

Summer Reading 2026

Incoming 10th Grade

Parents,

Our summer reading program opts to give students more choice in what they read, hoping that students can find a book that is a true page-turner. Our goal has always been to keep students reading through the summer months, but getting students to put down the phone and pick up a book is even more challenging. In expanding our recommended list, we hope to ensure there is something for everyone, and that the summer read is a positive experience and a fun adventure. Our English Department invested time developing reading lists per grade level, to include a few classics, nonfiction, realistic and historical fiction, science fiction, fantasy, and dystopia.

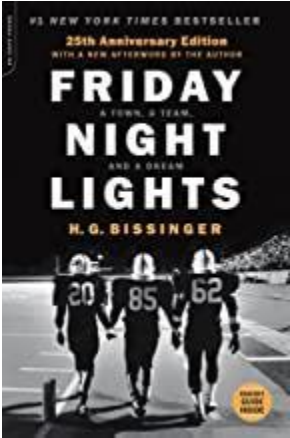

Take time with your student(s) to peruse the list, making sure their book choice meets with your parental approval. A synopsis is included with each title to assist with selection. If you are not sure where to look for more information regarding the content of the text for your child, you can consult [Common Sense Media \(www.commonsensemedia.org\)](http://www.commonsensemedia.org) or look at the publisher's recommendations. We will ask students to respond to a written prompt referencing their title once they are back in the classroom in late August.

We wish your family a safe and fun-filled summer, and invite all of you to pick up one of the titles listed to enjoy on the beach, by the pool, on a long car ride, or in a shady chair in the backyard. Happy reading, everyone!

Mrs. Kathy Hand

Principal

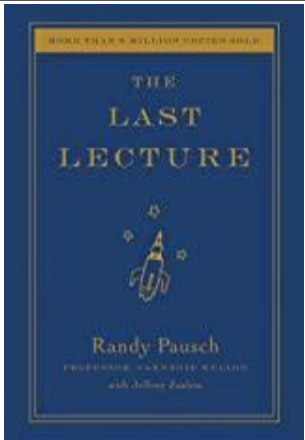
Choose one of the following books to read during the summer. When you return to school in August, your chosen book will be the topic of your first writing.

Genre	Title/Author	Summary
<p>Nonfiction/ Memoir</p> <p><i>Friday Night Lights: A Town, a Team, and a Dream</i></p> <p>H.G. Bissinger</p>		<p>Return once again to the timeless account of the Permian Panthers of Odessa—the winningest high school football team in Texas history. Socially and racially divided, Odessa isn't known to be a place big on dreams, but every Friday night from September to December, when the Panthers play football, dreams can come true. With frankness and compassion, Pulitzer Prize winner H. G. Bissinger unforgettably captures a season in the life of Odessa and shows how single-minded devotion to the team shapes the community and inspires—and sometimes shatters—the teenagers who wear the Panthers' uniforms.</p>
<p>Nonfiction/ Memoir</p> <p><i>Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me?</i></p> <p>Mindy Kaling</p>		<p>Mindy Kaling has lived many lives: the obedient child of immigrant professionals, a timid chubster afraid of her own bike, a Ben Affleck–impersonating Off-Broadway performer and playwright, and finally, a comedy writer and actress prone to starting fights with her friends and coworkers with the sentence “Can I just say one last thing about this, and then I swear I’ll shut up about it?” Perhaps you want to know what Mindy thinks makes a great best friend (someone who will fill your prescription in the middle of the night), or what makes a great guy (one who is aware of all elderly people in any room at any time and acts accordingly), or what is the perfect amount of fame (so famous you can never get convicted of murder in a court of law), or how to maintain a trim figure (you will not find that information in these pages). If so, you’ve come to the right book, mostly!</p>

**Nonfiction/
Memoir**

*The Last
Lecture*

**Randy
Pausch**

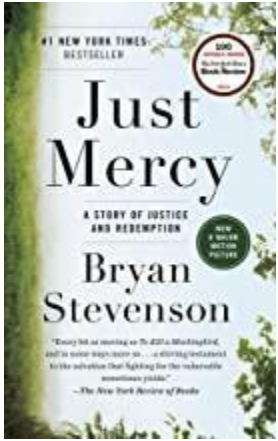


A lot of professors give talks titled "The Last Lecture." Professors are asked to consider their demise and to ruminate on what matters most to them. While they speak, audiences can't help but mull over the same question: What wisdom would we impart to the world if we knew it was our last chance? If we had to vanish tomorrow, what would we want as our legacy? When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon, was asked to give such a lecture, he didn't have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But the lecture he gave—"Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams"—wasn't about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of enabling the dreams of others, of seizing every moment (because "time is all you have... and you may find one day that you have less than you think"). It was about living.



