We have made a number of changes to our list this year in order to keep it current and relevant. With the exception of the AP English students, all students will read one book from this lengthy list of titles. Titles not on this list will not be accepted as summer reading, including any texts taught as part of the NHS curriculum. No books read a prior year may be repeated for the purposes of summer reading. Read something new!

* An asterisk next to an author’s name on the list means you are welcome to read any book by this author.

The following list is arranged categorically. The reading levels range from A to C, “A” designating accessible to all, “B” designating some difficulty, and “C” designating challenging reads. Annotations are from the following sources: Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Follett, Library Journal, Novelist, and Publisher’s Weekly.

**AGAINST ALL ODDS: Life’s Challenges**

Anton the Dove Fancier and Other Tales from the Holocaust by Bernard Gotfryd
Gotfryd recounts his Holocaust experiences before, during, and after World War II. B

Birds of Paradise by Diana Abu-Jaber
At thirteen, Felice Muir ran away from home to punish herself for some horrible thing she had done—leaving a hole in the hearts of her family. After five years of scrounging for food, drugs, and shelter on Miami Beach, Felice is now turning eighteen, and she and the family she left behind must reckon with the consequences of her actions—and make life-affirming choices about what matters to them most, now and in the future. A

Eleven Seconds: a Story of Tragedy, Courage, and Triumph by Travis Roy
Roy recounts how his life has changed since a freak accident in 1995 in his first Boston University hockey game that left him paralyzed from the neck down. A

Hole in My Life by Jack Gantos
The author relates how, as a young adult, he became a drug user and smuggler, was arrested, did time in prison, and eventually got out and went to college, all the while hoping to become a writer. A

Hope Was Here by Joan Bauer*
When sixteen-year-old Hope and the aunt who has raised her move from Brooklyn to Mulhoney, Wisconsin, to work as waitress and cook in the Welcome Stairways diner, they become involved with the diner owner’s political campaign to oust the town’s corrupt mayor. A

A Lesson Before Dying by Ernest Gaines
This book tells the story of a young African-American man sentenced to death for a murder he did not commit, and a teacher who tries to impart to him his learning and pride before the execution. A

The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold
Fourteen-year-old Susie Salmon, the victim of a sexual assault and murder, looks on from the afterlife as her family deals with their grief, and waits for her killer to be brought to some type of justice. A

Looking for Alaska by John Green*
Sixteen-year-old Miles’ first year at Culver Creek Preparatory School in Alabama includes good friends and great pranks, but is defined by the search for answers about life and death after a fatal car crash. A

Lucy by Jamaica Kincaid
Lucy, a 19-year-old West Indian, sheds her cloistered colonial upbringing by accepting a job as an au pair in New York—the perfect setting for satisfying her gluttonous appetite for both mental and sensual stimulation. The startling disintegration of her employers’ marriage triggers flashbacks of home and family; the reflected details are unsettling. Lucy finds being born “woman” places her in a territory she wants to explore and at the same time escape. As she begins her exploration, cathartic tears blur the first pages of her diary. But Lucy plunges ahead, reassured by the discovery of an authentic self. A

Monster: The Autobiography of an LA Gang Member by Sanyika Shakur
"Monster" Kody, today known as Sanyika Sakur, spent 16 years as a gang member in South Central Los Angeles. Throughout his memoir, he describes the siege mentality that prevails every minute of every day, due to the daily barrage of gang-on-gang violence. Scott today is dedicated to ending gang violence. A

Peeling the Onion by Wendy Orr
Following an automobile accident in which her neck is broken, a teenage karate champion begins a long and painful recovery with the help of her family. A
Shakespeare Bats Cleanup by Ron Koetrge
When a fourteen-year-old baseball player catches mononucleosis, he discovers that keeping a journal and experimenting with poetry not only helps fill the time, it also helps him deal with life, love, and loss. A

What is the What by Dave Eggers
Eggers tells the true story of Valentino Achak Deng, a refugee of the Sudanese civil war who was forced to flee from his village in the mid-1980’s. Deng became one of the Lost Boys, who survived starvation, thirst, and man-eating lions on their march to refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya. B

Wintergirls by Laurie Halse Anderson*
Eighteen-year-old Lia comes to terms with her best friend's death from anorexia as she struggles with the same disorder. A

The Women of Brewster Place by Gloria Naylor
A series of vignettes focusing on seven African-American women who are residents of Brewster Place, showing how their reactions to certain situations are affected by their backgrounds, ages, dreams, and problems. A

You Remind Me of Me by Dan Chaon
Jonah Doyle must deal with the physical scars left him when the family Doberman attacks him, the mental anguish of his mother's suicide, and the painful search for the older brother he never knew. B

13 Reasons Why by Jay Asher
When Clay Jenkins receives a box containing thirteen cassette tapes recorded by his classmate Hannah, who committed suicide, he spends the night crisscrossing their town, listening to Hannah's voice recounting the events leading up to her death. A

ALMOST REAL: Historical Fiction

The Agony and the Ecstasy: a biographical novel of Michelangelo by Irving Stone
Michelangelo's career as a sculptor, painter, architect, and poet is traced from his promising boyhood apprenticeships to the painter Ghirlandaio and the sculptor Bertoldo through all the years of his genius. C

Ahab's Wife by Sena Jeter Naslund
A novel inspired by Herman Melville's Moby Dick in which Una Spenser, wife of Captain Ahab, tells the story of her life in a whaling village in mid-nineteenth century America. C

And the Mountains Echoed by Khaled Hosseini*
Presents a story inspired by human love, how people take care of one another, and how choices resonate through subsequent generations. Afghanistan, 1952. Abdullah and his sister Pari live with their father and step-mother in the small village of Shadbagh. Their father, Saboor, is constantly in search of work and they struggle together through poverty and brutal winters. To Abdullah, Pari, as beautiful and sweet-natured as the fairy for which she was named, is everything. B

Anna of Byzantium by Tracy Barrett
In the eleventh century the teenage princess Anna Comnena fights for her birthright, the throne to the Byzantine Empire, which she fears will be taken from her by her younger brother John because he is a boy. B

Atonement by Ian McEwan*
In 1935 England, thirteen-year-old Briony Tallis witnesses an event involving her sister Cecilia and her childhood friend Robbie Turner, and she becomes the victim of her own imagination, which leads her on a lifelong search for truth and absolution. B

Boston Girl by Anita Diamant*
Eighty-five-year-old Addie tells the story of her life to her twenty-two-year-old granddaughter, who has asked her "How did you get to be the woman you are today." She begins in 1915, the year she found her voice and made friends who would help shape the course of her life. From the one-room tenement apartment she shared with her parents and two sisters, to the library group for girls she joins at a neighborhood settlement house, to her first, disastrous love affair, Addie recalls her adventures with compassion for the naive girl she was and a wicked sense of humor. B

The Chaperone by Laura Moriarty*
The story of the woman who chaperoned an irreverent Louise Brooks, a film star, to New York City in the 1920s and the summer that would change them both. A

Code Name Verity - Elizabeth Wein
In exchange for a temporary stay of execution and lesser forms of torture, a young female spy captured in Nazi-occupied France writes a confession of her activities in the Resistance. Her story is that of two women who should never have crossed paths, yet were destined to become the best of friends and embark upon the covert mission that would determine which of them would live or die. A
Escape from Warsaw by Ian Serailler
During 1942 in Warsaw, Edek shoots a Nazi Storm Trooper. Edek and his two sisters must escape from the secret police. A

Going After Cacciato by Tim O'Brien
An American soldier in Vietnam decides to leave the war and simply walks out of the jungle, with the intent of going to Paris. B

Gone With the Wind by Margaret Mitchell
After the Civil War sweeps away the genteel life to which she has been accustomed, Scarlett O'Hara sets about to salvage her plantation home. C

