

Summer Reading 2026

Incoming 9th Grade Honors

Our summer reading program opts to give students more choice in what they read, hoping that students can find books that are true page turners. 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 choices meet 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.


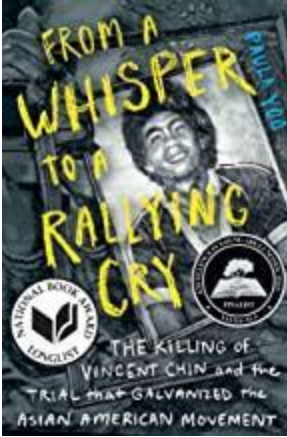
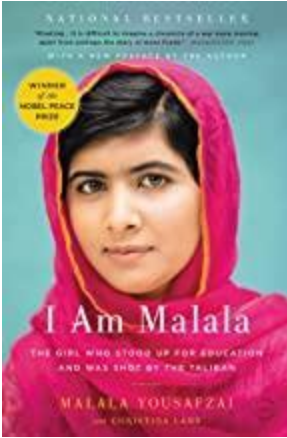
The assignment and rubric for the honors-level non-fiction text is located at the end of this document. Teachers will also ask students to respond to a written prompt referencing the title of their fiction text once they are back in the classroom in late August.

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



You should read two books during the summer. Choose one of the following nonfiction books AND one of the fiction books. (Note that if a text is NOT labeled nonfiction, it is considered a fiction text.) Your assignment for your non-fiction text is attached to the bottom of this list. When you return to school in August, your chosen fiction book will be the topic of your first writing.

Genre	Title/Author	Summary
<p>Nonfiction</p> <p><i>In the Time of Butterflies</i></p> <p>Julia Alvarez</p>		<p>It is November 25, 1960, and three beautiful sisters have been found near their wrecked Jeep at the bottom of a 150-foot cliff on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. The official state newspaper reports their deaths as accidental. It does not mention that a fourth sister lives. Nor does it explain that the sisters were among the leading opponents of Gen. Rafael Leónidas Trujillo’s dictatorship. It doesn’t have to. Everybody knows of Las Mariposas—the Butterflies. The voices of all four sisters—Minerva, Patria, María Teresa, and the survivor, Dedé—speak across the decades to tell their own stories, from secret crushes to gunrunning, and to describe the everyday horrors of life under Trujillo’s rule.</p>
<p>Nonfiction</p> <p><i>Funny in Farsi</i></p> <p>Firoozeh Dumas</p>		<p><i>Funny in Farsi</i> chronicles the American journey of Dumas’s wonderfully engaging family: her engineer father, a sweetly quixotic dreamer who first sought riches on Bowling for Dollars and in Las Vegas, and later lost his job during the Iranian revolution; her elegant mother, who never fully mastered English (nor cared to); her uncle, who combated the effects of American fast food with an army of miraculous American weight-loss gadgets; and Firoozeh herself, who as a girl changed her name to Julie, and who encountered a second wave of culture shock when she met and married a Frenchman, becoming part of a one-couple melting pot. In a series of deftly drawn scenes, we watch the family grapple with American English (hot dogs and hush puppies?—a complete mystery), American traditions (Thanksgiving turkey?—an even greater mystery, since it tastes like nothing), and American culture.</p>

<p>Nonfiction/ Memoir</p> <p><i>Left to Tell</i></p> <p>Immaculee Ilibagiza</p>		<p>Immaculee Ilibagiza grew up in a country she loved, surrounded by a family she cherished. But in 1994 her idyllic world was ripped apart as Rwanda descended into a bloody genocide. Immaculee’s family was brutally murdered during a killing spree that lasted three months and claimed the lives of nearly a million Rwandans. Incredibly, Immaculee survived the slaughter. For 91 days, she and seven other women huddled silently together in the cramped bathroom of a local pastor while hundreds of machete-wielding killers hunted for them. It was during those endless hours of unspeakable terror that Immaculee discovered the power of prayer, shed her fear of death and forged a profound relationship with God.</p>
<p>Nonfiction</p> <p><i>From a Whisper to a Rallying Cry</i></p> <p>Paula Yoo</p>		<p>America in 1982: Japanese car companies are on the rise and believed to be putting U.S. autoworkers out of their jobs. Anti-Asian American sentiment simmers, especially in Detroit. A bar fight turns fatal, leaving a Chinese American man, Vincent Chin, beaten to death at the hands of two white men, autoworker Ronald Ebens and his stepson, Michael Nitz. Paula Yoo has crafted a searing examination of the killing and the trial and verdicts that followed. When Ebens and Nitz pled guilty to manslaughter and received only a \$3,000 fine and three years’ probation, the lenient sentence sparked outrage. Protests followed and led to a federal civil rights trial and galvanized what came to be known as the Asian American movement.</p>
<p>Nonfiction/ Memoir</p> <p><i>I Am Malala</i></p> <p>Malala Yousafzai</p>		<p>On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, Malala almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive. Instead, Malala’s miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she became a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest nominee ever for the Nobel Peace Prize. <i>I Am Malala</i> is the remarkable tale of a</p>