**Nonfiction/
Memoir**


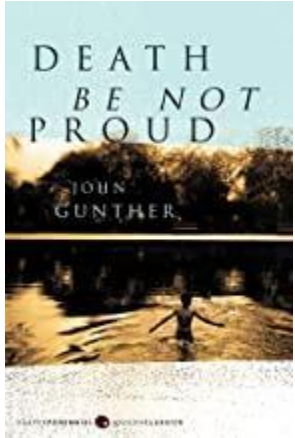
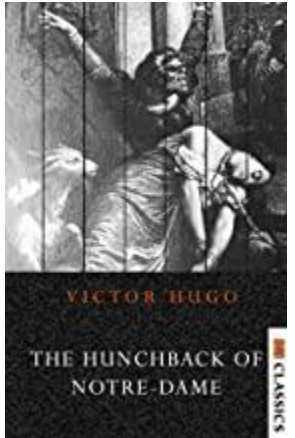
Just Mercy

**Bryan
Stevenson**

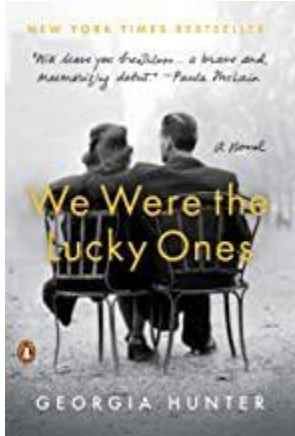
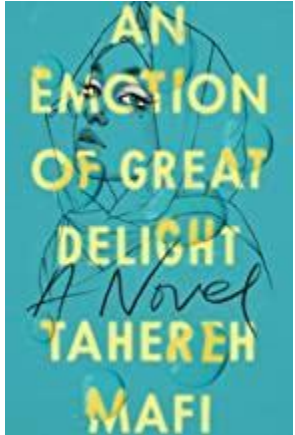


Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinksmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever.

<p>Classics</p> <p>Emma</p> <p>Jane Austen</p>		<p>Jane Austen’s <i>Emma</i> is the story of Emma Woodhouse, a young girl from a good home that does not need the financial support of a husband and is determined not to marry; however, Emma is not opposed to the idea of marriage for others and is determined to play matchmaker between the local citizens. Greatly overestimating her own matchmaking abilities, the headstrong young girl is blind to the dangers of meddling in the affairs of others. When she confuses the attentions of Mr. Elton, the local vicar, as interest for her friend Harriet Smith, she briefly ruins the opportunity for Harriet to marry a respectable, educated, and well-spoken young farmer named Robert Martin. When Mr. Elton rejects the idea of being matched with Harriet, the girl is heartbroken, and Emma begins to realize that her actions although well-intended may be doing more harm than good.</p>
<p>Classics</p> <p>Oliver Twist</p> <p>Charles Dickens</p>		<p>The story of the orphan Oliver, who runs away from the workhouse only to be taken in by a den of thieves, shocked readers when it was first published. Dickens’s tale of childhood innocence beset by evil depicts the dark criminal underworld of a London peopled by vivid and memorable characters—the arch-villain Fagin, the artful Dodger, the menacing Bill Sikes and the prostitute Nancy. Combining elements of Gothic Romance, the Newgate Novel and popular melodrama, Dickens created an entirely new kind of fiction, scathing in its indictment of a cruel society, and pervaded by an unforgettable sense of threat and mystery.</p>

<p>Classics</p> <p>Rebecca</p> <p>Daphne DuMaurier</p>		<p>Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again. The novel begins in Monte Carlo, where our heroine is swept off her feet by the dashing widower Maxim de Winter and his sudden proposal of marriage. Orphaned and working as a lady's maid, she can barely believe her luck. It is only when they arrive at his massive country estate that she realizes how large a shadow his late wife will cast over their lives—presenting her with a lingering evil that threatens to destroy their marriage from beyond the grave.</p>
<p>Classics</p> <p>Death Be Not Proud</p> <p>John Gunther</p>		<p>Johnny Gunther was only seventeen-years-old when he died of a brain tumor. During the months of his illness, everyone near him was unforgettably impressed by his level-headed courage, his wit and quiet friendliness, and, above all, his unfaltering patience through times of despair. This deeply moving book is a father's memoir of a brave, intelligent, and spirited boy.</p>
<p>Classics</p> <p>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</p> <p>Victor Hugo</p>		<p>Set in 1482, Victor Hugo's powerful novel of 'imagination, caprice and fantasy' is a meditation on love, fate, architecture and politics, as well as a compelling recreation of the medieval world at the dawn of the modern age. In a brilliant reworking of the tale of <i>Beauty and the Beast</i>, Hugo creates a host of unforgettable characters—among them, Quasimodo, the hunchback of the title, hopelessly in love with the gypsy girl Esmeralda, the satanic priest Claude Frollo, Clopin Trouillefou, king of the beggars, and Louis XI, King of France. Over the entire novel, both literally and symbolically, broods the Cathedral of Notre-Dame.</p>



