



Dear VMS Students and Parents,

Reading is a cornerstone of education and we hope to cultivate a love of books in all Vail Mountain School students. In support of this goal, each division has created a summer reading program that is age-appropriate and designed to appeal to a wide variety of interests.

Information about each division's summer reading program can be found in the attached PDF, which can also be accessed by going to the BTS 2021 on our new website which will launch in July. We ask that you please read over the sections relevant to your child and help support them in accomplishing the outlined goals.

Happy reading and enjoy the summer break!

**Kristin Douthitt**  
Lower School Division Director

**Trevor Adams**  
Middle School Division Director

**Maggie Pavlik**  
Upper School Division Director



## LOWER SCHOOL SUMMER READING 2021

Summer is right around the corner and much excitement abounds. The following book list will offer your child exposure to many different styles of writing, as well as flexibility in choosing books for a variety of interests and reading levels. We hope this offers you more breadth and depth in the selections of books for enjoyable summer reading.

It is recommended that students read approximately 20-40 minutes each day throughout the summer vacation from school. While children need time to unwind and relax, studies have shown that without summer reading, children's reading skills recede.

As parents, look for ways to incorporate reading into your child's summer vacation in a way that is fun and pleasurable. What can you do?

- Don't rule out comic books, magazines, and storybooks. Allow your child the freedom to break up his/her book reading with a shorter, easier "read."
- Help your child find a book on a subject that interests them. Sit down with your child and make a list of possible topics. Then visit the local library. Librarians are wonderful resources and can easily point out books for your child.
- Encourage your child to register for your local library's summer reading program for kids.
- Make sure that you are reading during the summer. Children need to see that reading is a lifelong activity even his/her parents enjoy. Show your children the pleasure you derive from reading by talking about the books you read.
- Get a second copy of your child's book and read along with him/her. This way you can discuss the book together. You might also take turns reading aloud to each other.
- Since reading and writing go hand and hand, encourage your child to keep a reading journal. Help your child think of topics for their entries. Your child might write a letter to the author as an entry or retell a book chapter from the perspective of a different character.
- Plan a summer trip around a book your child is reading. Historical fiction lends itself particularly well to this approach and there are plenty of places nearby to visit.
- Most importantly, schedule reading into the day. Set aside at least twenty minutes each day that your child will devote to reading, and do your best to help your child stick to the plan.
- If your child reads 200+ minutes a week, and you are inclined, go out for an ice cream cone, and spend extra time at the local library or bookstore.

## 2021 LOWER SCHOOL FAMILY SUMMER READ

This exciting tale will transport your family from Brooklyn, NY, to a magical world full of adventure and suspense. After being left with a mean, eccentric woman called Ma for “just one day,” nine year old Jaxon tries to figure out who she is, what she is, and how to help her successfully deliver baby dragons to a safe place. She has a lot of interesting friends, mostly magical, that help turn this hohum kind of day into an exciting adventure back in time. What will happen if Jax broke the rules that Ma explained to him?

*Dragons in a Bag*, written by Zetta Elliott and illustrated by Geneva Random, was a 2019 ALSC (Association for Library Service to Children) Notable Book and CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center) choice. We look forward to using this book as a springboard in the fall to explore the fantasy genre, consider what it would be like to live in a city, explore the power of friendship, think creatively and artistically, and read the sequel, *The Dragon Thief*, in K-5 home bases. While we know it is a cliffhanger, please don't read the second book so students can enjoy it with their classmates when we come back together in the fall. Happy reading!!



## **TOP 10 SUGGESTIONS**

### **for LOWER SCHOOL SUMMER READING**

#### ***Books Appropriate for Students Before Entering Kindergarten Recommended by Mrs. Blumenreich and Mrs. Szmyd***

- *The Night Before Kindergarten* by Natasha Wing
- *Wemberly Worried* by Kevin Henkes
- *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate
- *Timothy Goes to School* by Rosemary Wells
- *How Do Dinosaurs Go to School?* By Jane Yolen and Mark Teague
- *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn
- *Llama Llama Misses Mama* by Anna Dewdney
- *Interrupting Chicken* by David Ezra Stein
- *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin Jr.
- *Brown Bear Brown Bear What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr.

#### ***Books Appropriate for Students Reading at a Kindergarten Level Recommended by Mrs. Blumenreich and Mrs. Szmyd***

- *First Grade, Here I Come!* By Nancy Carlson
- *Now I'm Reading!* Series
- *If You Take a Mouse to School* by Laura Numeroff
- *The Night Before First Grade* by Natasha Wing
- *The Magic Treehouse Chapter book Series* by Mary Pope Osbourne
- *Piggie and Elephant series* by Mo Willems
- *Bedtime Math* by Laura Overdeck
- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle
- *Mercy Watson Series* by Kate DiCamillo
- Recommended Authors: Kate DiCamillo, Mercer Mayer, Eric Carle, Kevin Henkes, Dr. Seuss, Leo Lionni

#### ***Books Appropriate for Students Reading at a First Grade Level Recommended by Mrs. Robinson and Mrs. Weller***

- *Frog and Toad series* by Arnold Lobel
- *Nate the Great series* by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat
- *Henry and Mudge series* by Cynthia Rylant
- *Mr. Putter and Tabby books* by Cynthia Rylant
- *Little Critter Books* by Mercer Mayer
- *Magic Tree House series* by Mary Pope Osborne
- *Franklin series* by Paulette Bourgeois and Brenda Clark
- *Fly Guy series* by Ted Arnold
- *Poppleton series* by Cynthia Rylant
- *Hey Jack and Billie B. Brown books* by Sally Rippin
- Recommended Authors: Ted Arnold, Cynthia Rylant, Gail Gibbons, Jan Brett, Mo Williams, and Dr. Suess

