



Lawrence North High School English Department
Suggested Summer Reading Lists—2017
Grades 9-10



Fiction Novels

***A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest Gaines:** In a small Cajun community in 1940s Louisiana, a young black man is about to go to the electric chair for murder. A white shopkeeper had died during a robbery gone bad; though the young man on trial had not been armed and had not pulled the trigger, in that time and place, there could be no doubt of the verdict or the penalty. If young Jefferson, the accused, is confined by the law to an ironbarred cell, Grant Wiggins is no less a prisoner of social convention. University educated, Grant has returned to the tiny plantation town of his youth, where the only job available to him is teaching in the small plantation church school. More than 75 years after the close of the Civil War, antebellum attitudes still prevail: African Americans go to the kitchen door when visiting whites and the two races are rigidly separated by custom and by law. Grant, trapped in a career he doesn't enjoy, eaten up by resentment at his station in life, and angered by the injustice he sees all around him, dreams of taking his girlfriend Vivian and leaving Louisiana forever. But when Jefferson is convicted and sentenced to die, his grandmother, Miss Emma, begs Grant for one last favor: to teach her grandson to die like a man.

***A Separate Peace* by John Knowles:** Narrator Gene returns to Devon School 15 years after the end of World War II and recalls the unnatural “peace” experienced there by boys who were on the brink of going to war. His most poignant memory is of his love and jealousy for his friend, the brash, dare devil Phineas.

***A Step from Heaven* by An Na:** A Korean American girl tells of her acculturation into American life from the day she leaves Korea as a child to adulthood. Young Ju emigrates from Korea with her parents when she is four. A few months later, they live in a shabby apartment in Southern California, their family expanded to include a newborn baby boy. The parents work long hours at multiple jobs, and Young Ju struggles first to understand what is going on in school and then to be permitted to participate in typically American schoolgirl activities.

***Adoration of Jenna Fox* by Mary Pearson:** Who is Jenna Fox? Seventeen-year-old Jenna has been told that is her name. She has just awoken from a coma, they tell her, and she is still recovering from a terrible accident in which she was involved a year ago. But what happened before that? Jenna doesn't remember her life. Or does she? And are the memories really hers?

***American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang:** This graphic novel (i.e., a very extensive comic book) is made up of three individual plotlines: the determined efforts of the Chinese folk hero Monkey King to shed his humble roots and be revered as a god; the struggles faced by Jin Wang, a lonely Asian- American middle school student who would do anything to fit in with his white classmates; and the sitcom plight of Danny, an All-American teen so shamed by his Chinese cousin Chin-Kee (a purposefully painful ethnic stereotype) that he is forced to change schools.

***Amy & Roger's Epic Detour* by Morgan Matson:** Amy Curry thinks her life sucks. Her mom decides to move from California to Connecticut to start anew--just in time for Amy's senior year. Her dad recently died in a car accident. So Amy embarks on a road trip to escape from it all, driving cross-country from the home she's always known toward her new life. Joining Amy on the road trip is Roger, the son of Amy's mother's old friend. Amy hasn't seen him in years, and she is less than thrilled to be driving across the country with a guy she barely knows. So she's surprised to find that she is developing a crush on him. At the same time, she's coming to terms with her father's death and how to put her own life back together after the accident.

***Ask Me No Questions* by Marina Budhos:** "You forget. You forget you don't really exist here, that this isn't your home." Since emigrating from Bangladesh, fourteen-year-old Nadira and her family have been living in New York City on expired visas, hoping to realize their dream of becoming legal U.S. citizens. But after 9/11, everything changes. Suddenly

being Muslim means you are dangerous -- a suspected terrorist. When Nadira's father is arrested and detained at the U.S.-Canadian border, Nadira and her older sister, Aisha, are told to carry on as if everything is the same.

***Ashes* by Ilsa J. Bick:** When you think things cannot get much worse...they do. This dystopian novel follows seventeen-year-old Alex on her quest to scatter her parents' ashes in the isolated wilds of northern Michigan while dealing with personal issues of her own. An electromagnetic pulse suddenly flashes, turning her whole world upside down. Desperate to find out what happened after the pulse strikes her to the ground, Alex meets up with Ellie, an angry eight-year-old girl, lost and alone, and Tom, a young soldier with his own secrets. This novel is a terrifying journey where some humans survive and others exist but are no longer human. There are no easy answers in this riveting story of survival in a shattered world.

***Autobiography of My Dead Brother* by Walter Dean Myers:** Fifteen-year-old Jesse lives a clean and relatively careful life in contemporary Harlem. His best friend and honorary brother, Rise, is two years older and plays life faster and looser. The boys belong to a social club inherited from the men of the older generation. The Counts aren't a gang and the members tend to have a variety of aesthetic interests. Jesse is devoted to cartooning and sketching while C. J. is a fine musician. Rise, however, it seems to Jesse, has begun to lead a second life that doesn't include him or The Counts.

***Bean Trees* by Barbara Kingsolver:** Barbara Fleeing her Kentucky home, Taylor finds a two-year-old Cherokee baby abandoned in her car; naturally, she assumes responsibility for Turtle.

