes the object of his lust. Miles is quickly enlisted in their war against the Weekday Warriors, the rich kids who go home every weekend, and they bond over elaborate pranks, studying, and assorted rule-breaking. About halfway through the book a tragedy occurs, and those left spend the rest of the book trying to make sense of it.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

*This book is for mature audiences only and includes drinking, sex, profanity, smoking and use of marijuana, all of which serve to define character, give style to voice, and develop theme.*

### **40. Zahn, Timothy. *Heir to the Empire (Star Wars: The Thrawn Trilogy: Volume 1) w/ Mr. Naudus.***

Wow! Mr P says pick this book or Sprague's book!

It's five years after the Rebel Alliance destroyed the Death Star, defeated Darth Vader and the Emperor, and drove the remnants of the old Imperial Starfleet to a distant corner of the galaxy. Princess Leia and Han Solo are married and expecting Jedi twins. And Luke Skywalker has become the first in a long-awaited line of Jedi Knights.

But thousands of light-years away, the last of the Emperor's warlords, Grand Admiral Thrawn, has taken command of the shattered Imperial fleet, readied it for war, and pointed it at the fragile heart of the New Republic. For this dark warrior has made two vital discoveries that could destroy everything the courageous men and women of the Rebel Alliance fought so hard to build.

If you thought *The Force Awakens* did a poor job of explaining what happened after *The Return of the Jedi*, you were right. This novel does a much better job of painting an interesting continuation of

the storyline that occurs after *The Return of the Jedi*. It's a tragedy that this wasn't what was made into a movie. If you are a *Star Wars* fan, this is a must read and you will most likely want to read the other two novels in the trilogy. Just warning you.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

#### **41. Forman, Gayle. *I Was Here w/ Ms. Orabuena***

From the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *If I Stay* comes "a heartbreaking novel about coping with loss" (*People*).

When her best friend, Meg, commits suicide by drinking a bottle of industrial-strength cleaner alone in a motel room, Cody is understandably shocked and devastated. She and Meg shared everything—so how did she miss the signs of Meg's depression? But when Cody travels to Meg's college town to pack up the belongings left behind, she discovers that there's a lot that Meg never told her. About her old roommates, the sort of people Cody never would have met in her dead-end small town in Washington. About Ben McAllister, the boy with a guitar and a sneer, and some secrets of his own. And about an encrypted computer file that Cody can't open—until she does, and suddenly everything Cody thought she knew about her best friend's death gets thrown into question.

"*I Was Here* is a pitch-perfect blend of mystery, tragedy, and romance. Gayle Forman has given us an unflinchingly honest portrait of the bravery that it takes to live after devastating loss."

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

#### **42. Wooden, John. *A Game Plan for Life w/ Mr. Oshiro***

After eight books, many of them bestsellers, *A Game Plan for Life* was the one closest to John Wooden's heart: a moving and inspirational guide to the power of mentorship. The first half focuses on the people who helped foster the values that carried Wooden through an incredibly successful and famously principled career, including his father, his college coach, his wife, Mahatma Gandhi, and Mother Teresa. The second half is built around interviews with some of the many people he mentored over the years, including Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Bill Walton. Their testimony takes readers inside the lessons Wooden taught to generations of players, bringing out the very best in them not just as athletes but as human beings. In all, this is an inspiring primer on how to achieve success without sacrificing principles and how to build one of the most productive and rewarding relationships available to any athlete, businessperson, teacher, or parent—that of mentor and protégé.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

#### **43. Unknown. Undecided w/ Mr P**

From the Amazon: Mr P usually reads a bunch over summer. Probably a bunch of stuff very few folks would enjoy. Hence, P suggests signing up for Simpson's session as he is reading an Alan Watts' book. Heck, anything by Watts is likely solid. Although, Watts was a better speaker and storyteller than writer.

Here is a list of what P might be reading this summer. He is undecided and will not know until Finals and other distractions are out of the way and the freedom of summer grants P the glory of sitting with a pile of books so he could decide what he will read this summer. If you are interested in any of these books, email P at mrpatwest@hotmail.com and let him know. In the end, it might influence his decision for this summer reading thing.