Hidden Diary of Marie Antoinet by Carolly Erickson
Awaiting her execution, Marie Antoinette writes the story of her life, describing her privileged childhood as an Austrian archduchess, years as the glamorous mistress of Versailles, and imprisonment during the French Revolution. B

The House of the Spirits by Isabel Allende
Presents a novel set in an unnamed Latin American country and describes the struggles, passions, and secrets of the Trueba family that spans three generations. C

The Invention of Wings by Sue Monk Kidd
Inspired by the true story of early-nineteenth-century abolitionist and suffragist Sarah Grimké, Kidd paints a moving portrait of two women inextricably linked by the horrors of slavery. Sarah, daughter of a wealthy South Carolina plantation owner, exhibits an independent spirit and strong belief in the equality of all. Thwarted from her dreams of becoming a lawyer, she struggles throughout life to find an outlet for her convictions. Handful, a slave in the Grimké household, displays a sharp intellect and brave, rebellious disposition. She maintains a compliant exterior, while planning for a brighter future. B

Jubilee by Margaret Walker
The gallant South is reconstructed here through the living of Vyry, a young Negro woman, born a slave, natural, unclaimed child of the "Marster". Christmas at the Big House is dawn to nighttime toil in a steaming kitchen; Young Master Going Off to the Civil War anticipates the painful and wonderful idea of a rumor called Freedom; Sherman's terrible ride means the "Year of Jubillo," and the Dispersion means a beginning rather than an end. Vyry accepted as a child the bewildering cruelty of separations, torture at the hands of a high strung mistress with a child's natural dignity and sad innocence. B

On the Bus: A Novel of Families Trapped by Forced Busing by Kimberly Scott
Story of two families, one black one white, living in Boston at a time of outward racial tensions and hatred. B

Orphan Train by Christina Baker Kline
Close to aging out of the foster care system, Molly Ayer takes a position helping an elderly woman named Vivian and discovers that they are more alike than different as she helps Vivian solve a mystery from her past. B

Sarah's Key by Tatiana DeRosnay
American journalist Julia Jarmond researches the brutal 1942 Nazi roundup in Paris and stumbles upon a connection between her family and one of the victims, which compels Julia to learn more about the girl's life. B
Stones from the River by Ursula Hegi
Trudi Montag, a dwarf living in a small German town, through both world wars, learns to find acceptance, because she learns that all humans are different. C

When the Emperor was Divine by Julie Otsuka
A story told from five different points of view, chronicles the experiences of Japanese Americans caught up in the nightmare of the World War II internment camps. A

Year of Wonders: a Novel of the Plague by Geraldine Brooks*
When an infected bolt of cloth carries plague from London to an isolated village, a housemaid named Anna Frith emerges as an unlikely heroine and healer. Through Anna's eyes we follow the story of the fateful year of 1666, as she and her fellow villagers confront the spread of disease and superstition. B

AND THE WINNER IS: Award Winners

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr (Pulitzer)
During the last year of World War II, Marie-Laure, a French teenager who is blind, and Werner, an intelligent German soldier, come together, despite being on opposite sides of the conflict. B

American Pastoral by Philip Roth (Pulitzer)
A former athletic star, devoted family man, and owner of a thriving glove factory, Seymour "Swede" Levov finds his life coming apart during the social disorder of the 1960s, when his beloved daughter turns revolutionary terrorist out to destroy her father's world. C

Angle of Repose by Wallace Stegner (Pulitzer)
Susan and her engineer husband live rough lives in mining camps during the late 19th century, & their marriage cannot survive. C

Bel Canto by Ann Patchett* (PEN-Faulkner Award)
A group of international guests, taken hostage by terrorists while attending a birthday party at the home of the vice president of a small South American country, form bonds with their captors and enter into an almost idyllic lifestyle, united by the music of Roxanne Coss, opera's most revered soprano. B

Gilead by Marilynne Robinson* (Pulitzer)
This extended letter from an aging pastor to his young son digs many levels deep. On the literal plane, Gilead recounts the history of a family of preachers on Iowa's prairie. Philosophically, it delves into morality, racial justice, the decline of religion in American life, and the nature of faith in a beautiful, often indecipherable, world. Finally, on the personal level, it offers soul-searching lessons for fathers and sons. B

The Good Lord Bird by James McBride (National Book Award)
Abolitionist John Brown calls her "Little Onion," but her real name is Henry. A slave in Kansas mistaken for a girl due to the sackcloth smock he was wearing when Brown shot his master, the light-skinned, curly-haired 12-year-old ends up living as a young woman, most often encamped with Brown's renegade band of freedom warriors as they traverse the country, raising arms and ammunition for their battle against slavery. B

Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies by Jared M. Diamond (Pulitzer)
Diamond traces the development of primitive societies showing why some groups advanced more rapidly than others and how this progression explains why various populations stabilize at specific phases of development while others continue to evolve. C

The Hours by Michael Cunningham (Pulitzer)
Author Virginia Wolf awakens one morning in London in 1923 with a dream that will become Mrs. Dalloway. In the present, Clarissa Vaughan is planning a party in Greenwich Village for her oldest love, a poet dying from AIDS. And in Los Angeles in 1949, Laura Brown is pregnant and unsettled, trying to prepare for her husband's birthday, but wanting nothing more than to sit and read Woolf. B

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison (National Book Award)
In the course of his wanderings from a Southern college to New York's Harlem, an African-American man becomes involved in a series of adventures. C

John Adams by David McCullough* (Pulitzer)
McCullough chronicles the life of the second president, John Adams, describing the many conflicts—including international exploits—he faced during his long political career and exploring the love story that was his marriage to Abigail and the complexity of his friendship with Thomas Jefferson. C

Life of Pi by Yann Martel* (Booker)
Possessing encyclopedia-like intelligence, unusual zookeeper's son Pi Patel sets sail for America, but when the ship sinks, he escapes on a life boat and is lost at sea with a dwindling number of animals until only he and a hungry Bengal tiger remain. B

Snow Falling on Cedars by David Guterson (PEN-Faulkner Award)
After returning from internment and trying to get his land back, Kabuo Miyomoto is arrested and tried for the murder of Carl Heine. B
THE GAMES PEOPLE PLAY: Sports

The Education of a Coach by David Halberstam
Bill Belichick is the only head coach in NFL history to win three Super Bowl championships during a four-year span. The success of the New England Patriots' head honcho fascinates Pulitzer Prize-winning author David Halberstam, but what captivates him even more is Belichick's total lack of charisma. The Education of a Coach explores the extraordinary career of a gridiron genius who has consistently avoided celebrity.

Fever Pitch by Nick Hornby
This is an autobiography of Hornby's youth and a tribute to British football. Hornby pinpoints 1968 as his formative year—the year he turned 11, the year his parents separated, and the year his father first took him to watch Arsenal play. The author quickly moved "way beyond fandom" into an extreme obsession that has dominated his life, loves, and relationships.

Game of Shadows: Barry Bonds, BALCO, and the Steroids Scandal that Rocked Professional Sports by Mark Fainaru-Wada and Lance Williams
A journalistic account of the scandal involving steroid use and substance abuse by Barry Bonds and other elite athletes from the investigative reporters at the San Francisco Chronicle who broke the story.

The Greatest Game Ever Played: Harry Vardon, Francis Ouimet, and the Birth of Modern Golf by Mark Frost
Presents an early-twentieth-century history of golf by telling the stories of British champion Harry Vardon and young American Francis Ouimet, focusing on their showdown at the 1913 U.S. Open.

The Home Team: Of Mothers, Daughters, and American Champions by Ruthann Lobo, Rebecca Lobo
Mother Ruthann taught her daughters they could be anything they wanted, and Rebecca became captain of the national championship women's basketball team at U.Conn. and athlete of the year in 1995. Also recounts the mother's courageous battle with breast cancer.