***Before I Fall* by Lauren Oliver:** What if you only had one day to live? What would you do? Who would you kiss? And how far would you go to save your own life? Samantha Kingston has it all: looks, popularity, and the perfect boyfriend. Friday, February 12, should be just another day in her charmed life. Instead, it turns out to be her last. The catch: Samantha still wakes up the next morning. Living the last day of her life seven times during one miraculous week, she will untangle the mystery surrounding her death—and discover the true value of everything she is in danger of losing.

***Between Two Fires* by Christopher Buehlman:** The year is 1348. Thomas, a disgraced knight, has found a young girl in a dead Norman village. An orphan of the Black Death, and an almost unnerving picture of innocence, she tells Thomas that plague is only part of a larger cataclysm—that the fallen angels under Lucifer are rising in a second war on heaven, and that the world of men has fallen behind the lines of conflict. Is it delirium or is it faith? She believes she has seen the angels of God. She believes the righteous dead speak to her in dreams. And now she has convinced the faithless Thomas to shepherd her across a depraved landscape to Avignon. There she tells Thomas, she will fulfill her mission: to confront the evil that has devastated the earth and to restore to this betrayed, murderous knight the nobility and hope of salvation he long abandoned.

***Black and White* by Paul Volponi:** Marcus and Eddie are best friends who found the strength to break through the racial barrier. Marcus is black; Eddie is white. Stars of their school basketball team, they are true leaders who look past the stereotypes and come out on top. They are inseparable, watching each other's backs, both on and off the basketball court. But one night--and one wrong decision--will change their lives forever.

***Borderline* by Allan Stratton:** Life's not easy for Sami Sabiri, a funny, gutsy fifteen-year-old stuck at a private school where he's the only Muslim kid. But things are about to get a lot worse. When Sami catches his father in a lie, he gets suspicious . . . and he's not the only one. In a flash, the FBI descends on his home and Sami's family becomes the center of an international terrorist investigation. Now, as his world unravels, Sami must find a way to save his father, his family, and his life.

***Cold Sassy Tree* by Olive Burns:** Fourteen year old Will Tweedy tells the story of a southern family's view concerning Will's grandfather's remarriage.

***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon :**The novel's 15-year-old narrator with an autism spectrum condition is also its protagonist, searching to unravel the mysterious death of a neighborhood pup.

***Don't Look Behind You* by Lois Duncan:** In one quick afternoon, April Carrigan's life is turned upside down. She learns that her father, who she thought was a mild mannered man working an ordinary job for the airline, is really an undercover agent for the FBI, working against a drug ring. After testifying for the government, he finds that he and his family are in danger. They must enter the witness protection program. As a result of something that April does while in the witness protection plan, the family is once again put at risk.

***Don't Turn Around* by Michelle Gagnon:** Teens are dying and a computer hacker wakes strapped to an operating table. Meeting with another hacker, they try to figure out what's going on. But will they survive long enough to do so?

***Divergent* by Veronica Roth:** In Beatrice Prior's dystopian Chicago world, society is divided into five factions, each dedicated to the cultivation of a particular virtue. On an appointed day of every year, all sixteen-year-olds must select the faction to which they will devote the rest of their lives. For Beatrice, the decision is between staying with her family and being who she really is—she can't have both.

***Ellen Foster* by Kaye Gibbons:** In *Ellen Foster*, the title character is an 11-year-old orphan who refers to herself as "old Ellen," an appellation that is disturbingly apt. Ellen is an old woman in a child's body; her frail, unhappy mother dies, her abusive father neglects her, and she is shuttled from one uncaring relative's home to another before she finally takes matters into her own hands and finds herself a place to belong. There is something almost Dickensian about Ellen's tribulations; like *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* or a host of other literary child heroes, Ellen is at the mercy of adults, with only her own wit and courage--and the occasional kindness of others--to help her through. That she does, in fact, survive her childhood and even rise above it is the book's bittersweet victory.

***Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card:** In order to develop a secure defense against a hostile alien race's next attack, government agencies breed child geniuses and train them as soldiers. A brilliant young boy, Andrew "Ender" Wiggin lives with his kind but distant parents, his sadistic brother Peter, and the person he loves more than anyone else, his sister Valentine. Peter and Valentine were candidates for the soldier-training program but didn't make it—young Ender is the Wiggin drafted to the orbiting Battle School for rigorous military training.

***Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton:** Set in the bleak, barren landscape of New England, this is the tragic tale of Ethan Frome, bound to the demands of his farm and his tyrannical wife, Zeena, and his star crossed love for Zeena's vivacious cousin, Mattie. Irony abounds in this sad story of a man trying to decide whether personal happiness should come before obligation and duty.

***Everybody Sees the Ants* by A. S. King:** Lucky Linderman has been bullied by Nader McMillan since he was 7 years old. Now after his freshman year of high school it has escalated to a point where he and his mother leave town and visit his aunt and uncle. His parents have told him to just "walk away", he has monthly appointments with the guidance office because they think he might commit suicide, and he starts daydreaming and having nightmares about his grandfather who is MIA from the Vietnam War. During his three weeks away Lucky discovers a lot about himself, his family, girls, and his grandfather.