#### ***Books Appropriate for Students Reading at a Second Grade Level Recommended by Mrs. Peterson***

- *Mercy Watson* by Kate DiCamillo
- *Stink the Incredible Shrinking Kid* by Megan McDonald
- *Flat Stanley* by Jeff Brown
- *Ivy & Bean* by Annie Barrows
- *Katie Kazoo Switcheroo* by Nancy Krulik
- *Olive & Beatrix* by Amy Marie Stadelmann
- *Owl Diaries* by Rebecca Elliott
- *Secrets of Droon* by Tony Abbott
- *A to Z Mysteries* by Ron Roy
- *Ricky Ricotta's Mighty Robot* by Dav Pilkey

**Books Appropriate for Students Reading at a Third Grade Level Recommended by Mrs. Peterson**

- *Who Was...?* series by Jess Brallier, Stephanie Spinner, Dennis Brindell Fradin, et al
- *The Boxcar Children Mysteries* series by Gertrude Chandler Warner
- *Geronimo Stilton* series by Geronimo Stilton
- *Roald Dahl Classics* by Roald Dahl
- *Warriors: A Vision of Shadows* series by Erin Hunter
- *39 Clues* series by Jude Watson
- *Amber Brown* series by Paula Danziger
- *Humphrey* series by Betty G. Birney
- *Goosebumps* series by R. L. Stein
- *Notebook of Doom* series by Troy Cumming

**Books Appropriate for Students Reading at a Fourth Grade Level Recommended by Mrs. Stavisky**

- *Spy School* (series) by Stuart Gibbs
- *Sideways Stories From Wayside School* by Louis Sachar
- *Lunch Money* by Andrew Clements
- *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* by Kate DiCamillo
- *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* by Robert C. O'Brien
- *The Lemonade War* by Jacqueline Davies
- *Stuart Little* by E.B. White
- *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio
- *The Tale of Despereaux* by Kate DiCamillo
- *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate
- *Wish* by Barbara O'Connor
- *Shiloh* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
- *Hoot* by Carl Hiaasen

**Books Appropriate for Students Reading at a Fifth Grade Level Recommended by Mrs. Stavisky**

- *Restart* by Gordon Korman
- *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen
- *Fish In a Tree* by Linda Mullaly Hunt
- *Holes* by Louis Sachar
- *The Honest Truth* by Dan Gemeinhart
- *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry
- *The War That Saved My Life* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
- *Wishtree* by Katherine Applegate
- *Savvy* by Ingrid Law
- *Al Capone Does My Shirts* by Gennifer Choldenko
- *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander
- *Hello Universe* by Erin Entrada Kelly



## MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER READING 2021

Summer vacation is for spending quality time with family and friends and enjoying less structure and routine in your lives. However, it is imperative to read as much and as often as you can. The intent of VMS's Middle School Summer Reading is to integrate books into your normal summer life in a natural and fun way that is not stressful.

Over the summer, all incoming Middle School students should have an active reading life. Summer is a perfect time to develop personal reading interests that maintain and enrich literacy skills. You are expected to read **at least three (3)** books over the summer months and track the books you read on the attached Summer Reading Log.

**Two of the three books may be of your choice. The third must be one of the following book-club selections:**

- **Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler** by E.L. Konigsburg
- **Clap When You Land** by Elizabeth Acevedo
- **The Shadow Hero** by Gene Luen Yang
- **I'll Give you the Sun** by Jandy Nelson
- **Field Guide to the North American Teenager** by Ben Philippe
- **Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise** by Dan Gemeinhart
- **Drums, Girls and Dangerous Pie** by Jordan Sonnenblick
- **The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants** by Ann Brashares

Upon returning to school, you will participate in a cross-grade discussion based on the book club book you read.

In addition to reading, choose one book you would like to share with your classmates when school begins and write a one-paragraph reflection based on the attached prompt.

**The *Summer Reading Log* and written reflection, signed by a parent or guardian, will be your first Humanities (6th)/English (7th and 8th) grade of 2021-2022.**

SUMMER READING LOG

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Grade (2021-2022):</b>
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Date (started and finished)	Title of Book	Author	Genre	My Reaction
(Example)  June 1 - June 24	(Example)  <i>Echo</i>	(Example)  Pam Muñoz Ryan	(Example)  Historical Fiction	(Example)  This book really challenged me, but I liked how the three stories weaved together in the end. Makes me want to play the harmonica!

## REFLECTION PROMPT

After you complete your summer reading, choose one book that you would like to present to your class during the first weeks of school. Respond to the following prompt in *at least* one full paragraph using complete sentences.

**Please write a critique of the book you chose to present to your classmates. To help with your critique, respond to the following questions:**

- Why did you like the story?
- Why should others be interested in the story?
- What was a scene/moment that was memorable to you, and why?



## RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

Please find a list of recommendations for 6th-8th grade students to read over the summer. Note that because this list is intended for all middle schoolers, some books may be more appropriate for older students vs. younger students and vice versa. Parents are encouraged to research and/or preview books if concerned about maturity. \*We have labeled some books with asterisks to indicate known mature content due to language, violence, topic, etc.\*

