

Welcome to North Reading High School's 2016 Summer Reading Program!

All students must choose **two** books to read over the summer. This year the English department collaborated with NRHS's Library Media Specialist in an effort to increase student interest in reading. Towards that end, students will be able to fully participate in the selection of their books. One book *must* come from the teacher generated list, but the other can come from the suggestions at the end of this document.

The two selected books must be at or above the student's reading level and students should not have read their selections before. If students have questions or need help selecting a book, they should contact their English teacher. All students will be assessed on their summer reading in the first days of the 2016-2017 school year. **Academic Decathlon students may read *Transit* by Anna Seghers in lieu of a selection from the teacher generated list. AP Literature students should read one of the 12th grade required books in addition to their assigned books; AP Language students should read the books specific to their course. AP books can be found on the last page.**

Note: It is encouraged that parents participate in the selection of texts to ensure that students are reading appropriate material, both thematically and academically.

Teacher Generated List:

***A Dog's Purpose: A Novel for Humans* by W. Bruce Cameron (9)**

This is the remarkable story of one endearing dog's search for his purpose over the course of several lives. More than just another charming dog story, *A Dog's Purpose* touches on the universal quest for an answer to life's most basic question: Why are we here? Surprised to find himself reborn as a rambunctious golden-haired puppy after a tragically short life as a stray mutt, Bailey's search for his new life's meaning leads him into the loving arms of 8-year-old Ethan. During their countless adventures Bailey joyously discovers how to be a good dog.

But this life as a beloved family pet is not the end of Bailey's journey. Reborn as a puppy yet again, Bailey wonders—will he ever find his purpose?

Heartwarming, insightful, and often laugh-out-loud funny, *A Dog's Purpose* 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. This moving and beautifully crafted story teaches us that love never dies, that our true friends are always with us, and that every creature on earth is born with a purpose.

***Soldier X* by Don L. Wulffson (9)**

In this gritty novel of World War II, 16-year-old Erik Brandt is forced to fight for the emaciated German army, and because of his knowledge of the Russian language, he is sent to the Russian front. Erik and his fellow soldiers are sent to the front with only a few weeks of basic training and the directions to kill or be killed. After the first battle, Erik makes the life-altering decision to take the uniform of a dead Russian soldier. He pretends to be Russian for most of his remaining time as a soldier, surviving serious wounds and finding the love of his life while he recuperates in a war hospital. Erik's further adventures make for an exciting tale of a boy who faces extraordinary risks on his way to becoming a man.

***Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* by Ransom Riggs (9)**

As a kid, Jacob formed a special bond with his grandfather over his bizarre tales and photos of levitating girls and invisible boys. Now at 16, he is reeling from the old man's unexpected death. Then Jacob is given a mysterious letter that propels him on a journey to the remote Welsh island where his grandfather grew up. There, he finds the children from the photographs—alive and well—despite the islanders' assertion that all were killed decades ago. As Jacob begins to unravel more about his grandfather's childhood, he suspects he is being trailed by a monster only he can see. A haunting and out-of-the-ordinary read, interspersed with photos throughout, it is a truly atmospheric novel with plot twists, turns, and surprises that will delight readers of any age.

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Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer (9)

A bank of clouds was assembling on the not-so-distant horizon, but journalist-mountaineer Jon Krakauer, standing on the summit of Mt. Everest, saw nothing that "suggested that a murderous storm was bearing down." He was wrong. The storm, which claimed five lives and left countless more—including Krakauer's—in guilt-ridden disarray, would also provide the impetus for *Into Thin Air*, Krakauer's epic account of the May 1996 disaster.

I Am the Messenger by Markus Zusak (10)

Ed Kennedy is an underage cabdriver without much of a future. He's pathetic at playing cards, hopelessly in love with his best friend, Audrey, and utterly devoted to his coffee-drinking dog, the Doorman. His life is one of peaceful routine and incompetence until he inadvertently stops a bank robbery. That's when the first ace arrives in the mail. That's when Ed becomes the messenger. Chosen to care, he makes his way through town helping and hurting (when necessary) until only one question remains: Who's behind Ed's mission?

Something Like Normal by Trish Doller (10)

When Travis returns home from a stint in Afghanistan, his parents are splitting up, his brother's stolen his girlfriend and his car, and he's haunted by nightmares of his best friend's death. It's not until Travis runs into Harper, a girl he's had a rocky relationship with since middle school, that life actually starts looking up. And as he and Harper see more of each other, he begins to pick his way through the minefield of family problems and post-traumatic stress to the possibility of a life that might resemble normal again. Travis's sense of humor and incredible sense of honor make him an irresistible and eminently lovable hero.

I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban by Malala Yousafzai (10)

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education. On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive. Instead, Malala's miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she has become a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest nominee ever for the Nobel Peace Prize. *I Am Malala* is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons. *I Am Malala* will make you believe in the power of one person's voice to inspire change in the world.