*Dark Room* by Rachel Seiffert, *Zero-Marginal Cost Society* by Jeremy Rifkin, *Death of a King* by Tavis Smiley, *Bridge to the 18th Century* by Neil Postman, *History of Ancient Rome* by Mary Beard, *Democracy Inc* by Sheldon S Wolin, *Propaganda* by Edward Bernays, *Geography of Time* by Robert Levine, *Animal Farm* by George Orwell (because everyone should read it every few years), *The Landscape of History* by Cold War Historian John Lewis Gaddis... sort of reads like *The Art of Travel* by Allain De Botton but Allain is far more in-depth and superior metaphysical thinker than Mr. Gaddis or so it seems. *Masscult & Midcult* by Dwight MacDonald, *The Case Against the Supreme Court* by Erwin Chemerinsky, *Command and Control* by Eric Schlosser, *Shadow Factory* by James Bamford, *The Anatomy of Fascism* by Robert Paxton, *Buddha* by Karen Armstrong... anything by Armstrong is thought provoking... probably read some Ruskin Bond short stories... *Commentaries on Living* by Krishnamurti, something by David Brin because as of late lots of smart people have been referencing his books. Again, email P if you are interested in one of these books. He's busy but will eventually select one of these books. Do NOT like any of these books? Move on. Again, P suggests Mr. Simpson's Alan Watts' book. Amen.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

#### **44. Stork, Francisco. *Memory of Light*. w/ Mrs. Puccio**

**When Vicky Cruz wakes up in the Lakeview Hospital Mental Disorders Ward, she knows one thing: after her suicide attempt, she shouldn't be alive. But then she meets Mona, the live wire; Gabriel, the saint; E.M., always angry; and Dr. Desai, a quiet force. With stories and honesty, kindness and hard work, they push her to reconsider her life before Lakeview, and offer her an acceptance she's never had.**

Inspired in part by the author's own experience with depression, *The Memory of Light* is the rare young adult novel that focuses not on the events leading up to a suicide attempt, but the recovery from one — about living when life doesn't seem worth it, and how we go on anyway.

Describe the process and steps that Vicky must take and the imagery she uses to endure and move forward.

#### **45. Sayer, Amber. *PR: A Personal Record of Running from Anorexia* w/ Mrs. Rodriguez**

As a nationally ranked high school runner, nobody seemed to notice that Amber Sayer's weight was dropping just as fast as her finish times. "PR" is a sports chronicle, a coming of age story, and a cautionary report of one runner's simultaneous decent into anorexia and rise in the high school track and cross-country rankings. Her honest account of a distressingly common problem among high school and collegiate athletes takes readers through the disease's progression and its unsettling parallels with her burgeoning running career. After losing more than she ever anticipated, and incurring permanent

physical and emotional damage, Sayer struggles to overcome her severe case of anorexia and the sport's culture in which eating disorders and their increasing prevalence remain dangerously taboo.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**46. Markos, Adam. *A Higher Call* w/ Mr. Rollins**

December, 1943: A badly damaged American bomber struggles to fly over wartime Germany. At the controls is twenty-one-year-old Second Lieutenant Charlie Brown. Half his crew lay wounded or dead on this, their first mission. Suddenly, a Messerschmitt fighter pulls up on the bomber's tail. The pilot is German ace Franz Stigler—and he can destroy the young American crew with the squeeze of a trigger...

What happened next would defy imagination and later be called “the most incredible encounter between enemies in World War II.”

The U.S. 8th Air Force would later classify what happened between them as “top secret.” It was an act that Franz could never mention for fear of facing a firing squad. It was the encounter that would haunt both Charlie and Franz for forty years until, as old men, they would search the world for each other, a last mission that could change their lives forever.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**47. O'Dell, Scott. *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. w/ Ms. Rulon**

In the Pacific there is an island that looks like a big fish sunning itself in the sea. Around it, blue dolphins swim, otters play, and sea elephants and sea birds abound. Once, Indians also lived on the island. And when they left and sailed to the east, one young girl was left behind. This is the story of Karana, the Indian girl who lived alone for years on the Island of the Blue Dolphins. Year after year, she watched one season pass into another and waited for a ship to take her away. But while she waited, she kept herself alive by building shelter, making weapons, finding food, and fighting her enemies, the wild dogs. It is not only an unusual adventure of survival, but also a tale of natural beauty and personal discovery.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**48. Palacio, P. J. *Wonder* w/ Ms. Secura**

From Amazon: August (Auggie) Pullman was born with a facial deformity that prevented him from

going to a mainstream school—until now. He’s about to enter fifth grade at Beecher Prep, and if you’ve ever been the new kid, then you know how hard that can be. The thing is Auggie’s just an ordinary kid, with an extraordinary face. But can he convince his new classmates that he’s just like them, despite appearances?