The Last Amateurs: Playing for Glory and Honor in Division I College Basketball by John Feinstein
The author presents a look at college basketball as he believes it should be conducted, focusing on the Patriot League, a group of teams from seven academically oriented colleges whose players rarely have expectations of making basketball their careers, but play for the pure love of the sport.

The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams by Darcy Frey
The story of dreams and cynicism, the often naive hopes of youth played out against the realities of SATs, the NCAA, and the brutal world of college athletic sports recruitment.

Patriot Reign by Michael Holley
The author examines the heart of the New England Patriots football club and how its head coach, Bill Belichick, transformed a team of unmotivated, underperforming players into champions.

Season of Life: A football star, a boy, a journey to manhood by Jeffrey Marx
Marx reflects upon his season covering Maryland high school football team the Gilman Greyhounds, describing the lessons he learned about manhood from the Greyhounds’ coach, football-star-turned-minister Joe Ehrmann, and the impact it had on his relationship with his father.

Shooting from the Outside by Tara Vanderveer, Joan Ryan
Sports journalist Ryan and Stanford women's basketball coach team up to write about the quest for Olympic gold in 1996. Contains autobiographical information about Vanderveer and relates her passionate belief that women's sports have wider social significance.

Slam by Walter Dean Myers
Sixteen-year-old "Slam" Harris is counting on his noteworthy basketball talents to get him out of the inner city and give him a chance to succeed in life, but his coach sees things differently.

Values of the Game by Bill Bradley
Contains ten essays in which former basketball player and senator Bill Bradley reflects on the qualities that separate winners from losers, focusing on the importance of shared values among team members.

Wait Till Next Year by Doris Kearns Goodwin
The author explores her childhood in Rockville Centre, Long Island and how baseball, especially the play of the Brooklyn Dodgers, was important in her relationships with family, friends, and neighbors.

We Are All Athletes by Mariah Burton Nelson
Award-winning author and athlete, Nelson provides life lessons from the playing fields, and shows readers how to approach life with an athletic mentality. Includes interviews with business, military, arts and sports icons.
INTO THE WILD: Action, Adventure, Mystery and Suspense

The Call of the Wild by Jack London
The classic adventure tale of an unusual dog, part St. Bernard, part Scotch Shepherd, that was kidnapped and shipped off to Alaska to work on the Klondike Gold Rush. Buck the dog quickly learns how to survive in the wild and also learns the call of the wolf. A

Coyote Waits by Tony Hillerman*
An investigation of the murder of a tribal policeman leads to a historical find worth a fortune. B

Defending Jacob by William Landay
Set in Newton, MA, this is the story of a district attorney’s son accused of killing a classmate. As the father attempts to prove his son’s innocence, Landay explores uncomfortable territory: can a tendency toward violence be inherited? Is the capacity for murder a genetic disposition? A

Devices and Desires by P.D. James*
Scotland Yard’s Adam Dalgliesh leaves London to vacation in Norfolk and becomes involved in the hunt for the person responsible for a series of murders of young women, which mysteriously continues after the suspect’s capture. B

Double Indemnity by James M. Cain
An unfaithful and unscrupulous wife exploits a morally inert insurance salesman in a scheme to murder her husband and collect his insurance. A

Eye of the Needle by Ken Follett*
British Intelligence must thwart Die Nadel, the only spy Hitler trusts, from reaching Hitler to tell about the 1944 invasion of France. As D-Day approaches, Faber, an aristocratic German spy known as “The Needle,” is aware of the the Allies’ top-secret intended place of attack, but is distracted by the affections of Lucy Rose, a lonely, strong-willed Englishwoman. B

The Testament by John Grisham*
Troy Phelan’s surprising last will and testament names a heretofore unknown beneficiary—a missionary living deep in the wilds of Brazil. Nate O’Riley, a lawyer fresh from his fourth stay in rehab, is sent to find her. Along the way, he learns about God, himself, and the perils of the jungle. A

Grind by Eric Walters*
Philip, obsessed with skateboarding, finds himself pushed to perform more and more dangerous stunts when he begins taping himself and posting the movies on a Website to make money. A

High Trail to Danger by Joan Nixon Lowry
In 1879 seventeen-year-old Sarah travels from Chicago to the violent town of Leadtown, Colorado, to locate her missing father, but she finds that the mention of his name brings her strange looks and an attempt on her life. A

Hound of the Baskervilles by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*
Doyle presents the classic mystery novel in which legendary detective Sherlock Holmes and his assistant Dr. Watson are called to investigate the case of a family in Devonshire living under the curse of a spectral hound. A

Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster by Jon Krakauer
The author relates his experience of climbing Mount Everest during its deadliest season and examines what it is about the mountain that makes people willingly subject themselves to such risk, hardship, and expense. B

A Judgement in Stone by Ruth Rendell
When a housekeeper carries out a modern “Valentine’s Day Massacre” on the family that employs her, Detective Chief Superintendent William Vetch investigates to uncover evidence of a personal tragedy that precipitated the crime. A

Murder on the Orient Express by Agatha Christie*
On a threeday journey through the snowbound Balkan hills, Hercule Poirot tracks down a murderer among a colorful and unusual assortment of passengers aboard the Orient Express, in a new deluxe trade paperback edition of one of Christie’s best known works. A

Prey by Michael Crichton*
Deep in the remote Nevada desert, eight people are trapped inside of the Xymos Corporation by a rapidly evolving swarm of predatory molecules that have massed together to form a powerful and intelligent organism that is targeting its creators. B

Reconstructing Amelia by Kimberley McCreight
Kate believes her daughter, 15-year-old Amelia, has committed suicide, jumping from the roof of her private school—until she receives an anonymous text saying simply, “Amelia didn’t jump.” Could she have been murdered? Kate, a successful attorney, is determined to find out even as she is haunted by the fear she has failed her daughter, too often putting her career ahead of her responsibilities as a mother. A
We Were Liars by E. Lockhart

Cadence Sinclair Easton comes from an old-money family, headed by a patriarch who owns a private island off of Cape Cod. Each summer, the extended family gathers at the various houses on the island, and Cadence, her cousins Johnny and Mirren, and friend Gat (the four “Liars”), have been inseparable since age eight. During their fifteenth summer however, Cadence suffers a mysterious accident. She spends the next two years—and the course of the book—in a haze of amnesia, debilitating migraines, and painkillers, trying to piece together just what happened.

MIRRORS AND WINDOWS: Exploring Cultures

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho
Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy, dreams of treasure in the Egyptian pyramids, so he embarks on a journey to follow his dream. Along the way, he encounters many intriguing characters who help him to discover the treasure within himself.

Almost a Woman by Esmeralda Santiago
Esmeralda Santiago discusses what it was like to grow up as a Puerto Rican teenager in New York and to go against the wishes of her over-protective mother and discover her true identity.

The Bite of the Mango by Mariatu Kamara and Susan McClelland
When Mariatu set out for a neighborhood village in Sierra Leone, she was kidnapped and tortured, and both of her hands cut off. She turned to begging to survive. This heart rending memoir is a testament to her courage and resilience. Today she is a UNICEF Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict.

Bread Givers by Anzia Yezierska
Sara Smolinsky, the youngest daughter of an Orthodox rabbi in 1920’s New York, rejects her father’s conception of Jewish womanhood and makes a stand for independence when she takes a job as an ironer and rents a room of her own.

Caucasia by Danzy Senna
Two sisters, one light-skinned like their mother, the other dark like their father, are separated after their parents divorce and go on to lead very different lives while hoping for a reunion with each other.

Cleopatra: A Life by Stacy Schiff
Her palace shimmered with onyx and gold but was richer still in political and personal intrigue. Above all else, Cleopatra was a shrewd strategist and an ingenious negotiator. She was married twice, each time to a brother. She waged a brutal civil war against the first and poisoned the second. She had children by Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, two of the most prominent Romans of the day. With Antony she would attempt to forge a new empire, in an alliance that spilled both their ends.