Allegiant by Veronica Roth (10)

Tris and Tobias and their friends and enemies continue their Chicago-area adventures, 200 years in the future, in Roth's trilogy closer. Edith Prior's tape blew the lid off the secret history of the factions and how they evolved to be the organizing force in society. Now, one group shouts "Death to the factions!" while the other writes the Allegiant Manifesto, declaring that factions are the way society was meant to be. Divergents like Tris are no longer considered rejects, but instead are declared Genetically Pure. Tobias, once a proud Dauntless leader, now struggles with the knowledge he is Genetically Damaged and a second-class citizen in the eyes of many. The chapters switch points of view between Tris and Tobias as each struggles to come to terms with their respective family histories and their love for each other. Like the previous books, this story involves gun play, deaths, loyalty, forgiveness, romance, and lots of intrigue and double crossing.

Unwind by Neil Shusterman (11)

In a society where unwanted teens are salvaged for their body parts, three runaways fight the system that would "unwind" them. Connor's parents want to be rid of him because he's a troublemaker. Risa has no parents and is being unwound to cut orphanage costs. Lev's unwinding has been planned since his birth, as part of his family's strict religion. Brought together by chance, and kept together by desperation, these three unlikely companions make a harrowing cross-country journey, knowing their lives hang in the balance. If they can survive until their eighteenth birthday, they can't be harmed -- but when every piece of them, from their hands to their hearts, are wanted by a world gone mad, eighteen seems far, far away. In *Unwind*, the readers' ideas about life are challenged -- not just where life begins, and where it ends, but what it truly means to be alive.

Eleanor and Park by Rainbow Rowell (11)

Eleanor, 15, is the new girl at school and bullied because she's overweight and dresses in a flamboyant manner. Park is a half-Korean boy who has lived in Omaha, Nebraska, all his life but still feels like an outsider. This is a story of first love, which very slowly builds from the first day Eleanor sits next to Park on the school bus. First they ignore each other, and then they slowly become friends through their love of comic books and 1980s alternative music. Park is the only good thing in Eleanor's life. Her home life is a miserable exercise in trying to stay out of her abusive stepfather's way, and finding new ways to wear the same clothes repeatedly

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since there is no money for anything extra. Park adores everything about Eleanor, and she finds refuge at his house after school with his understanding parents. Things finally explode at Eleanor's house and Eleanor and Park's relationship is truly tested.

A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway (11)

The best American novel to emerge from World War I, *A Farewell to Arms* is the unforgettable story of an American ambulance driver on the Italian front and his passion for a beautiful English nurse. Hemingway's frank portrayal of the love between Lieutenant Henry and Catherine Barkley, caught in the inexorable sweep of war, glows with an intensity unrivaled in modern literature, while his description of the German attack on Caporetto—of lines of fired men marching in the rain, hungry, weary, and demoralized—is one of the greatest moments in literary history. A story of love and pain, of loyalty and desertion.

American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang (11)

Indie graphic novelist Gene Yang's intelligent and emotionally challenging *American Born Chinese* is made up of three individual plotlines: the determined efforts of the Chinese folk hero Monkey King to shed his humble roots and be revered as a god; the struggles faced by Jin Wang, a lonely Asian American middle school student who would do anything to fit in with his white classmates; and the sitcom plight of Danny, an All-American teen so shamed by his Chinese cousin Chin-kee that he is forced to change schools. Each story works well on its own, but Yang engineers a clever convergence of these parallel tales into a powerful climax that destroys the hateful stereotype of Chin-kee, while leaving both Jin Wang and the Monkey King satisfied and happy to be who they are. Yang skillfully weaves these affecting, often humorous stories together to create a masterful commentary about race, identity, and self-acceptance that has earned him a spot as a finalist for the National Book Award for Young People. The artwork, rendered in a chromatically cool palette, is crisp and clear, with clean white space around center panels that sharply focuses the reader's attention in on Yang's achingly familiar characters. There isn't an adolescent alive who won't be able to relate to Jin's wish to be someone other than who he is, and his gradual realization that there is no better feeling than being comfortable in your own skin.

I Will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives (11)

The true story of two young pen pals who forge a life-altering connection. In 1997, Caitlin, a typical 12-year-old girl from a middle class American family, began writing to Martin, a studious 14-year-old from a Zimbabwe slum. In her letters, Caitlin described her life, which consisted of shopping trips, quarrels with friends, and problems at school. Martin was initially far more circumspect in his responses. Inflation had rocketed in Zimbabwe, and even finding money for postage was a struggle for the boy. Staying in school, which required paying costly fees, became merely a dream. Eventually, Martin revealed the harsh realities of his life to Caitlin, who began sending money and gifts. What started as chatty letters turned into a lifeline for Martin and his family, as Caitlin and her parents helped the boy stay in school and achieve his goal of studying at an American university.

