

Grade 12 - Summer Choices Program 2020
(NOT including AP Courses)

Incoming seniors (not enrolled in an AP English course) must select **ONE** of the following texts to read over the summer. Please select books which you have not previously read. Assessments will be administered in the fall for the text selected. Students enrolled in AP courses should refer to their respective course lists.

***American Assassin* by Vince Flynn (Suspense)**

Syracuse University student Mitch Rapp broods over the deaths of his girlfriend and thirty-four other classmates on the bombed Pan Am Flight 103, until he is recruited and trained by the CIA and receives his first assignment--to kill the Turkish arms dealer who sold the bomb that killed his friends.

***Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates (Autobiographical)**

At every stage of Ta-Nehisi Coates' life, he's sought in his explorations of history answers to the mysteries that surrounded him--most urgently, why he, and other black people he knew, seemed to live in fear. Coates takes readers along on his journey through America's history of race and its contemporary resonances through a series of awakenings.

***Beyond Belief: Finding the Strength to Come Back* by Josh Hamilton with Tim Keown (Autobiography)**

Josh Hamilton was the first player chosen in the first round of the 1999 baseball draft. He was destined to be one of those rare "high-character " superstars. But in 2001, working his way from the minors to the majors, all of the plans for Josh went off the rails in a moment of weakness. What followed was a 4-year nightmare of drugs and alcohol, estrangement from friends and family, and his eventual suspension from baseball.

***Blink: the Power of Thinking without Thinking* by Malcolm Gladwell (Non-Fiction)**

Explores the process by which people make decisions, explaining how the difference between good and bad decision making is directly related to the details on which people focus, and offers advice on how to improve decision making skills.

***Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* by Trevor Noah (Memoir)**

Trevor Noah's unlikely path from apartheid South Africa to the desk of *The Daily Show* began with a criminal act: his birth. Trevor was born to a white Swiss father and a black Xhosa mother at a time when such a union was punishable by five years in prison. Whether subsisting on caterpillars for dinner during hard times, being thrown from a moving car during an attempted kidnapping, or just trying to survive the life-and-death pitfalls of dating in high school, Trevor illuminates his curious world with an incisive wit and unflinching honesty.

***Born To Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, and the Greatest Race The World Has Never Seen* by Christopher McDougall (Non-Fiction)**

Full of incredible characters, amazing athletic achievements, cutting-edge science, and, most of all, pure inspiration, *Born to Run* is an epic adventure that began with one simple question: *Why does my foot hurt?* The author sets off to find a tribe of the world's greatest distance runners and learn their secrets, and in the process shows us that everything we thought we knew about running is wrong.

***Brady vs Manning : the untold story of the rivalry that transformed the NFL* by Gary Myer (Non-fiction)**

Explores how the rivalry between quarterbacks Peyton Manning and Tom Brady has shaped their careers and the NFL overall, sharing insights into their opinions about each other and the factors that shaped them as men and athletes.

***Cairo* by G. Willow Wilson (Fantasy Fiction, Graphic Novel)**

Set in bustling modern-day Cairo, this magical-realism thriller interweaves the lives of a drug runner, a down-on-his-luck journalist, an American expatriate, a young activist, an Israeli soldier, and a genie as they navigate the city's streets and spiritual underworld to find a stolen hooka sought by a wrathful gangster-magician.

***City of Thieves* by David Benioff (War Fiction)**

Documenting his grandparents' experiences during the siege of Leningrad, a young writer learns his grandfather's story about how a military deserter and he tried to secure pardons by gathering hard-to-find ingredients for a powerful colonel's daughter's wedding cake.

***Die Young with Me* by Rob Rufus (Memoir)**

True story of punk rocker Rob Rufus' diagnosis of brain cancer at a young age. Amazon.com describes it as "a raw, honest account of a brave teen's fight with cancer and the many ways music helped him cope."

***Disrupted: My Misadventure in the Start-Up Bubble* by Dan Lyons (Non-fiction)**

An uproarious memoir of life inside the tech bubble by the Silicon Valley writer and co-producer describes how after being downsized he took a wacky job selling email spam with a tech company rife with cultish millennials, absent bosses and venture capital amenities.