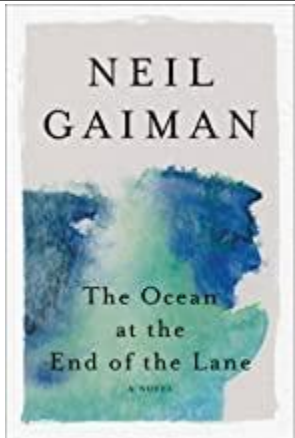
<p>Classics</p> <p><i>A Tree Grows in Brooklyn</i></p> <p>Betty Smith</p>		<p>From the moment she entered the world, Francie Nolan needed to be made of stern stuff, for the often harsh life of Williamsburg demanded fortitude, precocity, and strength of spirit. Often scorned by neighbors for her family’s erratic and eccentric behavior—such as her father Johnny’s taste for alcohol and Aunt Sissy’s habit of marrying serially without the formality of divorce—no one, least of all Francie, could say that the Nolans’ life lacked drama. By turns overwhelming, sublime, heartbreaking, and uplifting, the Nolans’ daily experiences are tenderly threaded with family connectedness and raw with honesty.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historical Fiction</p> <p><i>Room</i></p> <p>Emma Donoghue</p>		<p>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.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historical Fiction</p> <p><i>Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet</i></p> <p>Jamie Ford</p>		<p>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, 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</p>

		<p>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 that transcends the long-standing prejudices of their Old World ancestors. 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.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>We Were the Lucky Ones</i></p> <p>Georgia Hunter</p>		<p>It is the spring of 1939 and three generations of the Kurc family are doing their best to live normal lives, even as the shadow of war grows closer. The talk around the family Seder table is of new babies and budding romance, not of the increasing hardships threatening Jews in their hometown of Radom, Poland. Soon the horrors overtaking Europe will become inescapable and the Kurcs will be flung to the far corners of the world, each desperately trying to navigate his or her own path to safety. As one sibling is forced into exile, another attempts to flee the continent; others struggle to escape certain death by working grueling hours on empty stomachs in the factories of the ghetto or by hiding as gentiles in plain sight. Driven by an unwavering will to survive, the Kurcs must rely on hope, ingenuity, and inner strength to persevere.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>An Emotion of Great Delight</i></p> <p>Tahereh Mafi</p>		<p>It's 2003, several months since the US officially declared war on Iraq, and the American political world has evolved. Tensions are high, hate crimes are on the rise, FBI agents are infiltrating local mosques, and the Muslim community is harassed and targeted more than ever. Shadi, who wears hijab, keeps her head down. She's too busy drowning in her own troubles to find the time to deal with bigots. Shadi is named for joy, but she's haunted by sorrow. Her brother is dead, her father is dying, her mother is falling apart, and her best friend has mysteriously dropped out of her life. Then, of course, there's the small matter of her heart—it's broken.</p>