	(The adult version.)	family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls’ education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons.
<p>Classics</p> <p><i>The House on Mango Street</i></p> <p>Sandra Cisneros</p>		<p><i>The House on Mango Street</i> is the remarkable story of Esperanza Cordero, a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Told in a series of vignettes—sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous—Sandra Cisneros’ masterpiece is a classic story of childhood and self-discovery. Few other books in our time have touched so many readers.</p>
<p>Classics</p> <p><i>Great Expectations</i></p> <p>Charles Dickens</p>		<p><i>Great Expectations</i> is the thirteenth novel by Charles Dickens and his penultimate completed novel: a bildungsroman that depicts the personal growth and personal development of an orphan nicknamed Pip. It is Dickens’s second novel, after <i>David Copperfield</i>, to be fully narrated in the first person.</p>
<p>Classics</p> <p><i>All Creatures Great and Small</i></p> <p>James Herriot</p>		<p>In the rolling dales of Yorkshire, a simple, rural region of northern England, a young veterinarian from Sunderland joins a new practice. A stranger in a strange land, he must quickly learn the odd dialect and humorous ways of the locals, master outdated equipment, and do his best to mend, treat, and heal pets and livestock alike. This witty and heartwarming collection, based on the author’s own experiences, became an international success, spawning sequels and winning over animal lovers everywhere. Perhaps better than any other writer, James Herriot</p>

		reveals the ties that bind us to the creatures in our lives.
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>The Fault in Our Stars</i></p> <p>John Green</p>		<p>Despite the tumor-shrinking medical miracle that has bought her a few years, Hazel has never been anything but terminal, her final chapter inscribed upon diagnosis. When a gorgeous plot twist named Augustus Waters suddenly appears at Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel’s story is about to be completely rewritten.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>A Painted House</i></p> <p>John Grisham</p>		<p>A brutal murder leaves the town seething in gossip and suspicion. A beautiful young woman ignites forbidden passions. A fatherless baby is born... and someone has begun furtively painting the bare clapboards of the Chandler farmhouse, slowly, painstakingly, bathing the run-down structure in gleaming white. As young Luke watches the world around him, he unravels secrets that could shatter lives—and change his family and his town forever.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>Tokyo Ever After</i></p> <p>Emiko Jean</p>		<p>Izumi Tanaka has never really felt like she fit in—it isn’t easy being Japanese American in her small, mostly white, northern California town. Raised by a single mother, it’s always been Izumi—or Izzy, because “It’s easier this way”—and her mom against the world. Then Izumi discovers a clue to her previously unknown father’s identity, and he’s none other than the Crown Prince of Japan. Outspoken, irreverent Izzy is literally a princess. In a whirlwind, Izumi travels to Japan to meet the father she never knew and discover the country she always dreamed of, but being a princess isn’t all ball gowns and tiaras. There are conniving cousins, a hungry press, a scowling but handsome bodyguard who just might be her soulmate, and thousands of years of tradition</p>

		<p>and customs to learn practically overnight. Izumi soon finds herself caught between worlds, and between versions of herself—back home, she was never “American” enough, and in Japan, she must prove she’s “Japanese” enough.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p>Furia</p> <p>Yamile Mendez</p>		<p>In Rosario, Argentina, Camila Hassan lives a double life. At home, she is a careful daughter, living within her mother’s narrow expectations, in her rising-soccer-star brother’s shadow, and under the abusive rule of her short-tempered father. On the field, she is La Furia, a powerhouse of skill and talent. When her team qualifies for the South American tournament, Camila gets the chance to see just how far those talents can take her. In her wildest dreams, she’d get an athletic scholarship to a North American university, but the path ahead isn’t easy. Her parents don’t know about her passion. They wouldn’t allow a girl to play fútbol—and she needs their permission to go any farther. The boy she once loved is back in town. Since he left, Diego has become an international star, playing in Italy for the renowned team Juventus. Camila doesn’t have time to be distracted by her feelings for him. Things aren’t the same as when he left: she has her own passions and ambitions now, and La Furia cannot be denied. As her life becomes more complicated, Camila is forced to face her secrets and make her way in a world with no place for the dreams and ambition of a girl like her.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p>A Long Way Down</p> <p>Jason Reynolds</p>		<p>Bestselling author Jason Reynolds’s electrifying novel takes place in sixty potent seconds—the time it takes a kid to decide whether or not he’s going to murder the guy who killed his brother. He enters the elevator, a gun tucked in the back of his pants, and as the elevator stops on each floor, someone connected to his brother gets on to give Will a piece to a bigger story than the one he thinks he knows. A story that might never know an end... if Will gets off that elevator.</p>