***Every Day* by David Levithan:** A is a being who awakes every day in the body of someone new. Dealing with whatever that body deals with each day is not easy, but A has done since being born and has dealt with it; tries to make as little change in the person's life as possible. Until he meets Rhiannon...now A wants to see her every day. Can she understand seeing A as a beautiful black female, an overweight pimply boy, or a suicidal girl? Every day A has to not only deal with whatever the body is dealing with, but how can I see Rhiannon?

***Fallen Angels* by Walter Dean Myers:** A fictional account of an inner city youth's experience as a soldier in Vietnam.

***Fifth Chinese Daughter* by Jade Snow Wong:** This novel takes place in San Francisco in the 1920s and tells of one Chinese daughter and her family.

***Flight* by Sherman Alexie:** A deadpan "Call Me Zits" opens the #first novel in 10 years from Alexie (Smoke Signals, etc.), narrated by a self-described "time-traveling mass murderer" whose name and deeds unravel as this captivating bildungsroman progresses. Half-Indian, half-Irish, acne-beset Zits is 15: he never knew his alcoholic father; his mother

died when he was six; his aunt kicked him out when he was 10 (after he set her sleeping boyfriend on fire because the boyfriend had been forcing Zits to have sex). Running away from his 20th foster home, Zits ends up, briefly, in jail; soon after, he enters a bank, shoots several people and is shot dead himself. Zits then commences time traveling via the bodies of others, finding himself variously lodged in an FBI agent in the '70s (helping to assassinate radical Indian activists); a mute Indian boy at the Battle of Little Big Horn; an Indian tracker named Gus; an airplane pilot instructor (one of whose pupils commits a terrorist act); and his own father. Zits eventually comes back to himself and to an unexpected redemption. While the plot is wispy-thin, one quickly surrenders to Zits's voice, which elegantly mixes free-floating young adult cynicism with a charged, idiosyncratic view of American history. Alexie plunges the book into bracing depths. (Disclaimer: Frequent foul language)

***Forged by Fire* by Sharon Draper:** When his loving aunt dies, Gerald suddenly is thrust into a new home filled with anger and abuse. A brutal stepfather with a flaming temper and an evil secret makes Gerald miserable, and the only light in his grim life is Angel, his young stepsister. Gerald and Angel grow close as he strives to protect her from Jordan, his abusive stepfather, and from their substance-addicted mother. But Gerald learns, painfully, that his post can't be extinguished, and that he must be strong enough to face Jordan in a final confrontation.

***The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt:** This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel was published in 2013 and deals with issues of fate, self-creation, and obsession. Theo Decker, a 13-year-old New Yorker, miraculously survives an accident that kills his mother. Abandoned by his father, Theo is taken in by the family of a wealthy friend. Bewildered by his strange new home on Park Avenue, disturbed by schoolmates who don't know how to talk to him, and tormented above all by his longing for his mother, he clings to the one thing that reminds him of her: a small, mysteriously-captivating painting that ultimately draws Theo into the underworld of art.

***Graceling* by Kristin Cashore:** Kristin Cashore's best-selling, award-winning *fantasy* *Graceling* tells the story of the vulnerable yet strong Katsa, a smart, beautiful teenager who lives in a world where selected people are given a Grace, a special talent that can be anything from dancing to swimming. Katsa's is killing. As the king's niece, she is forced to use her extreme skills as his thug. Along the way, Katsa must learn to decipher the true nature of her Grace. . . and how to put it to good use.

***Hip Hop High School* by Alan Sitomer:** Theresa Anderson is every kind of smart: too smart-mouthed for her own good, street smart enough to deal with a neighborhood that gets more dangerous every day, and more book smart than anyone knows. But with the example of her super-achieving older brother towering above her, Theresa hasn't even been trying. How can a girl compete against the family favorite, especially when he's a certified local hero?

***The Hobbit* by J.R. Tolkien:** The hobbit Bilbo Baggins embarks on the adventure of a lifetime in this famous, wonderfully inventive fantasy that serves as a delightful introduction to Tolkien's mythical world of Middle Earth.

***The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins:** The dystopian, futuristic tale of a 16-year-old girl competing in a televised battle to the death in what was once North America.

***If You Come Softly* by Jacqueline Woodson:** Both Elisha (Ellie) and Jeremiah (Miah) attend Percy Academy, a private school where neither quite fits in. Ellie is wrestling with family demons, and Miah is one of the few African American students. The two of them find each other, and fall in love -- but they are hesitant to share their newfound happiness with their friends and families, who will not understand. At the end, life makes the brutal choice for them: Jeremiah is shot and killed, and Ellie now has to cope with the consequences.

