

EPHS Summer Reading List 2010

All Students are to read two books during the summer.

- Students are to read the one **required** text under their grade list and choose **one** of the **two optional** titles to read as well.
- All students will be tested on **both** readings by the following common assessments: one comprehension test and one performance assessment which can be entered into portfolio collection if proficient. Assessments for summer reading will be given the first full week of school in September in **all** English Classes.

9th Grade

Required: *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan

Description: Percy Jackson is a good kid, but he can't seem to focus on his schoolwork or control his temper. And lately, being away at boarding school is only getting worse -- Percy could have sworn his pre-algebra teacher turned into a monster and tried to kill him. When Percy's mom finds out, she knows it's time that he knew the truth about where he came from, and that he go to the one place he'll be safe. She sends Percy to Camp Half Blood, a summer camp for demigods (on Long Island), where he learns that the father he never knew is Poseidon, God of the Sea. Soon a mystery unfolds and together with his friends -- one a satyr and the other the demigod daughter of Athena -- Percy sets out on a quest across the United States to reach the gates of the Underworld (located in a recording studio in Hollywood) and prevent a catastrophic war between the gods.

Optional (choose one)

1. *Romiette and Julio* by Sharon Draper

Description: When Romiette Cappelle meets Julio Montague, she feels as though she has met the soul mate who can rescue her from her recurring nightmare about fire and water. But like the Shakespearean characters whose names echo theirs, Romiette and Julio discover that not everyone approves of their budding romance. In their case, it is because Romiette is African-American and Julio is Hispanic, and the Devildogs, a dangerous local gang, violently oppose their interracial relationship.

When the Devildogs threaten to teach them a lesson, Romiette and Julio come up with a risky plan to escape from the gang's fearsome shadow. But things go terribly awry, and the two find themselves caught up in a deadly reality more frightening than Romiette's nightmare -- and in a desperate struggle to avoid the tragic fate of Shakespeare's famous young lovers.

2. "Speak" by Laurie Halse Anderson

Description: Melinda Sordino busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops. Now her old friends won't talk to her, and people she doesn't even know hate her from a distance. The safest place to be is alone, inside her own head. But even that's not safe. Because there's something she's trying not to think about, something about the night of the party that, if she let it in, would blow her carefully constructed disguise to smithereens.

And then she would have to speak the truth. This extraordinary first novel has captured the imaginations of teenagers and adults across the country.

10th Grade

Required: *Black Boy* (Part I) by Richard Wright

Description: Richard Wright grew up in the woods of Mississippi amid poverty, hunger, fear, and hatred. He lied, stole, and raged at those around him; at six he was a "drunkard," hanging about in taverns. Surly, brutal, cold, suspicious, and self-pitying, he was surrounded on one side by whites who were either indifferent to him, pitying, or cruel, and on the other by blacks who resented anyone trying to rise above the common lot. *Black Boy* is Richard Wright's powerful account of his journey from innocence to experience in the Jim Crow South. It is at once an unashamed confession and a profound indictment -- a poignant and disturbing record of social injustice and human suffering.

Optional (choose one)

1. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne

Description: Berlin 1942. When Bruno returns home from school one day, he discovers that his belongings are being packed in crates. His father has received a promotion and the family must move from their home to a new house far far away, where there is no one to play with and nothing to do. A tall fence running alongside stretches as far as the eye can see and cuts him off from the strange people he can see in the distance. But Bruno longs to be an explorer and decides that there must be more to this desolate new place than meets the eye. While exploring his new environment, he meets another boy whose life and circumstances are very different to his own, and their meeting results in a friendship that has devastating consequences.

2. *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* by Julia Alvarez

Description: The Garcias Dr. Carlos (Papi), his wife Laura (Mami), and their four daughters, Carla, Sandra, Yolanda, and Sofia belong to the uppermost echelon of Spanish Caribbean society, descended from the conquistadores. Their family compound adjoins the palacio of the dictator's daughter. So when Dr. Garcia's part in a coup attempt is discovered, the family must flee. They arrive in New York City in 1960 to a life far removed from their existence in the Dominican Republic. Papi has to find new patients in the Bronx. Mami, far from the compound and the family retainers, must find herself. Meanwhile, the girls try to lose themselves by forgetting their Spanish, by straightening their hair and wearing fringed bell bottoms. For them, it is at once liberating and excruciating being caught between the old world and the new, trying to live up to their father's version of honor while accommodating the expectations of their American boyfriends. Acclaimed writer Julia Alvarez's brilliant and buoyant first novel sets the Garcia girls free to tell their most intimate stories about how they came to be at home and not at home in America.

11th Grade

Required: *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer

Description: In April 1992 a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. His name was Christopher Johnson McCandless. He had given \$25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet, and invented a new life for himself. Four months later, his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter. How McCandless came to die is the unforgettable story of *Into the Wild*.

Optional (choose one):

1. *Dawn* by Elie Wiesel

Description: Elisha is a young Jewish man, a Holocaust survivor, and an Israeli freedom fighter in British-controlled Palestine; John Dawson is the captured English officer he will murder at dawn in retribution for the British execution of a fellow freedom fighter. The night-long wait for morning and death provides Dawn, Elie Wiesel's ever more timely novel, with its harrowingly taut, hour-by-hour narrative. Caught between the manifold horrors of the past and the troubling dilemmas of the present, Elisha wrestles with guilt, ghosts, and ultimately God as he waits for the appointed hour and his act of assassination. Dawn is an eloquent meditation on the compromises, justifications, and sacrifices that human beings make when they murder other human beings.

2. *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

Description: On November 15, 1959, in the small town of Holcomb, Kansas, four members of the Clutter family were savagely murdered by blasts from a shotgun held a few inches from their faces. There was no apparent motive for the crime, and there were almost no clues.

As Truman Capote reconstructs the murder and the investigation that led to the capture, trial, and execution of the killers, he generates both mesmerizing suspense and astonishing empathy. *In Cold Blood* is a work that transcends its moment, yielding poignant insights into the nature of American violence.

12th Grade

Required: *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen

Description: Though he may not speak of them, the memories still dwell inside Jacob Jankowski's ninety-something-year-old mind. Memories of himself as a young man, tossed by fate onto a rickety train that was home to the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth. Memories of a world filled with freaks and clowns, with wonder and pain and anger and passion; a world with its own narrow, irrational rules, its own way of life, and its own way of death. The world of the circus: to Jacob it was both salvation and a living hell. Jacob was there because his luck had run out -- orphaned and penniless, he had no direction until he landed on this locomotive "ship of fools." It was the early part of the Great Depression, and everyone in this third-rate circus was lucky to have any job at all. Marlena, the star of the equestrian act, was there because she fell in love with the wrong man, a handsome circus boss with a wide mean streak. And Rosie the elephant was there because she was the great gray hope...

Optional (choose one):

1. *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini

Description: The timely and critically acclaimed debut novel that's becoming a word-of-mouth phenomenon. An epic tale of fathers and sons, of friendship and betrayal, that takes us from Afghanistan in the final days of the monarchy to the atrocities of the present.

The unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, *The Kite Runner* is a beautifully crafted novel set in a country that is in the process of being destroyed. It is about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption and it is also about the power of fathers over sons-their love, their sacrifices, their lies.

2. *Death Be Not Proud* by John J. Gunther

Description: Johnny Gunther was only seventeen years old when he died of a brain tumor. During the months of his illness, everyone near him was unforgettably impressed by his level-headed courage, his wit and quiet friendliness, and, above all, his unfaltering patience through times of despair. This deeply moving book is a father's memoir of a brave, intelligent, and spirited boy.