<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>Between Shades of Gray</i></p> <p>Ruta Sepetys</p>		<p>Fifteen-year-old Lina is a Lithuanian girl living an ordinary life—until Soviet officers invade her home and tear her family apart. Separated from her father and forced onto a crowded train, Lina, her mother, and her young brother make their way to a Siberian work camp, where they are forced to fight for their lives. Lina finds solace in her art, documenting these events by drawing. Risking everything, she imbeds clues in her drawings of their location and secretly passes them along, hoping her drawings will make their way to her father’s prison camp. Will strength, love, and hope be enough for Lina and her family to survive?</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>In the Wild Light</i></p> <p>Jeff Zentner</p>		<p>Life in a small Appalachian town is not easy. Cash lost his mother to an opioid addiction and his Papaw is dying slowly from emphysema. Dodging drug dealers and watching out for his best friend, Delaney, is second nature. He’s been spending his summer mowing lawns while she works at Dairy Queen, but when Delaney manages to secure both of them full rides to an elite prep school in Connecticut, Cash will have to grapple with his need to protect and love Delaney, and his love for the grandparents who saved him and the town he has to leave behind.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>The Book Thief</i></p> <p>Markus Zusak</p>		<p>When Death has a story to tell, you listen. 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.</p>

<p>Science Fiction/ Fantasy/ Dystopia</p> <p><i>Beasts of Prey</i></p> <p>Ayana Gray</p>		<p>There's no such thing as magic in the broken city of Lkossa, especially for sixteen-year-old Koffi, who indentured to the notorious Night Zoo, knows the fearsome creatures in her care and paying off her family's debts to secure their eventual freedom can be her only focus. But the night those she loves are gravely threatened by the Zoo's cruel master, Koffi unleashes a power she doesn't fully understand, upending her life completely. As the second son of a decorated hero, Ekon is all but destined to become a Son of the Six—an elite warrior—and uphold a family legacy. But on the night of his final rite of passage, Ekon encounters not only the Shetani—a vicious monster that has plagued the city for nearly a century and stalks his nightmares—but Koffi who seems to have the power to ward off the beast. Koffi's power ultimately saves Ekon, but his choice to let her flee dooms his hopes of becoming a warrior. Desperate to redeem himself, Ekon vows to hunt the Shetani and end its reign of terror, but he can't do it alone. Koffi and Ekon form a tentative alliance and together enter the Greater Jungle, a world steeped in wild, frightening magic and untold dangers. The hunt begins but it quickly becomes unclear whether they are the hunters or the hunted.</p>
<p>Science Fiction/ Fantasy/ Dystopia</p> <p><i>The Ones We're Meant to Find</i></p> <p>Joan He</p>		<p>Cee has been trapped on an abandoned island for three years without any recollection of how she arrived, or memories from her life prior. All she knows is that somewhere out there, beyond the horizon, she has a sister named Kay, and it's up to Cee to cross the ocean and find her. In a world apart, 16-year-old STEM prodigy Kasey Mizuhara lives in an eco-city built for people who protected the planet—and now need protecting from it. With natural disasters on the rise due to climate change, eco-cities provide clean air, water, and shelter. Their residents, in exchange, must spend at least a third of their time in stasis pods, conducting business virtually whenever possible to reduce their environmental footprint. While Kasey, an introvert and loner,</p>

		doesn't mind the lifestyle, her sister Celia hates it. Popular and lovable, Celia much prefers the outside world, but no one could have predicted that Celia would take a boat out to sea, never to return.
<p>Science Fiction/ Fantasy/ Dystopia</p> <p><i>Maze Runner</i></p> <p>James Dashner</p>		<p>When Thomas wakes up in the lift, the only thing he can remember is his name. He's surrounded by strangers—boys whose memories are also gone. Outside the towering stone walls that surround them is a limitless, ever-changing maze. It's the only way out—and no one's ever made it through alive. Then a girl arrives. The first girl ever, and the message she delivers is terrifying. Remember. Survive. Run.</p>

Honors Level Non-Fiction Assignment

Your assignment for your non-fiction text is to create a museum piece, an artifact, that speaks for itself to express a complex idea put forth by your text. Maybe it represents a thematic idea, a claim your author is putting forth, an event described by your author, or a character presented.