### *Realistic Fiction*

- \*Anderson, Laurie H. *Twisted*
- Applegate, Katherine. *Crenshaw* and *The One and Only Ivan*
- Bauer, Joan. *Almost Home*
- Bell, Cece. *El Deafo*
- Bloor, Edward. *Tangerine*
- Benjamin, Ali. *The Thing About Jellyfish*
- Cormier, Robert. *The Rag and Bone Shop*
- Cormier, Robert. *I Am the Cheese*
- Dessen, Sarah. *Just Listen*
- Draper, Sharon. *Copper Sun* and *Out of My Mind*
- Erskine, Kathryn. *Mockingbird*
- Forman, Gayle. *If I Stay*
- Geimenhart, Dan. *The Honest Truth*
- Gipson, Fred. *Old Yeller*
- Goldblatt, Mark. *Twerp*
- Graff, Lisa. *Lost in the Sun, Tangle of Knots*
- \* Green, John. *The Fault in Our Stars, Paper Towns, and Looking for Alaska*
- Harrington, Karen. *Courage for Beginners*
- Hiassen, Carl. *Flush* and *Hoot*
- Hinton, S.E. *That Was Then, This is Now*
- Howe, James. *The Misfits, Addie on the Inside, and Totally Joe*
- Holm, Jennifer. *The Fourteenth Goldfish*
- Hunt, Linda Mullaly. *Fish in a Tree*
- Kelly, Jacqueline. *Curious World of Calpurnia Tate*
- Korman, Gordon. *Schooled, Son of the Mob, Ungifted, Born to Rock, Pop, and Swindle.*
- LaFleur, Suzanne. *Love, Aubrey, and Eight Keys*
- Littlewood, Kathryn. *Bliss*
- Mass, Wendy. *Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life, A Mango-Shaped Space (review), Finally, 11 Birthdays, The Candymakers, Leap Day, Heaven Looks a Lot Like the Mall, The Last Present, and 13 Gifts*
- Myers, Walter Dean. *Monster*
- Nowra, Louis. *Into That Forest*
- Palacio, R.J. *Wonder* and *Auggie & Me*
- \*Rowell, Rainbow. *Eleanor & Park*
- Ryan, Pam Munoz. *Echo, Becoming Naomi Leon, The Dreamer, and Esperanza Rising*
- \*Scheider, Robin. *The Beginning of Everything*
- Scieszka, Jon. *Guys Write for Guys Read*
- Shusterman, Neal. *Downsiders*
- Sloan, Holly Goldberg. *Counting by 7s*
- Spinelli, Jerry. *Stargirl, Milkweed*
- \*Stead, Rebecca. *Goodbye Stranger*
- Stockett, Kathryn. *The Help*
- Telgemeir, Raina. *Smile, Sisters, and Drama*
- Watson, Jude. *Loot*
- Weeks, Sarah. *So B. It*
- \*Whaley, John Corey. *Noggin*

### **Adventure/Action/Thriller**

- Barraclough, Lindsey. *Long Lankin*
- Card, Orson Scott. *Ender's Game*
- \*Cooney, Caroline B. *Flight #116 is Down*
- Dashner, James. *The Maze Runner* trilogy and *Eye of Minds*
- Farmer, Nancy. *A Girl Named Disaster*
- Haddix, Margaret Peterson. *The Shadow Children* series
- Horowitz, Anthony. *Alex Rider* series (*Stormbreaker*, *Point Blank*, etc.)
- Hirsch, Jeff. *The Eleventh Plague*
- Lore, Pittacus. *The I Am Number Four* series
- Lu, Marie. *Legend* series
- Patterson, James. *Maximum Ride* series
- Paulsen, Gary. *Hatchet* series & *Woods Runner*
- Roth, Veronica. *Divergent* and *Insurgent*
- Stewart, Trenton Lee, *The Mysterious Benedict Society*
- \*Yancey, Rick. *The 5th Wave*
- \*Martel, Yann. *The Life of Pi*

### **Sports**

- Alexander, Kwame. *The Crossover* and *Booked*
- Green, Tim. *Football Genius* series and *Baseball Great*
- Lupica, Mike. *QB1*, *True Legend*, and *Fantasy League*
- Deuker, Carl. *High Heat*

### **Fantasy/Science Fiction/Dystopian**

- \*Adams, Douglas. *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*
- \*Anderson, M. T. *Feed*
- Bergin, Virginia. *H2O*, *The Storm*
- Cameron, Bruce. *A Dog's Journey*
- Cass, Kiera. *The Selection* series
- Clarke, Arthur C. *2001: A Space Odyssey*
- Collins, Suzanne. *Gregor the Overlander* series and *The Hunger Games* series
- Colfer, Chris. *The Land of Stories* series
- Condie, Ally. *The Matched* series
- Duprau, Jeanne. *City of Ember*
- Farmer, Nancy. *House of the Scorpion*
- Fisher, Catherine. *Incarceron*
- Grabenstein, Chris. *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*
- \*Grant, Michael. *Gone* series
- Hautman, Pete. *Godless*
- Hunter, Erin. *Seekers* series
- Juster, Norton. *The Phantom Tollbooth*
- Kessler, Liz. *Emily Windsnap* series
- Lewis, C.S. *Chronicles of Narnia*
- Lore, Patticus. *Lorien Legacies* series
- Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*, *Gathering Blue*, and *The Silent Boy*
- McKenzie, Paige. *The Haunting of Sunshine Girl*
- Meyer, Stephenie. *The Twilight Saga* series
- Riordan, Rick. *The Lightning Thief*, *Sea of Monsters*, *Titan's Curse*, *The Lost Hero*, *The Son of Neptune*, *The Mark of Athena*, *The Kane Chronicles*, *Magnus Chase*, & the *Percy Jackson* series
- Mull, Brandon. *Fablehaven* series and *Beyonders* series
- Sanders, Ted. *The Keepers* series
- Selznick, Brian. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, *The Marvels*, and *Wonderstruck*
- Sutherland, Tui. *The Wings of Fire* series
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *Lord of the Rings* series
- Yancey, Rick. *The 5th Wave*