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**49. Watts, Alan. *The Book w/ Mr. Simpson***

Mr P says, “Anyone reading, listening, thinking, pondering or talking about stuff Alan Watts talks about is on the right path.” So you are a student at West High and you have to read a book and then discuss with a teacher in the Fall. Here is a brilliant author and a brilliant teacher to discuss this book. Easy choice. Forget the rest.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**50. King, Sara. *Forging Zero. w/ Mrs. Thompson***

From Amazon: The Legend of ZERO begins the epic journey of 14-year-old Joe Dobbs in a post-apocalyptic universe following a massive alien invasion of Earth. The oldest of the children drafted from humanity’s devastated planet, Joe is pressed into service by the alien Congressional Ground Force—and becomes the unwitting centerpiece in a millennia-long alien struggle for independence. Once his training begins, one of the elusive and prophetic Trith appears to give Joe a spine chilling prophecy that the universe has been anticipating for millions of years: Joe will be the one to finally shatter the vast alien government known as Congress. And the Trith cannot lie.... But first Joe has to make it through bootcamp.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**51. Palahniuk, Chuck *Survivor w/ Mr. Tubic***

From Amazon.com: Tender Branson—last surviving member of the Creedish Death Cult—is dictating his life story into Flight 2039’s recorder. He is all alone in the airplane, which will crash shortly into the vast Australian outback. But before it does, he will unfold the tale of his journey from an obedient Creedish child to an ultra-buffed, steroid- and collagen-packed media messiah. Unpredictable and unforgettable, *Survivor* is Chuck Palahniuk at his deadpan peak: a mesmerizing, unnerving, and hilarious satire on the wages of fame and the bedrock lunacy of the modern world.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**52. Alvarez, Julia. *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents. w/ Ms. Villaneda***

In this debut novel, the García sisters—Carla, Sandra, Yolanda, and Sofía—and their family must flee their home in the Dominican Republic after their father’s role in an attempt to overthrow a tyrannical dictator is discovered. They arrive in New York City in 1960 to a life far removed from their existence in the Caribbean. In the wild and wondrous and not always welcoming U.S.A., their parents try to hold on to their old ways, but the girls try find new lives: by forgetting their Spanish, by straightening their hair and wearing fringed bell bottoms. For them, it is at once liberating and

excruciating to be caught between the old world and the new. *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* sets the sisters free to tell their most intimate stories about how they came to be at home—and not at home—in America.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**53. Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*. w/ Mrs. Wang**

**\*Note\* You may not select this novel if you've read it for Eng 1 or are enrolled in Eng 1 Honors this Fall.**

The extraordinary #1 *New York Times* bestseller that is now a major motion picture, Markus Zusak's unforgettable story is about the ability of books to feed the soul. It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still. Liesel Meminger is a foster girl living outside of Munich, who scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement. In superbly crafted writing that burns with intensity, award-winning author Markus Zusak, author of *I Am the Messenger*, has given us one of the most enduring stories of our time.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**54. Owen, David. *The Conundrum: How Scientific Innovation, Increased Efficiency, and Good Intentions Can Make Our Energy and Climate Problems Worse* w/ Mr. Welch**

David Owen's *The Conundrum* is an elegant nonfiction narrative filled with fascinating information and anecdotes that take you through the history of energy and the quest for efficiency. This is a book about the environment that will change how you look at the world. We should not be waiting for some geniuses to invent our way out of the energy and economic crisis we're in. We already have the technology and knowledge we need to live sustainably. But will we do it? That is the conundrum.

EQ: What specific arguments does Owen make, and how do they compare to your previous understanding? What does this mean for your/our ability to make the world a better place?  
*This book should be acceptable to readers of all maturity levels.*

**55. Kean, Sam. *The Violinist's Thumb*. w/ Mr. Williams**

In *The Disappearing Spoon*, bestselling author Sam Kean unlocked the mysteries of the periodic table. In *THE VIOLINIST'S THUMB*, he explores the wonders of the magical building block of life: DNA.

There are genes to explain crazy cat ladies, why other people have no fingerprints, and why some people survive nuclear bombs. Genes illuminate everything from JFK's bronze skin (it wasn't a tan) to Einstein's genius. They prove that Neanderthals and humans bred thousands of years more recently than any of us would feel comfortable thinking. They can even allow some people, because of the exceptional flexibility of their thumbs and fingers, to become truly singular violinists.

Kean's vibrant storytelling once again makes science entertaining, explaining human history and whimsy while showing how DNA will influence our species' future.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**56. Franta, Connor. *A Work in Progress w/ Mrs. Yang*, (E)**

In this intimate memoir of life beyond the camera, Connor Franta shares the lessons he has learned on his journey from small-town boy to Internet sensation—so far. Here, Connor offers a look at his Midwestern upbringing as one of four children in the home and one of five in the classroom; his struggles with identity, body image, and sexuality in his teen years; and his decision to finally pursue his creative and artistic passions in his early twenties, setting up his thrilling career as a YouTube personality, philanthropist, entrepreneur, and tastemaker.