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini (12)

Afghan-American novelist Hosseini follows up his best-selling *The Kite Runner* with a story that covers three decades of anti-Soviet jihad, civil war, and Taliban tyranny through the lives of two women. Mariam is the scorned illegitimate daughter of a wealthy businessman, forced at age 15 to marry 40-year-old Rasheed, who grows increasingly brutal as she fails to produce a child. Eighteen years later, Rasheed takes another wife, 14-year-old Laila, a smart and spirited girl with few options after her parents are killed by rocket fire. Against a backdrop of unending war, Mariam and Laila become allies in an asymmetrical battle with Rasheed, whose violent misogyny is endorsed by custom and law. Hosseini's tale is a powerful, harrowing depiction of Afghanistan, and the enduring hopes of its resilient characters.

Maus I & II: A Survivor's Tale (My Father Bleeds History/And Here My Troubles Began) by Art Spiegelman (12)

Told with chilling realism in an unusual comic-book format, this is more than a tale of surviving the Holocaust. Spiegelman relates the effect of those events on the survivors' later years and upon the lives of the following generation. Art, who was born after the war, visits his father, Vladek, to record his experiences in Nazi-occupied Poland. An underlying theme of the work is Art's troubled adjustment to life as he, too, bears the burden of his parents' experiences. *Maus I & II* relate events which young adults, as the future architects of society, must confront, and their interest is sure to be caught by the skillful graphics and suspenseful unfolding of the story. The complete story is told in two volumes; students are required to read both.

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot (12)

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. 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. Skloot takes us on an extraordinary journey, from the

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"colored" ward of Johns Hopkins Hospital in the 1950s to stark white laboratories with freezers full of HeLa cells; from Henrietta's small, dying hometown of Clover, Virginia—a land of wooden slave quarters, faith healings, and voodoo—to East Baltimore today, where her children and grandchildren live and struggle with the legacy of her cells.

Notes from a Small Island by Bill Bryson (12)

After two decades as a resident of England, Bryson (*Made in America*, 1995, etc.) bids a very fond farewell to that sceptered isle, to that promontory of clotted cream. Before returning to his native America, Bryson launched himself on a seven-week journey through the hills and dells, the High Streets and hedgerows of England, Wales, and Scotland. As always, he found most of the towns and the hummocks very much to his liking, indeed. And who wouldn't smile broadly wandering through the environs of Horton in Ribblesdale or Giggleswick or journeying to Milton Keynes (which is, be assured, a place, not an economist)? The main trick to successful hiking, the author knows, is to take a bus or train or rent a car frequently between the beds and breakfasts--the latter being full English and full cholesterol. Of course, not all he encountered was wonderful. British Rail and the ubiquitous Marks & Spencer are not favorites, either. Bryson also has an eye, unsurpassed by that of Prince Charles himself, for nasty architecture, especially shopping centers. Despite those dark, satanic malls, England delights him. He asks, "can there anywhere on earth be, in such a modest span, a landscape more packed with centuries of busy, productive attainment?" The spelling is American, the writing is English (fat folk are seen to "Hoover up" their comestibles), and the wit is genuine. A diverting travel journal, for Anglophiles especially. A short glossary (translating such terms as "knickers," "loo," and "George Formby") is provided. All in all, a tasty crumpet.

For their second book, students are encouraged to choose a book that meets one of these criteria. Students may not read a book that they read for summer reading in a previous year or as part of a course at the middle or high school. This book should also be at or above the student's reading level. Parents are encouraged to participate in the selection of this book.

Suggestions for titles that fit this criteria can be found on the North Reading High School Library Media Center website (<https://sites.google.com/a/north-reading.k12.ma.us/nrhs-library/>).

- *A book with a female protagonist*
- *A book of poetry*
- *A book that will make you smarter*
- *A book with more than 500 pages*
- *A book that won a Hugo or Nebula Award*
- *A book that won an Edgar or Dagger Award*
- *A book originally written in a different language*
- *A Pulitzer Prize winner*
- *A National Book Award or Man Booker Prize winner*
- *A book more than 100 years old*
- *A book about the United States*
- *A history of a country that's not the United States*
- *A book of popular science*
- *A book about something you are curious about*
- *A play*
- *A book about World War II*
- *A book of essays*
- *A microhistory*

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AP SUMMER READING:

AP Literature Required Books

All students are required to **read one book from the list of teacher generated titles**. In addition to this, students must read the three books below:

- *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster
- *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen
- *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin

AP Language Required Books

Students are required to read **two** books over the summer for this course. All students must read ***Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About the Art of Persuasion* by Jay Heinrichs**. In addition, students must read **one** of the books from this short list of popular nonfiction:

- *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell
- *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* by Stephen King
- *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi, M.D.
- *Concussion* by Jeanne Marie Laskas
- *The Partly Cloudy Patriot* by Sarah Vowell
- *Rise of the Rocket Girls: The Women Who Propelled Us, from Missiles to the Moon to Mars* by Nathalia Holt
- *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* by Richard Rodriguez
- *Into the Wild* by John Krakauer