### **Historical Fiction**

- **Anderson, Laurie Halse.** *Chains and Fever* 1973
- **Bradley, Kim.** *The War that Saved My Life*
- **Boyne, John.** *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*
- **Curtis, Christopher Paul.** *Bud, Not Buddy, and The Watsons Go to Birmingham*
- **Doyle, Arthur.** *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*
- **Hilton, K.C.** *The Magic of Finkleton*
- **Knowles, John.** *A Separate Peace*
- **Lai, Thanhha.** *Inside Out and Back Again*
- **Maclean, Norman.** *A River Runs Through It*
- **Nielson, Jennifer.** *A Night Divided.*
- **Park, Linda Sue.** *A Long Walk to Water*
- **Rhodes, Jewell Parker.** *Sugar*
- **Ryan, Pam Munoz.** *Echo and Esperanza Rising*
- **Sepetys, Ruta.** *Between Shades of Gray*
- **Woodson, Jacqueline.** *Brown Girl Dreaming*
- **Zusak, Markus.** *The Book Thief*

### **Non-Fiction**

- **Armstrong, Jennifer.** *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and The Endurance*
- **Blumenthal, Karen.** *Steve Jobs: The Man Who Thought Different*
- **Brown, Daniel James.** *The Boys in the Boat (Young Reader's Edition): The True Story of an American Team's Epic Journey to Win Gold at the 1936 Olympics*
- **Fleischman, John.** *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science*
- **Hillenbrand, Laura.** *Unbroken (Young Adult Adaptation): An Olympian's Journey from Airman to Castaway to Captive*
- **Krakauer, Jon.** *Into Thin Air*
- **Mortenson, Greg.** *Three Cups of Tea*
- **Romero, John.** *No Summit out of Sight: The True Story of the Youngest Person to Climb the Seven Summits*
- **Webb, Brandon and John David Mann.** *The Making of a Navy Seal: My Story of Surviving the Toughest Challenge and Training the Best*
- **Yousafzai, Malala.** *I Am Malala (Young Reader's Edition)*



## UPPER SCHOOL SUMMER READING 2021

### REQUIREMENTS

VMS hopes to inspire all of its students to love to read. To that end, we provide a structured summer reading program that will allow students to enjoy a variety of books based on personal choice, grade level preparation, and Upper School divisional expectations. Any or all of these books can be read either in book, electronic, or audio format. Please read EACH of the following directives.

- 1) Please read the book or one of the choices of books that is specific to your grade level. **YOU WILL BE ASSESSED WITH A READING QUIZ AND A WRITING ASSIGNMENT IN THE FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL. THESE WILL BE THE FIRST TWO GRADES OF THE QUARTER.**

Entering 9th Grade: **READ ONE** of the following books:

- *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*, Erika L. Sanchez
- *The Martian*, Andy Weir
- *Mr. Penumbra's 24-hour Bookstore*, Robin Sloan
- *The Sun is Also a Star*, Nicola Yoon
- *Salt to the Sea*, Ruta Sepetys
- *Six of Crows*, Leigh Bardugo

Entering 10th Grade: **READ ONE** of the following books:

- *Touching the Void*, Joe Simpson
- *Where'd You Go Bernadette*, Maria Semple

**Note: if you watch the movies for these books, you must also still read them in order to be successful on the graded assignments.**

Entering 11th Grade: *Glass Castle*, Jeanette Walls

Entering 12th Grade: *The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien

- 2) **US Book Club Required Reading:** This summer's book is *Perestroika in Paris*, by Jane Smiley. Please see the description below. A free reading pass will be awarded upon proof of careful reading and we will have a "Book Club" the first week of school. This book will be referenced in English (and other) classes throughout the year.
- 3) We encourage you to read a book(s) of your own choosing. To that end, we have provided you with a list of faculty recommendations as well as some general "good books" to guide your choices.

### UPPER SCHOOL BOOK CLUB REQUIRED READING:

#### *Perestroika in Paris*, by Jane Smiley

The Upper School English department has chosen this book because it is a captivating, uplifting story that uses animals to show us the power of friendship and connection as we navigate this year of a global pandemic. This book has a little bit for everyone: excitement, intrigue, animals, humor, empathy, and hope -- something we could all use a little more of.

Paras, short for "Perestroika," is a spirited racehorse at a racetrack west of Paris. One afternoon at dusk, she finds the door of her stall open and--she's a curious filly--wanders all the way to the City of Light. Soon she meets an elegant dog, a German shorthaired pointer named Frida, who knows how to get by without attracting the attention of suspicious Parisians. They keep company with two irrepressible ducks and an opinionated raven. But then Paras meets a human boy, Etienne, and discovers

a new, otherworldly part of Paris: the ivy-walled house where the boy and his nearly-one-hundred-year-old great-grandmother live in seclusion.

Jane Smiley's beguiling new novel is itself an adventure that celebrates curiosity, ingenuity, and the desire of all creatures for true love and freedom.

Vail Mountain School would like to thank The Bookworm in Edwards for offering a 10% discount to VMS students who choose them for their summer reading needs when purchasing books.



#### ***FACULTY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UPPER SCHOOL***

##### ***Andrew Behrendt, Upper School Spanish Teacher***

***Sophie's World. Jostein Gaarder.*** It follows Sophie Amundsen, a Norwegian teenager who is introduced to the history of philosophy by Alberto Knox, a middle-aged philosopher.

***Art of Racing in the Rain. Garth Stein.*** A heart-wrenching but deeply funny and ultimately uplifting look at the wonders and absurdities of human life . . . as only a dog could tell it.

***The Power of One. Bryce Courtenay.*** A powerful and entertaining coming of age story set in S. Africa.

***The Nix. Nathan Hill.*** A hilarious and deeply touching debut novel about a son, the mother who left him as a child, and how his search to uncover the secrets of her life leads him to reclaim his own.

***Siddhartha. Hermann Hesse.*** The spiritual journey of self-discovery of a man named Siddhartha during the time of the Gautama Buddha.