***It's Kind of a Funny Story* by Ned Vizzini:** A superb study of angst-ridden adolescence in this story of teen depression. Craig Gilner is a gifted 15-year-old boy who works hard to get into a fiercely competitive high school, then crumbles under the intense academic pressure. Blindsided by his inability to excel and terrified by thoughts of suicide, Craig checks into a psychiatric hospital where he finally gets the help he needs.

***Jason & Kyra* by Dana Davidson:** Jason is a basketball star and one of the most popular guys in school. Brainy Kyra isn't, but she doesn't much care what other people think. Under normal circumstances, Jason and Kyra would live in their separate worlds until graduation. But fate intervenes, and the unlikely duo is paired up for a class project. Although

preconceived notions abound on both sides, Kyra soon realizes that Jason is not the dumb jock she anticipated. And Jason finds himself telling Kyra things he can't even tell his best friend. As the two become close and eventually start to fall in love, no one in school can believe it, especially Jason's ex-girlfriend, who is determined to get him back. Being together means navigating the obstacles that are coming their way—but staying apart may be impossible.

***Killing Mr. Griffin* by Lois Duncan:** A powerful novel about a group of high school students who plan to scare their tough English teacher into being more lenient. Their attempt brings Mr. Griffin's heart attack.

***Kindred* by Octavia Butler:** A woman travels in time to the Maryland plantation where her ancestors were slaves.

***Marcelo in the Real World* by Francisco X. Stork:** Marcelo Sandoval hears music no one else can hear—part of the autism-like impairment no doctor has been able to identify—and he's always attended a special school where his differences have been protected. But the summer after his junior year, his father demands that Marcelo work in his law firm's mailroom in order to experience "the real world."

***Matched* by Allie Condie:** For Cassia, nothing is left to chance—not what she will eat, the job she will have, or the man she will marry. In *Matched*, the Society Officials have determined optimal outcomes for all aspects of daily life, thereby removing the "burden" of choice. When Cassia's best friend is identified as her ideal marriage Match it confirms her belief that Society knows best, until she plugs in her Match microchip and a different boy's face flashes on the screen. This improbable mistake sets Cassia on a dangerous path to the unthinkable—rebellious against the predetermined life Society has in store for her. As author Ally Condie's unique dystopian Society takes chilling measures to maintain the status quo, *Matched* reminds readers that freedom of choice is precious, and not without sacrifice.

***Omeros* by Derek Walcott:** A poem in five books, of circular narrative design, titled with the Greek name for Homer, which simultaneously charts two currents of history: the visible history charted in events—tribal losses of the American Indian, and the tragedy of African enslavement—and the interior, unwritten epic fashioned from the suffering of the individual in exile.

***The Once and Future King* by T.H. White:** Once upon a time, a young boy called "Wart" was tutored by a magician named Merlyn in preparation for a future he couldn't possibly imagine... a future in which he would ally himself with the greatest knights, love a legendary queen and unite a country dedicated to chivalrous values. A future that would see him crowned and known for all time as Arthur, King of the Britons. During Arthur's reign, the kingdom of Camelot was founded to cast enlightenment on the Dark Ages, while the knights of the Round Table embarked on many a noble quest. But Merlyn foresaw the treachery that awaited his liege: the forbidden love between Queen Guinevere and Lancelot, the wicked plots of Arthur's half-sister Morgause, and the hatred she fostered in Mordred that would bring an end to the king's dreams for Britain and to the king himself.

***Orange Houses* by Paul Griffin:** Meet Tamika Sykes-Mik to her friends (if she had any). She's hearing impaired and way too smart for her West Bronx high school. She copes by reading lips and selling homework answers, and looks forward to the time each day when she can be alone in her room drawing. She's a tough girl who never gets close to anyone, until she meets Fatima, a teenage refugee who sells newspapers on Mik's block. Both Mik and Fatima unite in their efforts to befriend Jimmi, a homeless vet who is shunned by the rest of the community.

***Parrot in the Oven* by Victor Martinez:** In his debut novel, set in a dusty California town, Martinez employs a series of compelling, frequently troubling vignettes to illuminate a Mexican American boy's coming of age. It's not easy for Manuel Hernandez to discover his place in the world, especially when he is constantly bombarded with the hardships of his poor and woefully dysfunctional family. Their tiny sheetrock house in the projects is the scene of angry arguments—even of threats at ri#le point. Manny steps onto a battle#ield at every turn, whether he is collecting his alcoholic and violent father from the local pool hall, withstanding the ethnic slurs of white school mates, or seeking initiation into a neighborhood gang. But as the months pass and some of his wounds heal, Manny slowly begins to understand the sense of self that he can derive from his role within this dif#icult household. The tense prose and often biting dialogue bring into razor-sharp focus the frustration and bitterness of a struggling family; at the same time, Manny's #irst-person narrative is tinged with compassion and, indeed, love for the unstable people around him. Martinez's honest voice, and descriptions sprinkled with elegant imagery, offer a rare and consummately believable portrait of barrio life.

***Seraphina* by Rachel Hartman:** Seraphina grapples with her identity and magical secrets in a world where dragons, who can assume human form, and humans coexist uneasily.