In the Time of the Butterflies by Julia Alvarez
This tale of courage and sisterhood is set in the Dominican Republic during the rise of the Trujillo dictatorship and is inspired by the true story of the three Mirabal sisters who, in 1960, were murdered for their part in an underground plot to overthrow the government.

The Kingdom of this World by Alejo Carpentier
Set in Haiti, this is a fictional account of the destruction of the black regime under King Henri-Christophe, who reigned over an orgy of voodoo.

Like Water for Chocolate by Laura Esquivel
Main character Tita is the youngest of three daughters born to Mama Elena. Tita falls in love with Pedro, but Mama Elena will not allow them to marry. Instead, Mama Elena orchestrates the marriage of Pedro and her eldest daughter Rosaura and forces Tita to prepare the wedding dinner.

The Line of the Sun by Judith Ortiz Cofer
The niece of a black-sheep uncle tells of his life and adventures from a single Puerto Rican village to a tough immigrant community in New Jersey.

Memoirs of a Geisha by Arthur Golden
Nitta Sayuri, a young Japanese woman who was taken from her home at the age of nine and sold into slavery as a geisha, discovers a rare opportunity for freedom when the outbreak of World War II forces an end to the only life she has ever known.

Mexican White Boy by Matt de la Pena
Biracial Danny Lopez doesn’t think he fits in anywhere. He feels like an outsider. He also struggles with his obsession for baseball. With the support of a new friend and his caring cousins, Danny begins to deal with the multitude of problems in his life.

Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha by Roddy Doyle
It is 1968 and a ten-year-old boy growing up in Dublin faces the triumphs, indignities, warmth, and cruelty of his world, and tries to make sense of it all.
A Pale View of the Hills by Kazuo Ishiguro

Etsuko, a Japanese woman living alone in England, contemplates the recent suicide of her eldest daughter, mingling the tragedy with memories of the devastation of Japan during World War II and the calamities of her own life. C

The Second Life of Samuel Tyne by Esi Edugyan

Samuel Tyne quits his dead-end job as a government employee to move his family to his uncle's crumbling mansion in a small Canadian town, where he hopes to reclaim a communal, idyllic way of life, but instead finds himself and his family facing racism and ridicule. B

Snow Flower and The Secret Fan by Lisa See*

See's engrossing novel set in remote 19th-century China details the deeply affecting story of lifelong, intimate friends Lily and Snow Flower, their imprisonment by rigid codes of conduct for women and their betrayal by pride and love. B

Spring Snow: the sea of fertility, a cycle of four novels by Yukio Mishima

English translation of a Japanese novel tells the story of Kiyoaki Matsugae who comes of age in Tokyo in 1912, a time when the world of the ancient aristocracy is beginning to give way to outsiders. B

The Tiger's Wife by Tea Obreht

In a Balkan country mending from war, Natalia, a young doctor, is compelled to unravel the mysterious circumstances surrounding her beloved grandfather's recent death. Searching for clues, she turns to his own copy of The Jungle Book and the stories he told her of his encounters over the years with "the deathless man." But most extraordinary of all is the story her grandfather never told her—the legend of the tiger's wife. C

OUT OF THIS WORLD: Science Fiction and Fantasy

Childhood's End by Arthur C. Clarke

When the Overlords first came to Earth, they brought peace and prosperity with them, but it soon became apparent that their purpose was the elimination of the human race. B

Clovermead by David Randall

Clovermead, twelve-year-old tomboy, learns that her father has been lying about the past and that the truth may be the key to ending the epic battle raging between the followers of Lord Ursus and those of Lady Moon. A

Dawn by Octavia Butler

In a world devastated by nuclear war with humanity on the edge of extinction, aliens finally make contact. They rescue those humans they can, keeping most survivors in suspended animation while the aliens begin the slow process of rehabilitating the planet. A stunning story of invasion and alien contact by one of science fiction's finest writers. A

Dune by Frank Herbert

The story of a young prince, Paul Atreides, scion of a star-crossed dynasty, and of his journey from boy to warrior to ruler of a dying planet destined to become a paradise regained. B

Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card*

Ender, who is the result of genetic experimentation, may be the military genius Earth needs in its war against an alien enemy. A

Fantastic Voyage by Isaac Asimov*

Through the process of miniaturization, five people enter a tiny submarine and are injected into a man's circulatory system where they try to destroy a blood clot located in his brain. A

Fire Rose by Mercedes Lackey

Medieval scholar Rosalind Hawkins, left destitute when her family fortune disappears, accepts a position as governess in a house where there are no children, one servant, and a seemingly invisible employer. A

The Golden Compass (a.k.a. The Northern Lights in the U.K.) by Philip Pullman or the others in the trilogy (The Subtle Knife, The Amber Spyglass)

Accompanied by her daemon, Lyra Belacqua sets out to prevent her best friend and other kidnapped children from becoming the subject of gruesome experiments in the Far North. A

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams*

Douglas Adams's hapless hero Arthur Dent travels the galaxy with his intrepid pal Ford Prefect, getting into horrible messes and generally wreaking hilarious havoc. Dent is grabbed from Earth moments before a cosmic construction team obliterates the planet to build a freeway. A

The House of the Scorpion by Nancy Farmer

In a future where humans despise clones, Matt enjoys special status as the young clone of El Patron, the 142-year-old leader of a corrupt drug empire nestled between Mexico and the United States. A
The Illustrated Man by Ray Bradbury

Interview with the Vampire by Anne Rice
Having suffered a tremendous personal loss, an 18th-century Louisiana plantation owner named Louis Pointe du Lac descends into an alcoholic stupor. At his emotional nadir, he is confronted by Lestat, a charismatic and powerful vampire who chooses Louis to be his fledgling. The two prey on innocents, give their "dark gift" to a young girl, and seek out others of their kind (notably the ancient vampire Armand) in Paris. A

The Invisible Man by H.G. Wells
The tale of a scientist who discovers how to make his body become invisible, but, when he can't make himself visible again, becomes violently insane. B

Journey to the Center of the Earth by Jules Verne
Three men dare to adventure into a subterranean world full of danger and beauty. They discover many unusual things on their trip to the Earth's mysterious core. A

Little Brother by Cory Doctorow
While skipping school, Markus is caught near the site of a terrorist attack on San Francisco and held by the Department of Homeland Security for six days of intensive interrogation. After his release, he vows to use his skills to fight back against an increasingly frightening system of surveillance. A

The Long Patrol by Brian Jacques
Tammo, a daring young hare hungry for adventure, is sent with Russa Nodrey, the wandering red squirrel, to join the Long Patrol and defend Salamandastron against the Rapscallion horde. [Follett] One of the Redwall series of books. B

The Magicians by Lev Grossman
Quentin Coldwater lives in a state of perpetual melancholy, privately obsessed with his childhood books about the enchanted land of Fillory. When he's admitted to the surreptitious Brakebills Academy for an education in magic, Quentin finds mastering spells is tedious (and love is even more fraught). He also discovers his power has thrilling potential--though it's unclear what he should do with it once he's moved with his new magician cohorts to New York City. Then they discover the magical land of Fillory is real and launch an expedition to use their powers to set things right in the kingdom--which, naturally, turns out to be a much murkier proposition than expected. B

The Man in the High Castle by Philip K. Dick*
An alternative history in which Germany and Japan jointly occupy the defeated United States twenty years after World War II. B

Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children by Ransom Riggs
A horrific family tragedy sends sixteen-year-old Jacob journeying to a remote island off the coast of Wales, where he discovers the crumbling ruins of an old orphanage that was home to children who were more than just peculiar, but possibly dangerous--and who may still be alive. A

Mists of Avalon by Marion Zimmer Bradley
When Morgan le Fay has to sacrifice her virginity during fertility rites, the man who impregnates her is her younger brother Arthur, whom she turns against when she thinks he has betrayed the old religion of Avalon. C