##### ***Jennifer Bill, Lower School Admissions***

***A Prayer for Owen Meany. John Irving.*** In the summer of 1953, two eleven-year-old boys are playing in a Little League baseball game when one of the boys hits a foul ball that kills the other boy's mother. The boy who hits the ball doesn't believe in accidents; Owen Meany believes he is God's instrument. What happens to Owen after that 1953 foul ball is extraordinary.

***Let My People Go Surfing. Yvon Chouinard.*** Legendary climber, businessman, environmentalist, and founder of Patagonia, Inc. shares the persistence and courage that have gone into being head of one of the most respected and environmentally responsible companies on earth. This memoir is of a man who brought doing good and having grand adventures into the heart of his business life.

***A Dog's Purpose. W. Bruce Cameron.*** Heartwarming, insightful, and often laugh-out-loud funny, it is not only the emotional and hilarious story of a dog's many lives, but also a dog's-eye commentary on human relationships and the unbreakable bonds between man and man's best friend.

##### ***Kate Blakslee, Community Service Coordinator, Alumni Coordinator, Upper School Homebase Advisor and Student Support Services***

***The Rent Collector. Camron Wright.*** Set in the largest waste dump in all of Cambodia, this is a story of hope. It follows a family's journey in living in the dump, and that of a woman who collects rent money from them. "It demonstrates that even in

a dump in Cambodia- perhaps especially in a dump in Cambodia - everyone deserves a second chance."

***This Tender Land.* William Kent Krueger.** Four orphans journey into the unknown and cross paths with others who are adrift, from struggling farmers and traveling faith healers to displaced families and lost souls of all kinds. It's an enthralling, big-hearted epic that shows how the magnificent American landscape connects us all, haunts our dreams, and makes us whole.

***Carson Blumenreich, Kindergarten Teacher***

***Centennial.* James Michener.** Trappers, traders, homesteaders, gold seekers, ranchers, and hunters are brought together in the dramatic conflicts that shape the destiny of the legendary West—and the entire country.

***Paint the Wind.* Cathy Cash Spellman.** Outsize characters and melodramatic incident propels this gaudy Western extravaganza that sweeps from a Louisiana plantation during the Civil War to a wide-open Colorado mining town.

***Tanya Boderck, Mathematics Department Chair***

***Refugee.* Alan Gratz.** The book follows three young people (Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud) in the journey to seek refuge. All three stories are of three different time periods and three different geographical locations.

***Bobby Ecker, Athletic Director***

***Endurance.* Alfred Lansing.**

In August 1914, polar explorer Ernest Shackleton boarded the Endurance and set sail for Antarctica and became locked in an island of ice. He and his crew attempted a near-impossible journey over 850 miles of the South Atlantic's heaviest seas to the closest outpost of civilization.

***Noel Falk, Upper School History Teacher***

***A Gentleman in Moscow.* Amor Towles.** This is the quiet, but beautifully written fiction novel of Count Alexander Rostov, an aristocrat arrested by the Soviets and sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol Hotel in Moscow in 1922 for revolutionary writings in 1913.

***The Balcony.* Jane Delury.** It is the story of an estate outside Paris and the lives of the inhabitants of the estate. While these short stories are separate and span generations, they are connected to the estate.

***The Huntress.* Kate Quinn.** This is not a "light" summer read, but you won't be disappointed. Though fictional, this novel is based on real Nazi Hunters who work tirelessly in hunting war criminals and documenting the testimony of Holocaust survivors and Night Witches, real life, Soviet (and the only, in the entire world) female fighter and bomber pilots in WWII.

***The Map of Salt and Stars.* Jennifer Zeynab Joukhadar,.** The story of two girls living eight hundred years apart shows how interconnected two supposedly opposing worlds can be.

***Marisa Ferrara, College Counselor***

***Make Your Home Among Strangers.* Jennine Capo Crucet.** an American tale of a female Cuban immigrant's journey to higher education in the US and the stark contrast of cultures, politics and life experiences so entwined in the first-year transition of college.

***The Mindful College Applicant.* Belinda Chiu.** an encouraging voice and guide for cultivating emotional intelligence and growth for and throughout the college search process.

***The Other Wes Moore.* Wes Moore.** Wes Moore shares his autobiography as well as the story of another Wes Moore, both having grown up similarly in Baltimore, but whose lives could not have turned out more different.

***Anders Fogel, Upper School English and History Teacher***

***The Voyage of the Narwhal.* Andrea Barrett.** Barrett's ability to combine her love of history, science and adventure makes this novel a compelling read. A group of researchers travel to the Arctic circle in search of a missing crew.

***The Opposite of Loneliness.* Marina Keegan.** A graduate of Yale with a knack for understanding the basic human condition, Keegan's short stories and nonfiction in this collection celebrate the work of a young writer.

***The Mars Room. Rachel Kushner.*** This book is phenomenal. A woman with a turbulent past goes to prison. Read the rest...

***In Search of Small Gods. Jim Harrison.*** For people who love the natural world and the mysteries that surround it, Harrison provides a voice for the aimless wanderer of the fields, woods and mountains.

***How to Write a Sentence. Stanley Fish.*** This book is a must read for anyone at any age. It's thrust is a conversation around the shortcomings of teaching grammar but at its core is an appreciation for life through its relationship with words.

***A Different Angle: Fly Fishing Stories by Women.*** A collection of short stories by female fly fishermen that are hilariously funny, meticulously scientific, and at times, brutally honest.

***Faceless Killers. Henning Mankell.*** My mother would find it irresponsible if I didn't include a Scandinavian murder mystery. If summertime is feeling too hot for you, escape to the cold and dark of southern Sweden for Kurt Wallander's attempt to solve a grisly murder.