***Shine, Coconut Moon* by Neesha Meminger:** Sixteen-year-old Samar—aka Sam—is an Indian American teenager whose mom has kept her away from her old-fashioned family. It's never bothered Sam, who is busy with school, friends, and a demanding boyfriend. But things change after 9/11. A guy in a turban shows up at Sam's house—and turns out to be her uncle. He wants to reconcile the family and teach Sam about her Sikh heritage. She is eager to learn, but when boys attack her uncle, shouting "Go home Osama!" Sam realizes she could be in danger—and just how dangerous ignorance is.

***Ship Breaker* by Paolo Bacigalupi:** In America's Gulf Coast region, 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....

***Sorta Like a Rock Star* by Matthew Quick:** Amber Appleton lives in a bus. Ever since her mom's boyfriend kicked them out, Amber, her mom, and her totally loyal dog, Bobby Big Boy (aka Thrice B) have been camped out in the back of Hello Yellow (the school bus her mom drives). Still, Amber, the self-proclaimed princess of hope and girl of unyielding optimism, refuses to sweat the bad stuff. But when a fatal tragedy threatens Amber's optimism—and her way of life, can Amber continue to be the rock star of hope?

***Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson:** Since the beginning of the school year, high school freshman Melinda has found that it's been getting harder and harder for her to speak out loud: "My throat is always sore, my lips raw.... Every time I try to talk to my parents or a teacher, I sputter or freeze.... It's like I have some kind of spastic laryngitis." What could have caused Melinda to suddenly fall mute? Could it be due to the fact that no one at school is speaking to her because she called the cops and got everyone busted at the seniors' big end-of-summer party? Or maybe it's because her parents' only form of communication is Post-It notes written on their way out the door to their nine-to-whenever jobs. While Melinda is bothered by these things, deep down she knows the real reason why she's been struck mute...

***Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli:** From the day she arrives at quiet Mica High in a burst of color and sound, the hallways hum with the murmur of "Stargirl, Stargirl." She captures Leo Borlock's heart with just one smile. She sparks a school-spirit revolution with just one cheer. The students of Mica High are enchanted. At first. Then they turn on her. Stargirl is suddenly shunned for everything that makes her different, and Leo, panicked and desperate with love, urges her to become the very thing that can destroy her: normal.

***Starters* by Lissa Price:** The Spore Wars has left only Starters and Enders. Those under twenty and over sixty were vaccinated and everyone else died leaving a lot of children homeless and without parents. Callie must take care of her younger brother in the rough streets. She is desperate for money so she signs a contract to rent her body to Enders who experience youth again by "joyriding" in teen bodies. Something goes wrong and Callie finds out that her renter is involved in an assassination plot. She struggles to maintain control and stop it before the renter ends up killing Callie in the process.

***Steel* by Carrie Vaughn:** Meet Jill. As the book begins she is fencing in a championship round that she does not win. A few weeks later she finds a piece of a sword and ends up on a pirate ship fighting for her life. Can this be real? How does she get home? Does she want to go home? These are just a few of the questions floating through her mind.

***Tears of a Tiger* by Sharon Draper:** Andy Jackson was driving the car that crashed one night after a game, killing Robert Washington, his best friend and the captain of the Hazelwood High Tigers. It was late, and they'd been drinking, and now, months later, Andy can't stop blaming himself. As he turns away from family, friends, and even his girlfriend, he finds he's losing the most precious thing of all -- his ability to face the future.

***Tell us We're Home* by Marina Budhos:** Jaya, Maria, and Lola are just like the other eighth-grade girls

in the wealthy suburb of Meadowbrook, New Jersey. But there's one big difference: all three are daughters of maids and nannies. And they go to school with the very same kids whose families their mothers work for. That difference grows even bigger—and more painful—when Jaya's mother is accused of theft and Jaya's small, fragile world collapses. When tensions about immigrants start to erupt, fracturing this perfect, serene suburb, all three girls are tested, as outsiders—and as friends.

***Ten Miles Past Normal* by Frances O'Roark Dowell :** When Janie Gorman was younger she convinced her family to move to a farm. Now as a high school freshman she is wishing she lived anywhere else. She is finding it hard to fit in. Her best friend convinces her to join the Jam Band then the friend decides not to come. Janie meets Monster who teaches her to play the Bass Guitar. Her mother plans a huge hootenanny and invites everyone. As Janie struggles to fit in she discovers that she is "Ten Miles Past Normal."

***The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green:** After struggling with terminal cancer for three years, sixteen-year-old Hazel Lancaster prefers books to people, and lives her life in the gray area between sickness and health. After being forced by her parents to attend a Cancer Kids Support Group, she meets Augustus Waters and must face her fear of letting people in.

***The First Part Last* by Angela Johnson:** This book is the story of teenager Bobby Morris, a guy who likes to hang out with his friends K-Boy and J. L.; they're typical boys who want to shoot hoops, buy a slice of pizza in a New York City neighborhood, or play with a Game Boy. But things are never the same when Bobby gets Nia pregnant; she's flipping out about this baby developing inside her belly, and Bobby is learning all too fast what it takes to be a daddy and a man.