Rhapsody: Child of Blood by Elizabeth Haydon*
Rhapsody, a singer of some talent who is on the run from a persistent old romantic interest, literally bumps into a couple of shady characters who not only come to her rescue, but who drag her along on a life-changing epic adventure. B

Shipbreaker by Paolo Bacigalupi
Nailer works light crew; his dirty, dangerous job is to crawl deep into the wrecks of the ancient oil tankers that line the beach, scavenging copper wire and turning it over to his crew boss. After a brutal hurricane passes over, Nailer and his friend Pima stumble upon the wreck of a luxurious clipper ship. It's filled with valuable goods—a "Lucky Strike" that could make them rich, if only they can find a safe way to cash it in. A

Snow Child by Eowyn Ivey
A childless couple working a farm in the brutal landscape of 1920 Alaska discover a little girl living in the wilderness, with a red fox as a companion, and begin to love the strange, almost-supernatural child as their own. B

Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel
A flight from Russia lands in middle America, its passengers carrying a virus that explodes "like a neutron bomb over the surface of the earth." In a blink, the world as we know it collapses. "No more ballgames played under floodlights," Emily St. John Mandel writes in this smart and sober homage to life's smaller pleasures, brutally erased by an apocalypse. "No more trains running under the surface of cities ... No more cities ... No more Internet ... No more avatars." Survivors become scavengers, roaming the ravaged landscape or clustering in pocket settlements, some of them welcoming, some dangerous. B
Timeline by Michael Crichton*
When a group of scientists learns how to travel through time, they enter life in fourteenth-century feudal France and threaten the history of the world. A

The Third Witch by Rebecca Reisart
Though she is considered a witch, Gilly is also just a young woman driven by ordinary but powerful emotions. Her goal is Macbeth's destruction, and the action relates closely to Shakespeare's play, offering considerable tension and suspense for those who know that story. B

The Wanting Seed by Anthony Burgess
Anthony Burgess turns the typical dystopian novel on its ear. Instead of a methodical, technorganic world, Mr. Burgess presents a smelly, macrobiotic mess of overpopulation and disharmony. Instead of a grim, foreboding atmosphere, Mr. Burgess employs a lighthearted, quirky tone, allowing readers to smirk at the ridiculousness and incongruity to which the world of the Wanting Seed has been driven. B

Watership Down by Richard Adams
In a constant struggle against oppression, a group of rabbits searches for peaceful co-existence. The major battles are fought against the dictator rabbit General Woundwort and his secret police. A

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The Wizard of Earthsea by Ursula LeGuin
A boy grows to manhood while attempting to subdue the evil he unleashed on the world as an apprentice to the master wizard. B

Woman on the Edge of Time by Marge Piercy
With honest and compelling prose, Marge Piercy delves into the mind of thirty-seven-year-old Consuelo (Connie) Ramos, a woman who exists on the fringes of life in contemporary New York City. The novel shifts between the horrible conditions in psychiatric wards and the year 2137, as Connie at first talks to, then time travels with Luciente, a person from that future time. B

POT LUCK: Good Reads

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay by Michael Chabon
In 1939 New York City, Joe Kavalier, a refugee from Hitler's Prague, joins forces with his Brooklyn-born cousin, Sammy Clay, to create comic-book super heroes inspired by their own fantasies, fears, and dreams. C

The Art of Racing in the Rain by Garth Stein
Enzo is a lab terrier mix plucked from a farm outside Seattle to ride shotgun with race car driver Denny Swift as he pursues success on the track and off. Denny meets and marries Eve, has a daughter, Zoë, and risks his savings and his life to make it on the professional racing circuit. Enzo, frustrated by his inability to speak and his lack of opposable thumbs, watches Denny's old racing videos, coins koanlike aphorisms that apply to both driving and life, and hopes for the day when his life as a dog will be over and he can be reborn a man. When Denny hits an extended rough patch, Enzo remains his most steadfast if silent supporter. A

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak
Death himself narrates this World War II-era story of Liesel Meminger who is taken, at age nine, to live in Molching, Germany, with a foster family in a working-class neighborhood. Liesel steals a book—although she has not yet learned how to read—and her foster father uses it to lull her to sleep. As Liesel collects more stolen books, she also gains a peculiar set of friends. A

The Confessions of Max Tivoli by Andrew Sean Greer
Max, born with the body of a very old man, finds his physical body growing younger as his mind grows older, giving him multiple chances to win the heart of Alice, the neighbor girl he fell in love with as a child, and who fails to recognize him as they meet again and again throughout their lives. B

The Dante Club by Matthew Pearl
The title refers to an actual group of 19th-century Bostonians who gathered to translate Dante's Inferno for an American audience. While poring over the poem, the men find themselves on the trail of a serial killer who tortures his victims in ways that seem to be taken straight out of the pages of Inferno. B

The Death of Bees by Lisa O'Donnell
Trying to keep the death of their parents a secret, Marnie and her little sister Nelly are on their own until several residents in Glasgow's Hazelhurst housing estate suspect that something is not right. B

The Diagnosis by Alan Lightman
Lightman's novel perfectly captures the frenzy of our electronic era in this breakneck tale of one man's short-circuiting under the relentless pace and pressure of life in the age of information overload. Always on the phone, compulsively checking his watch, and frantically responding to e-mails, Bill Chalmers runs himself ragged until, suddenly, he snaps. A
Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant by Anne Tyler  
Pearl Tull's children return to their home to watch their mother die, and while they are there, they are forced to deal with the issues they have with their mother before it is too late. A

Finding Nouf by Zoe Ferraris  
When sixteen-year-old Nouf goes missing and is found drowned in the desert outside Jeddah, Nayir—a desert guide hired by her prominent family to search for her—feels compelled to find out what really happened. B

Go Set a Watchman by Harper Lee (to be published in July 2015)  
Originally written in the mid-1950s, Go Set a Watchman was the novel Harper Lee first submitted to her publishers before To Kill a Mockingbird. Assumed to have been lost, the manuscript was discovered in late 2014. Go Set a Watchman features many of the characters from To Kill a Mockingbird some twenty years later. Returning home to Maycomb to visit her father, Jean Louise Finch—Scout—struggles with issues both personal and political, involving Atticus, society, and the small Alabama town that shaped her. B

High Fidelity by Nick Hornby  
The book dramatizes the romantic struggle of Rob Fleming, owner of a vintage record store in London. After his girlfriend Laura leaves him for another man, he realizes that he pines for the type of serious relationship he once criticized. He takes comfort in the company of the clerks at the store, whose bantering includes compilations of top-five lists. A

Kafka on the Shore by Haruki Murakami  
Fifteen-year-old Kafka Tamura runs away from home, both to escape his father's oedipal prophecy and to find his long-lost mother and sister. As Kafka flees, so too does Nakata, an elderly simplicity whose quiet life has been upset by a gruesome murder. What follows is a kind of double odyssey, as Kafka and Nakata are drawn inexorably along their separate but somehow linked paths, groping to understand the roles fate has in store for them. B

The Language of Flowers by Vanessa Diffenbaugh  
The Victorian language of flowers was used to convey romantic expressions: honeysuckle for devotion, asters for patience, and red roses for love. But for Victoria Jones, it's been more useful in communicating mistrust and solitude. After a childhood spent in the foster-care system, she is unable to get close to anybody, and her only connection to the world is through flowers and their meanings. Now eighteen and emancipated from the system with nowhere to go, Victoria realizes she has a gift for helping others through the flowers she chooses for them. A

The Light Between Oceans by M. L. Stedman  
A boat washes up on the shore of a remote lighthouse keeper's island. It holds a dead man and a crying baby. The only two islanders, Tom and his wife Izzy, are about to make a devastating decision. They break the rules and follow their hearts. B