The choice of idea to represent is yours. The choice of medium is yours.

It should be accompanied by a reflective piece that deconstructs the artifact/museum piece you created, describing its complex ideas and the intersection of your object/creation and that which you are trying to convey to your audience. It should reference the text itself, whether directly quoted or paraphrased, and appropriately cited in text as well as in a Works Cited at the end of the reflection.

Please keep in mind that this does not require an expensive trip to Michael's or Hobby Lobby. Household supplies (toilet paper and paper towel rolls, dried beans, pasta, rice, sprinkles, candy), old toys (Legos, blocks, etc.), and items from nature are all acceptable building materials. Of course, you can always create the old standby—a collage—but it is preferred for you to get outside of your comfort zone to think in metaphorical ways.

Because this is something that may challenge your comfort in being successful, please feel free to reach out to your teacher, Ms. Baker, this summer to check in (bbaker@yorkcatholic.org). Also, keep in mind the following:

1. You must have an artifact that can stand on its own or be hung without falling apart.
2. It must be transportable to school and left behind in your English teacher's classroom.
3. It must be a new creation, not simply an object you locate and then name a symbol of something from your text.
4. It should not be comprised of overwhelming amounts of written word, as the goal is to use a different mode of expression to represent your ideas.
5. It must be accompanied by a paragraph explaining the connection of the artifact to the text. Ensure you are using an MLA heading at the top of the page:
Your name
Your teacher's name
Your class name
The due date (28 August 2026)

Museum Artifact for Non-Fiction Text Rubric

Criteria	5 — Exemplary	4 — Strong	3 — Proficient	2 — Developing	1 — Beginning
Concept & Effort	Artifact shows a highly original, thoughtful idea that clearly represents a complex idea from the text. Work shows sustained effort, careful planning, and strong attention to detail.	Artifact shows a clear, thoughtful idea from the text. Work shows strong effort, with only minor gaps in detail.	Artifact represents a relevant idea from the text with a clear purpose. Work shows steady effort and is completed with adequate care.	Artifact shows a basic idea from the text, but the connection may be simple, unclear, or only partly developed. Effort is uneven or rushed in places.	Artifact shows little evidence of thought about the text. Effort is minimal, and the piece appears unfinished or poorly planned.
Creative Risk Taking	Uses an imaginative medium or approach that goes beyond the obvious and takes meaningful creative risks to communicate the idea. Choice of materials or form strengthens the message in a memorable way.	Uses an original approach that shows clear creativity and some risk taking. The medium supports the message well.	Uses a thoughtful creative approach, though it may rely on familiar ideas or common materials. The medium communicates the message clearly.	Uses limited creativity or falls back on a very basic approach. The medium only partly supports the message or feels predictable.	Shows little creativity or willingness to try a new approach. The artifact relies on a simple, obvious, or copied idea.
Artifact Construction & Presentation	Artifact is sturdy, transportable, and neatly constructed. It stands on its own or hangs safely, and the finished piece is polished and ready for display.	Artifact is sturdy and transportable, with only small construction flaws. It is presented neatly and works as intended.	Artifact is complete and transportable, though it may have some weak spots or uneven finishing. It generally functions as required.	Artifact has noticeable construction issues or presentation problems. It may be unstable, messy, or only partly functional.	Artifact is incomplete, unstable, or difficult to transport. It does not meet basic presentation needs.
Reflection & Text Evidence	Reflection thoroughly explains the artifact's meaning, the complex idea it represents, and the connection between form and message. Uses well-chosen direct quotes or paraphrased evidence with correct in-text citation and a complete Works Cited.	Reflection clearly explains the artifact and its connection to the text. Uses relevant text evidence with mostly correct citation and a Works Cited that is nearly complete.	Reflection explains the artifact and includes a basic connection to the text. Uses at least one piece of text evidence with some citation support and a Works Cited that is mostly correct.	Reflection gives limited explanation of the artifact or text connection. Text evidence is weak, incomplete, or poorly cited, and the Works Cited may have major errors.	Reflection is missing, very brief, or does not explain the artifact. Little or no text evidence is used, and citation/Works Cited requirements are not met.
Guidelines Followed	Fully follows all assignment guidelines: new creation, transportable, stable, limited written text, and appropriate use of materials. Every requirement is met with care.	Follows nearly all guidelines with only a minor issue that does not interfere with the project's purpose. Requirements are clearly addressed.	Follows the main guidelines, though one requirement may be only partly met. The project still fits the assignment overall.	Follows some guidelines, but several requirements are missed or only weakly addressed. The artifact may not fully match the assignment.	Does not follow key assignment guidelines. The project misses multiple required features or does not fit the task.