***The Healing: A Novel* by Jonathan Odell:** Grenda, a young slave girl, thinks that she likes wearing a dead girl's fancy dresses, but soon finds that in order to fulfill her destiny; she must shed the garb of slavery, rid herself of an unstable plantation mistress, and remember who she is.

***The Hoopster* by Alan Sitomer:** When assigned to write his first full-length feature article-on racism-for Affairs magazine, Andre Anderson balks: Just because he's black doesn't make him an expert on racism. He tells his boss, "I don't really think it affects me personally all that much." However, as he writes, and begins to observe and think like a writer, he sees racism everywhere. His article receives tremendous positive response except from the local hate group, the PPA (People for a Pure America), who decide to respond with violence.

***The Latte Rebellion* by Sarah Jamila Stevenson:** Senior Asha Jamison starts a club at her high school to promote mixed-race awareness, but when the "Latte Rebellion" takes on a life of its own, she ends up in trouble at school and her college dreams are threatened.

***The Raven Boys* by Maggie Stiefvater:** Her entire life Blue Sargeant has been told by her family of psychics that she will kill her true love with a kiss. When she sees a spirit for the first time on St. Mark's Eve she's told that the teen boy, Gansey, is either her true love or, in the next year, she will kill him. She tries to avoid Gansey, but when he and his friends come to her house for a reading, she is drawn into their search for the resting place of an ancient Welsh king, Owain Glendŵr.

***The Red Umbrella* by Christina Diaz Gonzalez:** The Red Umbrella is the moving tale of a 14-year-old girl's journey from Cuba to America as part of Operation Pedro Pan—an organized exodus of more than 14,000 unaccompanied children, whose parents sent them away to escape Fidel Castro's revolution. In 1961, two years after the Communist revolution, Lucía Álvarez still leads a carefree life, dreaming of parties and her first crush. But when the soldiers come to her sleepy Cuban town, everything begins to change. Freedoms are stripped away. As the revolution's impact becomes more oppressive, Lucía's parents make the heart-wrenching decision to send her and her little brother to the United States—on their own. Suddenly plunked down in Nebraska with well-meaning strangers, Lucía struggles to adapt to a new country, a new language, a new way of life.

***The Skin I'm In* by Sharon G. Flake:** Miss Saunders, whose skin is blotched with a rare skin condition, serves as a mirror to Maleeka Madison's struggle against the burden of low self-esteem that many black girls face when they're darker skinned. Miss Saunders is tough and through this, Maleeka learns to stand up to tough-talking Charlese.

***Tyrell* by Coe Booth:** Tyrell is a young African-American teen who can't get a break. He's living (for now) with his spaced-out mother and little brother in a homeless shelter. His father's in jail. His girlfriend supports him, but he doesn't feel good enough for her -- and seems to be always on the verge of doing the wrong thing around her. There's another girl at the homeless shelter who is also after him, although the desires there are complicated. Tyrell feels he needs to score some money to make things better. Will he end up following in his father's footsteps?

***Twisted* by Laurie Halse Anderson:** High school senior Tyler Miller used to be the kind of guy who faded into the background. But since he got busted for doing graffiti on the school, and spent the summer doing outdoor work to pay for it, he stands out like you wouldn't believe. His new physique attracts the attention of queen bee Bethany Milbury, who just so happens to be his father's boss's daughter, the sister of his biggest enemy— and Tyler's secret crush. And that sets off a string of events and changes that have Tyler questioning his place in school, in his family, and in the world.*

***Virtuosity* by Jessica Martinez:** At seventeen Carmen has already won a Grammy and plays a 1.2 million dollar violin. She is the favorite to win the prestigious Guarneri Competition and she has been preparing for four years. The only violinist who has a chance to beat her is handsome Jeremy, who both infuriates and attracts her. But the competition comes first and Carmen's manager mother supplies her with anti-anxiety drugs and will do anything to help Carmen win. How far will Carmen go when she finds out the truth?

***You Don't Know Me* by David Klass:** You think you know John? Well, let's see . . . What bathroom fixture did his father have in mind at his birth? Does algebra have a use, besides torture? Who is Glory Halle-lujah? Who is Violent Hayes? What do they want? Who or what are the Lashasa Palulu? Why do fools fall in love? How can anyone who is fighting a secret battle for his life know anyone? And how can they know him?

Non-Fiction Texts

***All Better Now* by Emily Wing Smith:** All her life, Emily has felt different from other kids. Between therapist visits, sudden uncontrollable bursts of anger, and unexplained episodes of dizziness and loss of coordination, things have always felt not right. For years, her only escape was through the stories she'd craft about herself and the world around her. But it isn't until a near-fatal accident when she's 12 years old that Emily and her family discover the truth: a grapefruit sized benign brain tumor at the base of her skull.