The Memory Keeper's Daughter by Kim Edwards  
When Norah Henry goes into labor, her husband, orthopedic surgeon Dr. David Henry, must deliver their twins himself, aided only by a nurse. When the boy and girl are born, David notices his daughter has Down syndrome. He instructs the nurse to take her to a home and later tells Norah, who was drugged during labor, that their daughter died at birth. David's deception becomes the defining moment of the main characters' lives. A

The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chboski  
A coming of age novel about Charlie, a freshman in high school who is a wallflower, shy and introspective, and very intelligent. He deals with the usual teen problems, but also with the suicide of his best friend. A

The Red Tent by Anita Diamant  
This novel, inspired by biblical tales, re-creates the life of Dinah, daughter of Leah and Jacob, from her birth and happy childhood in Mesopotamia through her years in Canaan and death in Egypt. B

Rule of the Bone by Russell Banks  
The story of a troubled fourteen-year-old boy who, upon leaving an abusive home life, lives on the edge of society, struggling to find himself. B

The Saint of Lost Things by Christopher Castellani*  
In a 1953 Italian neighborhood in Delaware, Maddalena Grasso, her husband Antonio, and Giulio Fabbri live in the shadows of St. Anthony's Church, where their prayers are heard and fate and circumstances intervene to answer them in unforeseeable ways. B

The Sea of Tranquility by Katja Millay  
Teenage former piano prodigy Nastya Kashnikov and Josh Bennett, a lonely boy at her school, enter into an intense relationship, with neither unaware of the dark secrets the other's past holds. B

She's Come Undone by Wally Lamb*  
A series of tragedies, including the death of her baby brother, her parent's divorce, her mother's nervous breakdown, and her own rape at the age of thirteen, leaves Dolores Price wounded both mentally and physically, but she miraculously finds the strength to give herself one more chance at life and love. B
The Silver Linings Playbook by Matthew Quick
Pat Peoples formulates a theory about silver linings: he believes his life is a movie produced by God, his mission is to become physically fit and emotionally supportive, and his happy ending will be the return of his estranged wife, Nikki. When Pat goes to live with his parents, everything seems changed: no one will talk to him about Nikki; his old friends are saddled with families; the Philadelphia Eagles keep losing. When Pat meets the tragically widowed and clinically depressed Tiffany, she offers to act as a liaison between him and his wife, if only he will give up watching football, agree to perform in this year’s Dance Away Depression competition, and promise not to tell anyone about their “contract.” All the while, Pat keeps searching for his silver lining.

Sisterland by Curtis Sittenfeld
Twin sisters Kate Tucker and Violet Schramm are at the heart of Sittenfeld’s (American Wife, 2008) latest novel, which opens with a modest earthquake striking St. Louis. In the aftermath, Violet goes on television predicting that a much larger quake will hit the area, much to her sister’s horror. Kate has spent her life trying to shove aside the psychic abilities she and her sister share, choosing the safe confines of marriage and motherhood over nurturing her gifts the way Violet has.

The Story of Beautiful Girl by Rachel Simon
It is 1968. Lynnie, a young white woman with a developmental disability, and Homan, an African American deaf man, are locked away in an institution, the School for the Incurable and Feebleminded, and have been left to languish, forgotten. Deeply in love, they escape, and find refuge in the farmhouse of Martha, a retired schoolteacher and widow. But the couple is not alone—Lynnie has just given birth to a baby girl. When the authorities catch up to them that same night, Homan escapes into the darkness, and Lynnie is caught. But before she is forced back into the institution, she whispers two words to Martha: “Hide her.” And so begins the 40-year epic journey of Lynnie, Homan, Martha, and baby Julia—lives divided by seemingly insurmountable obstacles, yet drawn together by a secret pact and extraordinary love.

The Story of Edgar Sawtelle by David Wroblewski
Born mute, speaking only in sign, Edgar Sawtelle leads an idyllic life with his parents on their farm in remote northern Wisconsin. But with the unexpected return of Claude, Edgar’s paternal uncle, turmoil consumes the Sawtelles’ once peaceful home. When Edgar’s father dies suddenly, Claude insinuates himself into the life of the farm. Edgar tries to prove Claude played a role in his father’s death, but his plan backfires—spectacularly.

Sula by Toni Morrison
Traces the lives of two black heroines from their growing up together in a small Ohio town, to their sharply divergent paths of womanhood, to their ultimate confrontation and reconciliation.

Vanishing Act by Jodi Picoult
Working with the Search and Rescue bloodhound team to find missing people, single mother Delia Hopkins anticipates her upcoming nuptials, until a series of unsettling flashbacks threatens to devastate her life and the lives of those she loves.

Water for Elephants by Sara Gruen
The novel, told in flashback by Jacob Jankowski, recounts the wild and wonderful period he spent with the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth, a traveling circus he joined during the Great Depression. He cares for a menagerie of exotic creatures and also falls in love with Marlena, one of the show’s star performers.

POWER TRIPS: Politics

All the King’s Men by Robert Penn Warren
Jack Burden, a young journalist, becomes involved with Willie Stark’s quest for power while serving as a Southern governor.

Down and Out in the Great Depression: Letters from the Forgotten Man—edited by Robert S. McElvaine
A collection of letters by the ordinary men, women, and children who suffered through the Great Depression.

The Gospel According to Larry by Janet Tashjian
17-year-old Josh wants to save the world and win the love of his girlfriend. Self-deprecating humorous tone tackles some sophisticated issues, including materialism and activism.

How We Got There: The 70s: The Decade That Brought You Modern Life by David Frum
Frum examines the political events, popular opinion polls, films, music, and advertising of the 1970s that brought extreme changes to popular American culture.

Jailbird by Kurt Vonnegut
Walter Starbuck reflects on various aspects of American life as he has seen it during his sixty-six years.

Jihad vs. McWorld by Benjamin Barber
A study of how democracy is suffering from the forces of consumerist capitalism, which has broken down the borders between countries, creating a global village of communications, information, entertainment, and commerce; and religious and tribal fundamentalism, which is splintering the world into small, intolerant factions.
Rainbow 6 by Tom Clancy
In a novel of military intrigue, formidable ex-Navy SEAL John Clark takes on a world-threatening band of terrorists. B

Whiteness Visible: The Meaning of Whiteness in American Literature and Culture by Valerie Babb
Babb investigates the history, values, rituals, and shared consciousness that created whiteness in the United States. Babb surveys early American writings and material culture, 19th-century literature, and early 20th-century cultural creations. She claims we can only understand the full significance of race, when we understand how the concept of "whiteness" was created in a cultural context. B

REAL LIVES/REAL PEOPLE: Biographies, Autobiographies and Memoirs

All Souls: a Family Story from Southie by Michael Patrick MacDonald
MacDonald describes how his family survived the daily violence they encountered while living in South Boston during the 1970's busing controversy and streets crowded with Whitey Bulger's gangs. The author lost 4 of 8 siblings to violence. A

Autobiography of a Face by Lucy Grealy
A memoir in which award-winning poet Lucy Grealy recalls her experiences with a potentially terminal cancer that required she have a third of her jaw removed when she was nine years old, and discusses the suffering she endured as she was growing up from classmates, strangers, and other people because of her looks. A

Bone by Fae Myenne Ng
This novel describes the hopes, grief, and quarrels of two generations of Chinese Americans in San Francisco's Chinatown. Mah, who has worked hard all her life in garment sweatshops, finally is able to own her baby-clothing store. Her husband, Leon, who used to be a merchant seaman, worked two shifts in ships' laundry rooms to provide for his family. Nevertheless, the family is torn apart over their daughters' choices and decisions. B

Boston Boy by Nat Hentoff
Elocutive memoir of growing up Jewish in the Boston of the 1930s and '40s. A

Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson
In vivid poems that reflect the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, an award-winning author shares what it was like to grow up in the 1960s and 1970s in both the North and the South. A

The Circuit : Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child by Francisco Jimenez
Explores a migrant family's experiences moving through labor camps, facing poverty and impermanence, and discusses how they endure through faith, hope, and back-breaking work. B