		<p>Shadi tries to navigate her crumbling world by soldiering through, saying nothing. She devours her own pain, each day retreating farther and farther inside herself until finally, one day, everything changes. She explodes. <i>An Emotion of Great Delight</i> is a searing look into the world of a single Muslim family in the wake of 9/11. It's about a child of immigrants forging a blurry identity, falling in love, and finding hope—in the midst of a modern war.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>The Water Keeper</i></p> <p>Charles Martin</p>		<p>Murphy Shepherd is a man with many secrets. He lives alone on an island, tending the grounds of a church with no parishioners, and he's dedicated his life to rescuing those in peril. As he mourns the loss of his mentor and friend, Murph himself may be more lost than he realizes. When he pulls a beautiful woman named Summer out of Florida's Intracoastal Waterway, Murph's mission to lay his mentor to rest takes a dangerous turn. Drawn to Summer, and desperate to find her missing daughter, Murph is pulled deeper and deeper into the dark and dangerous world of modern-day slavery. With help from some unexpected new friends, including a faithful Labrador he plucks from the ocean and an ex-convict named Clay, Murph must race against the clock to locate the girl before he is consumed by the secrets of his past—and the ghosts who tried to bury them.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>Half Brother</i></p> <p>Kenneth Oppel</p>		<p>For thirteen years, Ben Tomlin was an only child, but all that changes when his mother brings home Zan—an eight-day-old chimpanzee. Ben's father, a renowned behavioral scientist, has uprooted the family to pursue his latest research project: a high-profile experiment to determine whether chimpanzees can acquire advanced language skills. Ben's parents tell him to treat Zan like a little brother. Ben reluctantly agrees. At least now he's not the only one his father's going to scrutinize. It isn't long before Ben is Zan's favorite, and Ben starts to see Zan as more.</p>

<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>Dear Martin</i></p> <p>Nic Stone</p>	 <p>The cover features a young Black boy in a red hoodie and pants, standing against a white background. Text on the cover includes 'A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER', 'Powerful, wrenching.' - John Green, 'Raw and gripping.' - Jason Reynolds, 'Dear Martin' in large script, 'A NOVEL', 'NIC STONE', and a 'JACKIE' award seal.</p>	<p>Justyce is a good kid, an honor student, and always there to help a friend—but none of that matters to the police officer who just put him in handcuffs without cause. When faced with injustice, Justyce looks to the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for answers. But do they hold up anymore? He starts a journal to Dr. King to find out. Then comes the day Justyce and a friend spark the fury of an off-duty cop. Words fly, shots are fired, and the boys get caught in the crosshairs, but in the media fallout, it's Justyce who is under attack.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>Before We Were Yours</i></p> <p>Lisa Wingate</p>	 <p>The cover shows two young girls sitting on a wooden crate, looking out over a body of water. Text on the cover includes 'A program, exposing the role of child labor and the call of justice.' - Angie Thomas, '#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER', 'Before We Were Yours', and 'Lisa Wingate'.</p>	<p>Memphis, 1939. Twelve-year-old Rill Foss and her four younger siblings live a magical life aboard their family's Mississippi River shantyboat, but when their father must rush their mother to the hospital one stormy night, Rill is left in charge—until strangers arrive in force. Wrenched from all that is familiar and thrown into a Tennessee Children's Home Society orphanage, the Foss children are assured that they will soon be returned to their parents—but they quickly realize the dark truth. At the mercy of the facility's cruel director, Rill fights to keep her sisters and brother together in a world of danger and uncertainty. Aiken, South Carolina, present day. Born into wealth and privilege, Avery Stafford seems to have it all: a successful career as a federal prosecutor, a handsome fiancé, and a lavish wedding on the horizon, when Avery returns home to help her father weather a health crisis, a chance encounter leaves her with uncomfortable questions and compels her to take a journey through her family's long-hidden history, on a path that will ultimately lead either to devastation or to redemption.</p>

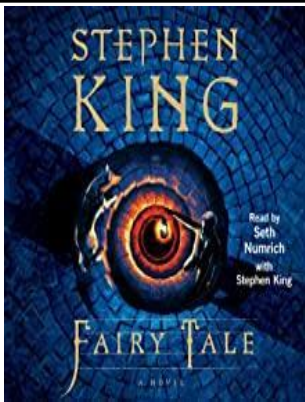
<p>Science Fiction/ Fantasy/ Dystopia</p> <p><i>Feed</i></p> <p>M.T. Anderson</p>		<p>For Titus and his friends, it started out like any ordinary trip to the moon—a chance to party during spring break and play around with some stupid low-grav at the Ricochet Lounge. That was before the crazy hacker caused all their feeds to malfunction, sending them to the hospital to lie around with nothing inside their heads for days. And it was before Titus met Violet, a beautiful, brainy teenage girl who knows something about what it’s like to live without the feed—and about resisting its omnipresent ability to categorize human thoughts and desires.</p>
<p>Science Fiction/ Fantasy/ Dystopia</p> <p><i>Ship Breaker</i></p> <p>Paolo Bacigalupi</p>		<p>In America's flooded Gulf Coast region, oil is scarce, but loyalty is scarcer. Grounded oil tankers are being broken down for parts by crews of young people. Nailer, a teenage boy, works the light crew, scavenging for copper wiring just to make quota--and hopefully live to see another day. But when, by luck or by chance, he discovers an exquisite clipper ship beached during a recent hurricane, Nailer faces the most important decision of his life: Strip the ship for all it's worth or rescue its lone survivor, a beautiful and wealthy girl who could lead him to a better life.</p>
<p>Science Fiction/ Fantasy/ Dystopia</p> <p><i>The Martian Chronicles</i></p> <p>Ray Bradbury</p>		<p>Bradbury's Mars is a place of hope, dreams and metaphor—of crystal pillars and fossil seas—where a fine dust settles on the great empty cities of a silently destroyed civilization. It is here the invaders have come to despoil and commercialize, to grow and to learn—first a trickle, then a torrent, rushing from a world with no future toward a promise of tomorrow. The Earthman conquers Mars... and then is conquered by it, lulled by dangerous lies of comfort and familiarity, and enchanted by the lingering glamour of an ancient, mysterious native race.</p>