***Priest Turned Therapist Treats Fear of God. Tony Hoagland.*** Like everyone's favorite run on a powder day, keep this poet a secret because he's that good.

***The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind. William Kamkwamba.*** When a terrible drought struck a tiny village in Malawi, William's family lost all of the season's crops, leaving them with nothing to eat and nothing to sell. Made out of scrap metal and old bicycle parts, William's windmill brought electricity to his home and helped his family pump the water they needed to farm the land.

***Steve Gordon, Upper & Middle School Spanish Teacher***

***The Milagro Beanfield Wars. John Nichols.*** A farmer in New Mexico battles a large landowner over water rights to his bean field. I liked all of the cultural references and Spanish sprinkled throughout the book.

***Andrew Hustad, World Languages Department Chair***

***The Road. Cormac McCarthy.*** Equal parts beauty and brutality, *The Road* follows the path of a father and son as they navigate a new life filled with unimaginable decisions. Highly recommended.

***When Breath Becomes Air. Kalanithi, Paul.*** The memoirs and reflections of a neurosurgeon who is diagnosed with terminal cancer just as he is completing nearly a decade of training. Powerful, heartbreaking, inspiring. Hopefully it leads you to consider the larger questions in life and what, in the end, might give it a deeper sense of meaning.

***Dao De Jing. Laozi (Lao Tzu).*** Composed of 81 short chapters, the *Dao De Jing* is the central text of Daoist thought. It can be accessed and analyzed on a variety of levels and in my opinion, does not necessarily have to be understood in any particular way to be impactful. There are countless versions, so feel free to email me if you are looking to pick up a copy.

***Think: A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy. Simon Blackburn.*** Although philosophy is one of my favorite topics to read and ponder, I am very much an informal student of the discipline. It is a nice introduction to some of the overarching questions of philosophy and will hopefully push you to explore more.

***Cosmicomics. Italo Calvino.*** A collection of curious short stories concerning science, evolution and the expansion of our universe. It's been 15 years or more since I read this, but every time I see it on my shelf, I think to myself, "I should read that again." Maybe I'm just writing this recommendation as a reminder to myself.

***Collins Canada Kelly, Middle School English Teacher***

***Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl. Anne Frank.*** Discovered in the attic in which she spent the last years of her life, Anne Frank's remarkable diary has become a world classical powerful reminder of the horrors of war and an eloquent testament to the human spirit. Current stay-at-home orders lend the modern reader new empathy for Anne's life in the "Secret Annex."

***Station Eleven. Emily St. John Mandel.*** Set in the days of civilization's collapse due to a global pandemic, *Station Eleven* tells the story of a Hollywood star, his would-be savior, and a nomadic group of actors roaming the scattered outposts of the Great Lakes region, risking everything for art and humanity.



**A Darker Shade of Magic. V.E. Schwab.** The first of a trilogy, *A Darker Shade of Magic* is a tale of fantasy and adventure that is set in parallel versions of London, each with varying degrees of magic.

**The Overstory. Richard Powers.** The novel is about nine Americans whose unique life experiences with trees bring them together to address the destruction of forests. *The Overstory* leaves you with a slightly adjusted frame of reference, and you begin to look at the trees outside your window more curiously.

**The Soul of an Octopus. Sy Montgomery.** This non-fiction book immerses readers into an intriguing, seductive world just beneath the ocean waves and the lives of the creatures living within. Montgomery brings empathy, insight, and an enchanting sense of wonderment to the bonds we inherently share with other beings—even those seeming far different from us.

**Ariel Levine, Visual Art & Design Thinking Teacher**

**Persepolis, by Marjane Satrapi.** I first read this graphic novel in high school and it changed the way I thought about storytelling and narrative. In this novel, Satrapi tells the story of her childhood growing up in Iran before, during and after the Iranian Revolution. She does an amazing job of paralleling the struggles of growing up along with the conflict and social change Iran faced during her time there.

**Keeping You a Secret, Julie Anne Peters.** This was the first LGBTQ+ YA novel I read after coming out to myself. This story chronicles the journey of self discovery, not just of one's sexuality, but what it means to live your truth in all aspects of your life. The love story between Holland Jaeger and Cece Goddard is sweet, warm and all the things you'd want out of a summer read, but it was walking along with Holland and her journey to be what she wanted, not what was expected of her, that has made this novel stay with me even after 16 years

**The Fault in Our Stars, John Green.** I've followed John Green as a youtube personality before he was a New York Times bestselling author. *The Fault in Our Stars* is definitely his most well known novel, but one of my favorites. In this novel, Green explores the power of love and interrogates the meaning of life via the relationship between Hazel and Augustus, two teens who meet at a cancer patient support group. Probably don't read the end of this novel in public, like I did, unless you want everyone to wonder why you're crying profusely. Beautiful, moving, poignant, this is a novel that stays with you long after you finish.

**Hounded, Iron Druid Chronicles, Book 1, Kevin Hearne.** If you like fantasy, adventure and mythology this might be the series for you. Similar in premise to *American Gods* where all the gods are real and exist due to the power of belief, the series follows Atticus O'Sullivan, a 2000+ year old druid, and the various shenanigans he and his Irish wolfhound, Oberon, get themselves into when the mythical beings of old clash with the modern era. I've listened to the entire series via audiobook and I cannot recommend the performance enough. Also, Oberon is a fan of Arnold Schwarzenegger movies and will keep you laughing as any good animal sidekick should.

**Steph Lewis, Upper & Middle School Science Teacher**

**Transcendent Kingdom, Yaa Gyasi.** *Transcendent Kingdom* is a deeply moving portrait of a family of Ghanaian immigrants ravaged by depression and addiction and grief—a novel about faith, science, religion, love.