The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to his White Mother by James McBride
An African-American male tells of his mother, a white woman, who refused to admit her true identity. B

Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race & Inheritance by Barack Obama
This memoir is not about his father's life, but about Obama's, and he brings that home with an intimate tone. (His 2004 Democratic Convention keynote address is included at the end.) Throughout the book, the then U.S. Senator looks at race from the point of view of someone who has seen and been part of a variety of cultures, and he explains how his perspective shaped his views. B

Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim by David Sedaris
These 27 essays (many previously published in Esquire, G.Q. or the New Yorker, or broadcast on PRI's This American Life) include his best and funniest writing yet about the exploits of his family in all its odd glory. A

Eleni by Nicholas Gage
In 1948, as civil war ravaged Greece, children were abducted and sent to communist "camps" inside the Iron Curtain. Eleni Gatzoyiannis, forty-one, defied the traditions of her small village and the terror of the communist insurgents to arrange for the escape of her three daughters and her son, Nicola. For that act, she was imprisoned, tortured, and executed in cold blood. B

The First Elizabeth by Carolly Erickson
A biography of Queen Elizabeth I, who withstood intense pressure to marry, survived two decades of aggression from the Catholic Mary Stuart, and stood fast against the Invincible Armada sent to destroy her. B

The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls
Walls chronicles her upbringing at the hands of eccentric, nomadic parents who uprooted their kids time and again. Walls, her brother, and two sisters were left largely to their own devices; she describes in fascinating detail what it was to be a child in this family. A

Getting Away With Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case by Phyllis Fogelman
Presents a true account of the murder of fourteen-year-old, Emmett Till, in Mississippi, in 1955. A
A Hope in the Unseen: an American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League by Ron Susskind
Follows gifted African-American student Cedric Jennings from his crime-infested high school in Washington D.C. to his junior year at Brown University, discussing the problems he encountered along the road out of the ghetto. B

Hunger of Memory: the Education of Richard Rodriguez by Richard Rodriguez
The author, a disadvantaged Mexican American, writes of feelings of alienation from his family as he learned English and earned a Ph.D. B

I am Malala by Malala Yousafzai
Describes the life of a young Pakistani student who advocated for women's rights and education in the Taliban-controlled Swat Valley who survived an assassination attempt and became the youngest nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize. [A]

The Liars' Club: A Memoir by Mary Karr
Mary Karr, a prize-winning poet and critic, looks back at her upbringing in a swampy East Texas refinery town with a volatile, defiantly loving family. B

The Other Wes Moore by Wes Moore
Two kids named Wes Moore were born blocks apart within a year of each other. Both grew up fatherless in similar Baltimore neighborhoods and had difficult childhoods; both hung out on street corners with their crews; both ran into trouble with the police. How, then, did one grow up to be a Rhodes Scholar, decorated veteran, White House Fellow, and business leader, while the other ended up a convicted murderer serving a life sentence? A

The author presents a memoir of her life in post-revolutionary Iran, focusing on her organization of a group of young women in 1997 who met secretly once a week to read and discuss forbidden works of Western literature. C

The Road from Coorain by Jill Ker Conway
The memoirs of Jill Conway and her journey into adulthood from a 30,000 acre sheep ranch in Coorain, Australia, to America where she became the first woman president of Smith College. B

The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace by Jeff Hobbs
Rob was a popular, straight-A student who played on the water polo team (his mother scraped up enough money to send him to parochial school), and upon graduating he was rewarded with a scholarship to Yale. Although he continued to thrive academically in college, growing up in the second largest concentration of African-Americans living under the poverty line created barriers that even one as gifted as Robert Peace could not fully surmount. A

The Souls of Black Folk by W.E.B. Du Bois
This book's largely autobiographical chapters take the reader through the momentous and moody maze of Afro-American life after the Emancipation Proclamation: from poverty, the neoslavery of the sharecropper, illiteracy, miseducation, and lynching, to the heights of humanity reached by the spiritual "sorrow songs" that birthed gospel and the blues. B

Steve Jobs by Walter Isaacson
Based on more than forty interviews with Jobs conducted over two years—as well as interviews with more than a hundred family members, friends, adversaries, competitors, and colleagues—Walter Isaacson has written a riveting story of the roller-coaster life and searingly intense personality of a creative entrepreneur whose passion for perfection and ferocious drive revolutionized six industries: personal computers, animated movies, music, phones, tablet computing, and digital publishing. C

Travels with Charley by John Steinbeck
Contains observations about life and descriptions of nature as described by Steinbeck as he traveled from coast to coast at sixty years of age with his French poodle, Charley. A

Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand*
On a May afternoon in 1943, an Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean and disappeared, leaving only a spray of debris and a slick of oil, gasoline, and blood. Then, on the ocean surface, a face appeared. It was that of a young lieutenant, the plane's bombardier, who was struggling to a life raft and pulling himself aboard. So began one of the most extraordinary odysseys of the Second World War. B

Up From Slavery by Booker T. Washington
An autobiography in which Booker T. Washington, the son of a slave woman and a white man, discusses how he rose from slavery to become one of the most influential African-American leaders in the U.S., and founder of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. C

A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail by Bill Bryson*
Bryson share his experiences hiking the Appalachian Trail with a childhood friend. The two encounter eccentric characters, a blizzard, getting lost, and rude yuppies along the way. A powerful voice for the environment told with a great deal of humor. A

Yell-Oh Girls by Vickie Nam
Emerging voices explore culture, identity, and growing up Asian American. Addresses a variety of issues Asian American girls face in today's modern culture. B
TRANSCENDS TIME: Classics

Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy*
In nineteenth-century Russia, the wife of an important government official loses her family and social status when she chooses the love of Count Vronsky over a passionless marriage. C

Brothers Karamazov by Fyodor Dostoyevsky*
Four sons of Fyodor Karamazov, a man of immoral character, must contend with a criminal investigation and with their own inner questions about justice and the existence of God after they are involved in their father’s murder. C

Emma by Jane Austen*
The story revolves around a comedy of errors: Emma Woodhouse befriends Harriet Smith, a young woman of unknown parentage, and attempts to remake her in her own image. As Emma’s fantastically misguided schemes threaten to surge out of control, the voice of reason is provided by Mr. Knightly, the Woodhouse’s longtime friend and neighbor. B

House of Mirth by Edith Wharton*
Lily Bart, an orphaned child of a New York merchant, calmly prepares a campaign to marry for the power and luxury that money brings. B

If Beale Street Could Talk by James Baldwin
Tish and Fonny have pledged to get married, but Fonny is falsely accused of a terrible crime and imprisoned. Their families set out to clear his name, and as they face an uncertain future, the young lovers experience a kaleidoscope of emotions—affection, despair, and hope. In a love story that evokes the blues, where passion and sadness are inevitably intertwined, Baldwin has created two characters so alive and profoundly realized that they are unforgettable ingrained in the American psyche. B

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte
In early nineteenth-century England, an orphaned young woman accepts employment as a governess and soon finds herself in love with her employer who has a terrible secret. B

Middlemarch by George Eliot
Dorothea Brooke, a young woman of impeccable character, marries the embittered Mr. Casaubon, who almost immediately dies. Eliot takes the reader through a labyrinth of nineteenth-century morals and conventions as Dorothea searches for fulfillment and happiness. C

Moby Dick by Herman Melville
Mad Captain Ahab’s quest for the White Whale is a timeless epic—a stirring tragedy of vengeance and obsession, a searing parable about humanity lost in a universe of moral ambiguity. It is the greatest sea story ever told. C

Native Son by Richard Wright
Right from the start, 20-year-old Bigger Thomas had been headed for jail. Frustrated by racism and the limited opportunities for black men, Bigger strikes out in a futile attempt to overcome the limits of his position. Native Son tells the story of this young black man caught in a downward spiral after he kills a young white woman in a brief moment of panic. Yet the act of murder gives his life meaning, and the consequent trial is incidental. Set in Chicago in the 1930s, Wright's powerful novel is an honest reflection on the poverty and feelings of hopelessness experienced by people in inner cities across the country and of what it means to be black in America. C