Exploring his past with insight and humor, his present with humility, and his future with hope, Connor reveals his private struggles while providing heartfelt words of wisdom for young adults. His words will resonate with anyone coming of age in the digital era, but at the core is a timeless message for people of all ages: don't be afraid to be yourself and to go after what you truly want.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**57 Brashares, Ann. *My Name Is Memory*. w/ Ms. Yang (P)**

**From Amazon:** Daniel has spent centuries falling in love with the same girl. Life after life, crossing continents and dynasties, he and Sophia (despite her changing name and form) have been drawn together—and he remembers it all. For all the times that he and Sophia have been connected throughout history, they have also been torn painfully, fatally, apart.

But just when Sophia (now "Lucy" in the present) finally awakens to the secret of their shared past, the mysterious force that has always separated them reappears. Ultimately, they must come to understand what stands in the way of their love if they are ever to spend a lifetime together.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**58. *Harriers: The Making of a Championship Cross Country Team* w/ Mr Drueten**

A fresh perspective enlivens this classic story about a losing team with an energetic new coach. Written by two Ohio teenagers about their high school's cross-country team. This account offers engaging portraits of the kids and their coach, passes on lessons of hard work and sacrifice, and follows the ascent of the Salem Quakers cross-country team to a first-place ranking in their conference and third place at the 2003 state championships. Along the way the teenagers learn the unromantic truth about the athletic association that regulates their high school sport—legal wrangling and uproar ensue when officials find scoring errors in a postseason meet. As they develop their

talents and teamwork, the teens also learn valuable lessons about sports rules, bureaucracy, and true success.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**59. Applegate, Katherine. *Crenshaw*. w/ Ms. Jenna Murata.**

In her first novel since *The One and Only Ivan*, winner of the Newbery Medal, Katherine Applegate delivers an unforgettable and magical story about family, friendship, and resilience.

Jackson and his family have fallen on hard times. There's no more money for rent. And not much for food, either. His parents, his little sister, and their dog may have to live in their minivan. Again.

Crenshaw is a cat. He's large, he's outspoken, and he's imaginary. He has come back into Jackson's life to help him. But is an imaginary friend enough to save this family from losing everything?

Beloved author Katherine Applegate proves in unexpected ways that friends matter, whether real or imaginary.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**60. Jahren, Hope. *Lab Girl* with Ms. Sprague**

In *Lab Girl*, Hope Jahren gives us a glimpse into the world of being a scientist--a geobiologist, to be exact. She tells of taking field trips in broken-down vehicles, working all night in the lab, and scrambling for funding for her next study. Through her journey, she has her foul-mouthed but loyal lab assistant Bill at her side. (Note: his foul-mouth is just about the only offensive thing in this book.) Their friendship, though, is powerful, and it is, I think, the key to Jahren's success. Also, Jahren struggles with manic depression and her honesty about this condition bolsters the book's power. And, oh yeah, she does describe her studies of plants and trees, but they run parallel to her life story, a life story that is a compelling read all on its own!

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**61. Yang, Gene. *Level Up*.w/ Mrs. White**

Smackdown!

Video Games vs. Medical School!

Which will win the battle for our hero's attention in Gene Luen Yang's new graphic novel?

Dennis Ouyang lives in the shadow of his parents' high expectations. *They* want him to go to med school and become a doctor. *Dennis* just wants to play video games—and he might actually be good enough to do it professionally.

But four adorable, bossy, and occasionally terrifying angels arrive just in time to lead Dennis back onto the straight and narrow: the path to gastroenterology. It's all part of the plan, they tell him. But is it? This powerful piece of magical realism brings into sharp relief the conflict many teens face between pursuing their dreams and living their parents'.

Partnered with the deceptively simple, cute art of newcomer Thien Pham, Gene Yang has returned to the subject he revolutionized with *American Born Chinese*. Whimsical and serious by turns, *Level Up* is a new look at the tale that Yang has made his own: coming of age as an Asian American.

Focus Question: What interests you in this book? What do you want to talk about? Bring your ideas and quotes

**#63** The group for my book is full, but I really want to read it, so I will have to write about the book instead.

**#64** I will read a book on this list but want to write about it instead of joining a group

**#65** I am not going to read and realize this will affect my first semester English grade