**Hamnet, A Novel of the Plague, Maggie O'Farrell.** *Hamnet* is essentially a family-type drama telling the background between William Shakespeare and his wife Agnes. It follows their relationship as they deal with their grief over the death of their son Hamnet, the implications of William's career and William's infidelity. In the end, William writes the play *Hamlet* as a farewell to his son -- it's a play where the father dies instead of the son and the ghost's final line is "Remember me."

**Greenwood, Michael Christie.** A magnificent generational saga that charts a family's rise and fall, its secrets and inherited crimes, and the conflicted relationship with the source of its fortune - trees - from one of Canada's most acclaimed novelists.

**Sourdough, Robin Sloan.** Lois Clary is a software engineer at General Dexterity, a San Francisco robotics company with world-changing ambitions. She codes all day and collapses at night, her human contact limited to the two brothers who run the neighborhood hole-in-the-wall from which she orders dinner every evening. When they are forced to flee the country due to visa issues, Lois is entrusted with something that jogs her from her dispassionate existence: a sourdough starter. Armed with this magical mixture of flour and water (it really is magic—it even sings!), Lois—whose fridge and gastronomic knowledge has heretofore been utterly barren—begins to bake. Then, disaster!



**Maddie Lindley, Upper School English Teacher**

**Annapurna: A Woman's Place. Maurice Herzog.** A gripping tale about the first all-female ascent of one of Nepal's tallest mountains. While adventure sits at the forefront of the book, Herzog does not shy away from exploring the hardships that female adventurers often face.

**The Light Between Oceans. M.L. Stedman.** Though you can't hear their accents, these Australian characters catch your attention in no time. On an isolated island, a lighthouse keeper and his infertile wife find a baby; the beautiful, heart-wrenching story unravels from there.

**Think Again. Adam Grant.** In a time when people are quick to hold opinions close, Grant offers practical, relevant research on the benefits of thinking again.

**The Sun and Her Flowers. Rupi Kaur.** Easy to read, yet incredibly powerful, this book of poems highlights a young woman's journey towards growth, healing, and becoming.

**Sabrina & Corina. Kali Fajardo-Anstine.** A powerful collection of short stories set in Denver, Colorado. Each story highlights Latina women and their hardships, relationships, and triumphs. A mature read.

**Laurie Mortensen, English Department Chair**

**The River Why. David James Duncan.** This book is ostensibly about fly-fishing but really more of a philosophical exploration into love, journeys, water, humor, war, and one man's quest to figure out why it's all worth it. This is one of the funniest and also most moving books I have read.

**The River. Peter Heller.** From the best-selling author of *The Dog Stars*, the story of two college students on a wilderness canoe trip— a gripping tale of a friendship tested by fire, white water, and violence.

**Cowboys Are My Weakness. Pamela Houston.** This collection of short stories about strong women, the natural world, and the men they love is a 2nd person narrative about the things that make sense even when they are completely illogical.

**The Elegance of the Hedgehog. Muriel Barbery.** This book is a philosophical tour de force with 2 narrators: a Parisian auto-didactic apartment concierge, and a 12 year old girl contemplating suicide because she is a nihilist. These two characters come together to find meaning in life in unexpected and profound ways.

**Circe. Madeline Miller.** A bold and subversive retelling of the goddess's story, both epic and intimate in its scope, recasting the most infamous female figure from the Odyssey as a hero in her own right.

**Once Upon A River. Diane Setterfield.** On a dark midwinter's night in an ancient inn on the river Thames, an extraordinary event takes place. This is a glorious tapestry of a book that combines folklore and science, magic and myth.

**Maggie Pavlik, Upper School Director**

**The Kite Runner. Khaled Hosseini.** A beautifully written tale of the friendship of two young boys growing up in pre-Russian Afghanistan and how their lives take a traumatic turn.

**We are Called to Rise. Laura McBride.** 2016's One Book One Valley read is a contemporary novel that details the real life issues of divorce, police violence, immigration, PTSD, and generations in families—all which intersect in the city of Las Vegas.

**Big Little Lies. Liane Moriarty.** A novel set in an Australian seaside suburb where women who are looked at as regular soccer moms all have buried secrets from their past.

**Becoming. Michelle Obama.** Michelle Obama's biography about her childhood and her years in the white house as the FLOTUS.

**Crazy for the Storm. Norman Ollestad.** An autobiographical story that begins with a plane crash and moves on to detail the life of a boy growing up in the southern California surf culture with his unpredictable father.

**We Were the Lucky Ones. Georgia Hunter.** A true story of the Kurc family, who scatters across the globe when Poland is invaded by the German Army. A story of hope and survival and incredible optimism.

**Know My Name. Chanel Miller.** For mature readers!! Ms. Miller's memoir of her sexual assault on the Stanford campus, her trauma, journey, recovery and redemption - POWERFUL for all who will live on a college campus.

**Lizzy Reed, Upper School History Teacher & Middle School Dean**

**Homegoing. Yaa Gyasi.** I could not put this national best seller down. The story tracks two half sisters born into different families in Ghana during the eighteenth century. You follow their descendents through eight generations from the Gold Coast to Jazz Age Harlem. Immediately after I finished, I drove to the bookstore and bought Gyasi's newest book, **Transcendent Kingdom**, which is about an aspiring neuroscientist determined to discover the scientific basis for suffering. Both books are incredibly powerful.

**Running with Sherman: How a Rescue Donkey Inspired a Rag-tag Gang of Runners to Enter the Craziest Race in America. Christopher McDougall.** My dad sent me this book for some much-needed good vibes during COVID. Written by the author of **Born to Run**, this book features the International Leadville Pack Burro Race and a donkey protagonist who will warm your heart. It will make you want to sign up for this year's Boom Days burro race!