<p>Science Fiction/ Fantasy/ Dystopia</p> <p><i>The House of the Scorpion</i></p> <p>Nancy Farmer</p>		<p>Matt Alacrán wasn't born. He was harvested. His DNA came from El Patrón, the drug-lord ruler of the country of Opium. Most people hate and fear clones like Matt—except for El Patrón. El Patrón loves Matt as he loves himself, because Matt is himself. As Matt struggles to understand his existence, he is threatened by a sinister cast of characters, and realizes escape is his only chance to survive. But escape from the Alacrán Estate is no guarantee of freedom.</p>
<p>Science Fiction/ Fantasy/ Dystopia</p> <p><i>The Book of Lost Things</i></p> <p>John Connolly</p>		<p>High in his attic bedroom, twelve-year-old David mourns the death of his mother. He is angry and alone, with only the books on his shelf for company. But those books have begun to whisper to him in the darkness, and as he takes refuge in his imagination, he finds that reality and fantasy have begun to meld. While his family falls apart around him, David is violently propelled into a land that is a strange reflection of his own world, populated by heroes and monsters, and ruled over by a faded king who keeps his secrets in a mysterious book...<i>The Book of Lost Things</i>.</p>
<p>Science Fiction/ Fantasy/ Dystopia</p> <p><i>The Ocean at the End of the Lane</i></p> <p>Neil Gaiman</p>		<p>The never-named narrator is drawn to visit the house at the end of the lane when he is an older man back in town for a funeral. The woman at the house sparks a dim memory—and the story unfolds. It starts with the death of a lodger from the boy's house—that's the first instance of the evil thing that has come to the area. The lodger killed himself at the end of the lane, and that's how the boy met Lettie Hempstock and her family, who are definitely not what they seem. They run a farm and milk cattle, but they are really some kind of ancient protective beings, and they take it upon themselves to destroy the evil that's been unleashed. Unfortunately, when the boy lets go of Lettie's hand accidentally, the evil is able to get a foothold—literally—in him.</p>

**Science Fiction/
Fantasy/
Dystopia**

Fairy Tale

Stephen King



Charlie Reade looks like a regular high school kid, great at baseball and football, a decent student, but he carries a heavy load. His mom was killed in a hit-and-run accident when he was ten, and grief drove his dad to drink. Charlie learned how to take care of himself—and his dad. When Charlie is seventeen, he meets a dog named Radar and her aging master, Howard Bowditch, a recluse in a big house at the top of a big hill, with a locked shed in the backyard. Sometimes strange sounds emerge from it. Charlie starts doing jobs for Mr. Bowditch and loses his heart to Radar. Then, when Bowditch dies, he leaves Charlie a cassette tape telling a story no one would believe. What Bowditch knows, and has kept secret all his long life, is that inside the shed is a portal to another world.

**Realistic/
Historical
Fiction**

The Latte Rebellion

**Sarah
Stevenson**



Hoping to raise money for a post-graduation trip to London, Asha Jamison and her best friend Carey decide to sell t-shirts promoting the Latte Rebellion, a club that raises awareness of mixed-race students, but seemingly overnight, their "cause" goes viral and the t-shirts become a nationwide social movement. As new chapters spring up from coast to coast, Asha realizes that her simple marketing plan has taken on a life of its own—and it's starting to ruin hers. Asha's once-stellar grades begin to slip, threatening her Ivy League dreams, while her friendship with Carey hangs by a thread. When the peaceful underground movement spins out of control, Asha's school launches a disciplinary hearing. Facing expulsion, Asha must decide how much she's willing to risk for something she truly believes in.