The Once and Future King by T.H. White
Tells the story of the youth and reign of King Arthur, the establishment of the Round Table, and the search for the Holy Grail. B

Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe
During one of his several adventurous voyages in the 1600s, an Englishman becomes the sole survivor of a shipwreck and lives for nearly thirty years on a deserted island. B

Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens*
1859 historical novel set in Paris and London during the French Revolution, in which a French nobleman, Charles Darnay, renounces his position and leaves his country, then returns during the Terror to save the life of a servant, putting himself in grave danger. B

Tess of the D’Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy*
The son in the family for which Tess Durbeyfield works assaults her, and she has a child who dies in infancy, but her husband is unforgiving. Set in 19th century England. C

This Side of Paradise by F. Scott Fitzgerald
The coming of age story of Amory Blaine, a young college man in his twenties, including his years in prep school and his times at Princeton. B
Winesburg, Ohio by Sherwood Anderson
A collection of interrelated stories in which George Willard, a young newspaper reporter, comments on the hopes, dreams, and fears of the residents of the small town of Winesburg, Ohio. B

Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte
When Mr. Lockwood has an encounter with the spirit of Catherine Linton at the home of the unsociable Heathcliff, he hears the story of the tempestuous love affair between Catherine and Heathcliff. B

TRUE STORIES: Nonfiction
Alive by Piers Paul Read
Discusses the ordeal of the Brazilian soccer team, survivors of an airplane crash in 1972, as they spend months in the Andes wilderness and eventually resort to cannibalism. B

Behind the Beautiful Forevers by Katherine Boo
Profiles everyday life in the settlement of Annawadi as experienced by a Muslim teen, an ambitious rural mother, and a young scrap metal thief, illuminating how their efforts to build better lives are challenged by religious, caste, and economic tensions. B

Bomb: the Race to Build and Steal the World's Most Dangerous Weapon by Steve Sheinkin
Recounts the scientific discoveries that enabled atom splitting, the military intelligence operations that occurred in rival countries, and the work of brilliant scientists hidden at Los Alamos. B

Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown
The improbable, intimate account of how nine working-class boys from the American West showed the world at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin what true grit really meant. A

Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families by J. Anthony Lucas
Describes events in the lives of three families during the 1968 Boston school integration crisis. B

Consumed by Benjamin Barber
Barber proves his theory that the market imperative has conditioned us to lap up the easy offerings and reject hard, complicated works. This lifelong study of the effects of capitalism and privatization reveals a pervasiveness of branding and homogenization from which there is seemingly no turning back. C

A Death in Belmont by Sebastian Junger*
From the acclaimed author of A Perfect Storm comes a powerful chronicle of three lives that collide in the vortex of one of America's most controversial serial murder cases (The Boston Strangler). A

The Devil in the White City by Erik Larson*
Not long after Jack the Ripper haunted the ill-lit streets of 1888 London, H.H. Holmes (born Herman Webster Mudgett) killed somewhere between 27 and 200 people, mostly single young women, in the churning new metropolis of Chicago; many of the murders occurred during (and exploited) the city’s finest moment, the World’s Fair of 1893. Larson's breathtaking new history is a novelistic yet wholly factual account of the fair and the mass murderer who lurked within it. B

Fast Food Nation: the Dark Side of the All-American Meal by Eric Schlosser
Traces the history of the fast food industry and discusses how it arose in postwar America. B

Freakonomics by Steven Levitt
Which is more dangerous, a gun or a swimming pool? What do schoolteachers and sumo wrestlers have in common? Why do drug dealers still live with their moms? How much do parents really matter? What kind of impact did Roe v. Wade have on violent crime? Steven D. Levitt is not a typical economist. He is a much heralded scholar who studies the stuff and riddles of everyday life whose conclusions regularly turn the conventional wisdom on its head. B

The Hot Zone by Richard Preston
 Tells the dramatic story of U.S. Army scientists and soldiers who worked to stop the outbreak of a deadly and extremely contagious virus in 1989. B
If I Die in a Combat Zone by Tim O'Brien
O'Brien's searing memoir of his years as a soldier in Vietnam takes readers with him through the ghostly ambiguities of manhood and morality in a war gone terribly wrong. B

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot
Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor Southern tobacco farmer who worked the same land as her slave ancestors, yet her cells—taken without her knowledge—became one of the most important tools in medicine. The first "immortal" human cells grown in culture, they are still alive today, though she has been dead for more than sixty years. HeLa cells were vital for developing the polio vaccine; uncovered secrets of cancer, viruses, and the atom bomb's effects; helped lead to important advances like in vitro fertilization, cloning, and gene mapping; and have been bought and sold by the billions. Yet Henrietta Lacks remains virtually unknown, buried in an unmarked grave. B

In the Heart of the Sea: the Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex by Nathaniel Philbrick*
Tells the story of the Essex, a whaleship that set sail from Nantucket in 1819 on a routine voyage, and was rammed and sunk by an enraged sperm whale in the South Pacific, setting the twenty-man crew adrift in three tiny boats. Note: contains cannibalism. C

Mountains Beyond Mountains by Tracy Kidder*
Kidder profiles Dr. Paul Farmer, a Harvard professor, renowned infectious-disease specialist, anthropologist, the recipient of a MacArthur "genius" grant, and world-class Robin Hood. Farmer was brought up in a bus and on a boat, and in medical school found his life's calling: to diagnose and cure infectious diseases and to bring the lifesaving tools of modern medicine to those who need them most. B

Nickel and Dimed: On (not) Getting by in America by Barbara Ehrenreich*
Ehrenreich relates her experiences from 1998 to 2000, during which time joined the ranks of the working poor as a waitress, hotel housekeeper, cleaning woman, nursing home aide, and Wal-Mart clerk to see for herself how America's "unskilled" workers are able to survive on only $6 or $7 an hour. B

Our Posthuman Future by Francis Fukuyama
A prominent thinker explores the issue of genetic engineering and the drive to make ourselves 'perfect' in a readable, thought-provoking way. B

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 high-achievers 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. B

The Right Stuff by Tom Wolfe
Dramatizes the experiences of the 1950s test pilots and "Mercury 7" astronauts, including Chuck Yeager, John Glenn, and Alan Shepard, who built America's manned space program. B

The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid in America by Jonathan Kozol*
"The nation needs to be confronted with the crime that we're committing and the promises we are betraying. This is a book about betrayal of the young, who have no power to defend themselves. It is not intended to make readers comfortable." Virtual apartheid is a fact of life in almost every urban school in America. B

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures by Anne Fadiman
Examines cultural issues in the American health care system through the case of Lia, a Hmong-American girl suffering from epilepsy whose treatment by doctors in California conflicted with the traditional healing beliefs held by her family. B

Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the opening of the American West by Stephen Ambrose
Chronicles the experiences of Meriwether Lewis, the man chosen by President Jefferson to lead a voyage from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean, discusses the experiences of those who took part in the expedition, and tells of the leading political, scientific, and military figures involved in the mapping of the American West. C

The Wright Sister: Katherine Wright and Her Famous Brothers by Richard Maurer
Presents a brief biography of the sister of Orville and Wilbur Wright. A

Zeitoun by Dave Eggers
The true story of one family, caught between America's two biggest policy disasters: the war on terror and the response to Hurricane Katrina. Abdulrahman and Kathy Zeitoun run a house-painting business in New Orleans. In August of 2005, as Hurricane Katrina approaches, Kathy evacuates with their four young children, leaving Zeitoun to watch over the business. In the days following the storm he travels the city by canoe, feeding abandoned animals and helping elderly neighbors. Then, on September 6th, police officers armed with M-16s arrest Zeitoun in his home. B