**Sourdough: or, Lois and Her Adventures in the Underground Market: A Novel. Robin Sloan.** I loved **Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore** so much I had to read Sourdough next. The protagonist, Lois, is a coding fiend working at a tech giant in San Francisco. She discovers a magical culture of sourdough that changes her world. This book is best paired with a loaf of sourdough for consumption.

**The Golden Compass. Philip Pullman.** One of the best fantasy novels I've read. This series is gripping, complex, and is nothing less than extraordinary story telling. If you like Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings, this should be next on your list.

**Ross Sappenfield, Upper School Science Teacher**

**Migrations. Charlotte McConaghy.** Much more than a pole to pole quest for Franny to follow the last migration of the arctic terns. Epic and intimate, heartbreaking and galvanizing, Charlotte McConaghy's *Migrations* is an ode to a disappearing world and a breathtaking page-turner about the possibility of hope against all odds.

**The Queen's Gambit. Walter Tevis.** A must read for the chess club! Beth confronts elements of feminism, addiction, and parental relations as she rises up from an orphanage to the center of the chess world.

**Life at the Speed of Us. Heather Sappenfield.** This Colorado book award finalist book weaves dyslexia, math, cutting-edge science, snowboarding, genius, and love into a young woman's reluctant journey toward grace.

**Shoe Dog: A memoir by the creator of Nike. Phil Knight.** A great story of building a business from the ground up (no pun intended) and one of the first examples of globalization in business.

**Travels with Charley. John Steinbeck.** #vanlife before vanlife was a thing! Steinbeck explores America in one of the first "camper vans" ever in this never ending quest to understand humanity and himself.

**Anne Verratti, Student Support Services Director**

**Valentine, Elizabeth Wetmore.** Multiple award winning first novel, described as, "An astonishing debut novel that explores the lingering effects of a brutal crime on the women of one small Texas oil town in the 1970s," the beauty of Valentine is in the relationships formed between unlike women of different ages and economic backgrounds who are bound to each other by the truth they share and will to protect each other. 9th and up. Fiction.

**Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging. Sebastian Junger.** This is a book about why men miss war, why Londoners missed the Blitz, and what we can all learn from American Indian captives who refused to go home. *Tribe* is a non-fiction look, compiled in separate essays, at post-traumatic stress disorder and the challenges veterans face returning to society. Recommended for audible 9th and up. Non-fiction.

**Me, Elton John.** Elton John holds nothing back about his life as a child prodigy, to massive rockstar, to self-sabotaging addict, and then thriving sober father of two committed to funding AIDS research and supporting rising musicians. I loved this book for the harsh honesty and the amazing memory of a decades long musician who is full of stories about the music scene and all its characters. #1 NY Times Bestseller. Recommended for audible and 10th and up. Non-fiction.

***Just Kids, Patti Smith.*** National Book Award Winner about the influential relationship between poet and musician Patti Smith and artist Robert Maplethorpe, “Just Kids begins as a love story and ends as an elegy. It serves as a salute to New York City during the late sixties and seventies and to its rich and poor, its hustlers and hellions. A true fable, it is a portrait of two young artists’ ascent, a prelude to fame.” Mature audience. Non-fiction.

***John Adams, David McCullough.*** Do yourself a favor and read this Pulitzer Prize winning biography of American Revolutionary and former president John Adams. The love affairs, back stabbing, diplomacy, falls from grace, and redemption make this the book you want to get home to at night. Don’t be intimidated by the length; it’s a fast read. You will learn so much about the fragile beginnings of America while being engrossed by a great story. Grades 9 and up. Nonfiction.

***Laurie Stavisky, Lower School Reading Teacher***

***When Stars are Scattered, Victoria Jamieson & Omar Mohamed.*** Do you remember how much you loved graphic novels? Well treat yourself to this one! This 2020 Newbery award winner reveals the true story of Omar (the coauthor) and his younger brother’s experiences growing up in a refugee camp. It is an action-packed novel filled with heartbreak and hope, love and war, and even a little humor...a must read.

***Jaime Walker, Executive Assistant to the Head of School***

***How Not to Die: Discover the Foods Scientifically Proven to Prevent and Reverse Disease, Michael Greger M.D.***

**FACLM.** I keep this book by my bedside and periodically go back to it whenever I feel I need to make some adjustments to what I eat. Scientifically based, but easy to read, it gives the reader justification and inspiration for eating to support their health.

***Song of Achilles, Madeline Miller.*** It is an action-packed, page turner with love, war, and fame. It is an easy read retelling the story of the legend of Achilles and the Trojan War.

***Julia Walsh, Upper School English Teacher***

***Ready Player One. Ernest Cline.*** In the year 2045, reality is an ugly place. The only time teenager Wade Watts really feels alive is when he’s jacked into the virtual utopia known as the OASIS. But when Wade stumbles upon the first clue, he finds himself beset by players willing to kill to take this ultimate prize.

***There Are No Children Here. Alex Kotlowitz.*** This is an inside look at an America that we never see. The kids are lovable yet tough, and the things that they experience are unfathomable.

***Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane. Lisa See.*** A Chinese mother and her daughter who has been adopted by an American couple align their lives around the seasons and the farming of tea. Then one day a jeep appears at the village gate—the first automobile any of them have seen—and a stranger arrives.

***Educated. Tara Westover.*** An unforgettable memoir about a young girl who, kept out of school, leaves her survivalist family and goes on to earn a PhD from Cambridge University.

***The Underground Railroad. Colson Whitehead.*** A magnificent tour de force chronicling a young slave’s adventures as she makes a desperate bid for freedom in the antebellum South.

***Just Mercy. Bryan Stevenson.*** Nonfiction about the justice system and racial inequities from a moving first person, inside perspective.

***The Island of Sea Women. Lisa See.*** Based on real historical events and an obscure culture of women divers on a Korean island.