***A Charmed Life: Growing Up in Macbeth's Castle (A Memoir)* by Liza Campbell:** Liza Campbell was the last child to be born at the impressive and renowned Cawdor Castle, the family seat of the Campbells, as featured in Shakespeare's Macbeth. Liza's father, Hugh, the twenty-fifth Thane, inherited dashing good looks, brains, immense wealth, an ancient and revered title, three stately homes, and 100,000 acres of land. This memoir tells the story of Liza's idyllic childhood with her four siblings in Wales in the 1960s, until Hugh inherited Cawdor Castle and moved his family up to the Scottish Highlands. It was at the ancestral home that the fairytale began to resemble a nightmare. Increasingly overwhelmed by his enormous responsibilities, Hugh tipped into madness fuelled by drink, drugs, and extramarital affairs. Over the years, the castle has transformed into an arena of reckless extravagance and terrifying domestic violence, leading to the abrupt termination of a legacy that had been passed down through the family for six hundred years.

***Breaking Night: A Memoir of Forgiveness, Survival, and my Journey from Homeless to Harvard* by Liz Murray** Liz Murray was born to loving but drug-addicted parents in the Bronx. In school she was taunted for her dirty clothing and lice-infested hair, eventually skipping so many classes that she was put into a girls' home. At age fifteen, Liz found herself on the streets when her family finally unraveled. She learned to scrape by, foraging for food and riding subways all night to have a warm place to sleep. When Liz's mother died of AIDS, she decided to take control of her own destiny and go back to high school, often completing her assignments in the hallways and subway

stations where she slept.

***Freedom Writers Diary* by Erin Gruwell** : Shocked by the teenage violence she witnessed during the Rodney King riots in Los Angeles, Erin Gruwell became a teacher at a high school rampant with hostility and racial intolerance. For many of these students—whose ranks included substance abusers, gang members, the homeless, and victims of abuse—Gruwell was the first person to treat them with dignity, to believe in their potential and help them see it themselves. Soon, their loyalty towards their teacher and burning enthusiasm to help end violence and intolerance became a force of its own.

***Getting Away With Murder* by Chris Crowe**: Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old Black teenager from Chicago, was visiting family in a small town in Mississippi during the summer of 1955. Likely showing off to friends, Emmett allegedly whistled at a white woman. Three days later his brutally beaten body was found floating in the Tallahatchie River. The extreme violence of the crime put a national spotlight on the Jim Crow ways of the South, and many Americans—Black and white—were further outraged at the speedy trial of the white murderers. Although the two white men were tried and acquitted by an allwhite jury, they later bragged publicly about the crime.

***I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou**: Maya Angelou's autobiography recounts her early years growing up in small community with her grandmother, brother, and uncle, and her experiences in adolescence living with her mother and father (separately).

***Learning to Die in Miami: Confessions of a Refugee* by Carlos Eire**

Learning to Die in Miami opens as the plane lands and Carlos faces, with trepidation and excitement, his new life. He quickly realizes that in order for his new American self to emerge, his Cuban self must “die.” And so, with great enterprise and purpose, he begins his journey. We follow Carlos as he adjusts to life in his new home.

***Letters to a Bullied Girl: Messages of Healing and Hope* by Olivia Gardner, Emily Bunder, Sarah Bunder**

Olivia Gardner, a northern California teenager, was severely taunted and cyber-bullied by her classmates for more than two years. News of her bullying spread, eventually reaching two teenage girls from a neighboring town, sisters Emily and Sarah Buder. The girls were so moved by Olivia's story that they initiated a letter-writing campaign to help lift her spirits. It was a tender gesture of solidarity that set off an overwhelming chain reaction of support, encouragement, and love.

***Nobel Prize Women in Science* by Sharon Bertsch McGrayne**: The biographer reveals the personal and professional lives of 14 female scientists.

***Our America: Life and Death on the South Side of Chicago* by Lelan Jones & Lloyd Newman**

Through two award-winning National Public Radio documentaries, and now this powerful book, LeAlan Jones and Lloyd Newman have made it their mission to be loud voices from one of this country's darkest places, Chicago's Ida B. Wells housing project. Set against the stunning photographs of a talented young photographer from the projects, *Our America* evokes the unforgiving world of these two amazing young men, and their struggle to survive unrelenting tragedy.

***Outcasts United: The Story of a Refugee Soccer Team That Changed a Town* by Warren St. John**:

This is a complex and inspirational story about the Fugees, a youth soccer team made up of refugees from around the world, and their formidable female coach. Clarkston, Georgia, was a typical southern town until it became a refugee resettlement center. The author explores how the community changed with the influx of refugees and how a single individual made a difference in the lives of so many.

***Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell**: Malcolm Gladwell takes us on an intellectual journey through the world of “outliers”—the best and the brightest, the most famous and the most successful. He asks the question: what makes highachievers different? His answer is that we pay too much attention to what successful people are like, and too little attention to where they are from: that is, their culture, their family, their generation, and the idiosyncratic experiences of their upbringing. Along the way he explains the secrets of software billionaires, what it takes to be a great soccer player, why Asians are good at math, and what made the Beatles the greatest rock band.

Simeon's Story: An Eyewitness account of the Kidnapping of Emmett Till by Simeon Wright - No modern tragedy has had a greater impact on race relations in America than the kidnapping and murder of Emmett Till. A 14-year-old black boy from Chicago visiting relatives in Mississippi in 1955, Till was taken from his uncle's home by two white men; several days later, his body was found in the Tallahatchie River. This grotesque crime became the catalyst for the civil rights movement. At age 12, author Simeon Wright saw and heard his cousin Emmett whistle at a white woman at a grocery store; he was sleeping in the same bed with him when Emmett was taken; and he was at the sensational trial.

The Bite of the Mango by Mariatu Kamara As a child in a small rural village in Sierra Leone, Mariatu Kamara lived peacefully surrounded by family and friends. Rumors of rebel attacks were no more than a distant worry. But when 12-year-old Mariatu set out for a neighboring village, she never arrived. Heavily armed rebel soldiers, many no older than children themselves, attacked and tortured Mariatu. During this brutal act of senseless violence they cut off both her hands. Stumbling through the countryside, Mariatu miraculously survived. In this gripping and heartbreaking true story, Mariatu shares with readers the details of the brutal attack, its aftermath and her eventual arrival in Toronto. There she began to pull together the pieces of her broken life with courage, astonishing resilience and hope.

The Pact by Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, Rameck Hunt , and Lisa Frazier Page: Growing up in broken homes in a crime-ridden area of Newark, N.J., these three authors could easily have followed their childhood friends into lives of drug-dealing, gangs and prison. They tell harrowing stories of being arrested for assault and mugging drug dealers, and of the lack of options they saw as black teenagers. But when their high school was visited by a recruiter from a college aimed at preparing minority students for medical school, the three friends decided to make something of their lives. Through the rigors of medical and dental school, and a brief detour into performing rap music at local clubs, they supported each other.

The Pregnancy Project: A Memoir by Gaby Rodriguez: Gaby comes from a long line of dropout teen mothers. On her way to being the first of her family to graduate and go to college, she decides to fake a pregnancy as a senior project to gauge the reactions of her family and peers.

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens by Sean Covey: Based on his father's bestselling *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Sean Covey applies the same principles to teens, using a vivacious, entertaining style. To keep it fun, Covey writes, he "stuffed it full of cartoons, clever ideas, great quotes, and incredible stories about real teens from all over the world... along with a few other surprises." Did he ever! Flip open to any page and become instantly absorbed in real-life stories of teens who have overcome obstacles to succeed, and step-by-step guides to shifting paradigms, building equity in "relationship bank accounts," creating action plans, and much more.

The Story of My Life by Helen Keller: The autobiography of the blind and deaf woman who, through the help of concerned teachers and friends, became an inspiration to those challenged, physically and otherwise.

We Beat the Streets by Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, Rameck Hunt, and Sharon Draper: "What started out as three boys skipping class turned out to be the most significant experience of our lives," says George Jenkins, who, together with Sampson Davis and Rameck Hunt, made a teenage pact to leave their impoverished New Jersey neighborhood, attend medical school, and become doctors. Author Sharon Draper helped shape chapters, written in the third person, describing each doctor's challenging childhood experiences, including a parent's drug addiction, forays into crime, and succeeding in an environment that made "failing equal to being cool." Following each story, passages written in the doctors' own words offer advice and strategies, and acknowledge the help received along the way.

What Smart Students Know by Adam Robinson: Starting from the premise that successful students are not necessarily any more brilliant than their less successful peers, but have simply mastered the art of efficient learning, Adam Robinson introduces high school and college students to an innovative approach that can help

them achieve top grades while discovering the joy of true learning.

***When I Was Puerto Rican* by Esmeralda Santiago** - Esmeralda Santiago's story begins in rural Puerto Rico, where her childhood was full of both tenderness and domestic strife, tropical sounds and sights as well as poverty. Growing up, she learned the proper way to eat a guava, the sound of tree frogs in the mango groves at night, the taste of the delectable sausage called *morcilla*, and the formula for ushering a dead baby's soul to heaven. As she enters school we see the clash, both hilarious and fierce, of Puerto Rican and Yankee culture. When her mother, Mami, a force of nature, takes off to New York with her seven, soon to be eleven children, Esmeralda, the oldest, must learn new rules, a new language, and eventually take on a new identity.

***You Got This!* By Maya S. Penn:** Maya Penn isn't like other 16-year-olds. This teen has given a TED Talk (two, in fact), has been on "The View" with Whoopi Goldberg, has launched her own business, designed her own eco-friendly clothing, and been name-checked by bestselling authors like Gabrielle Bernstein, Steve Harvey, and Eve Ensler. All while still in middle school! But while Maya is extraordinary in so many ways, what she has accomplished isn't miraculous or unique. Instead, her success is a testament to her own creativity, passion, and fearlessness...traits that, Maya says, can be cultivated in all of us, too. *YOU GOT THIS!* offers a creative blueprint for young adults (and others seeking their way in the world), showing them the tools Maya herself used to build an authentic, exciting, and connected life for herself ... and offering her readers ideas to help them do the same.