***Firefighters: Stories of Survival from the Front Lines of Firefighting* (Non- Fiction)**

Contains over twenty true accounts by and about firefighters who survived life threatening situations in the course of their work.

***Fool Me Once* by Harlan Coben (Mystery)**

Horried when she spots the husband who was reported dead weeks earlier playing with their toddler on her nanny cam, former special ops pilot Maya confronts deep secrets and deceit in her own past to discern the truth.

***The Head of the Saint* by Socorro Acioli, translated by Daniel Hahn (Fiction)**

Having arrived in Candeia, Brazil, starving and footsore, after walking sixteen days to fulfill his dying mother's last wishes, young Samuel takes up residence in an enormous, broken statue of Saint Anthony and finds that he can hear the prayers of the townspeople, despite his lack of faith.

***Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* by J.D. Vance (Memoir)**

Hillbilly Elegy is a passionate and personal analysis of a culture in crisis—that of white working-class Americans. The decline of this group, a demographic of our country that has been slowly disintegrating over forty years. J. D. Vance tells the true story of what a social, regional, and class decline feels like when you were born with it hung around your neck.

***Humans of New York: Stories* by Brandon Stanton (Non-fiction)**

Ever since Brandon began interviewing people on the streets of New York, the dialogue he's had with them has increasingly become as in-depth, intriguing and moving as the photos themselves. Humans of New York: Stories presents a whole new group of people in stunning photographs, with a rich design and, most importantly, longer stories that delve deeper and surprise with greater candor.

***I am the Messenger* by Markus Zusak (Realistic Fiction)**

After capturing a bank robber, nineteen-year-old cab driver Ed Kennedy begins receiving mysterious messages that direct him to addresses where people need help, and he begins getting over his lifelong feeling of worthlessness.

***The Inner Game of Tennis : The Classic Guide to the Mental Side of Peak Performance* by W. Timothy Gallwey (Sports psychology)**

In this sports classic the author applies his "inner game" theory to tennis, but the principles can be applied to virtually any sport. Warriors coach Steve Kerr and Seahawks coach Pete Carroll have taken this book to heart on the way to competitive success.

***Looking for Alaska* by John Green (Realistic Fiction)**

Sixteen-year-old Miles Halter is done with his safe life. He heads off to the sometimes crazy, possibly unstable, and anything-but-boring world of Culver Creek Boarding School, and his life becomes the opposite of safe. Because down the hall lives the gorgeous, clever, funny, sexy, self-destructive, screwed-up, and utterly fascinating Alaska Young, an event unto herself.

***A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman (Fiction)**

Behind the cranky exterior there is a story and a sadness. So when one November morning a chatty young couple with two chatty young daughters move in next door and accidentally flatten Ove's mailbox, it is the lead-in to a comical and heartwarming tale of unkempt cats, unexpected friendship, and the ancient art of backing up a U-Haul.

***Modern Romance* by Aziz Ansari & Eric Klinenberg (Non-fiction)**

The acclaimed comedian teams up with a New York University sociologist to explore the nature of modern relationships, evaluating how technology is shaping contemporary relationships and considering the differences between courtships of the past and present.

***Monster : a novel of Frankenstein* by Dave Zeltserman. (Horror)**

Shattered and tortured after being wrongly accused of his beloved fiancée's murder, Friedrich of 19th-century Germany is subjected to a brutal lab experiment by Victor Frankenstein and the Marquis de Sade, who transform him into a violent and vengeful creature.

***The Operator: Firing the Shots that Killed Osama bin Laden and My Years as a SEAL Team Warrior* by Robert O'Neill (Memoir)**

The Operator ranges across SEAL Team Operator Robert O'Neill's awe-inspiring four-hundred-mission career, which included his involvement in attempts to rescue "Lone Survivor" Marcus Luttrell and abducted-by-Somali-pirates Captain Richard Phillips and which culminated in those famous three shots that dispatched the world's most wanted terrorist, Osama bin Laden.

***The Path: What Chinese Philosophers Can Teach Us About the Good Life* by Michael Puett and Christine Gross-Loh (Non-fiction)**

An award-winning Harvard professor shares the lessons from his wildly popular course on classical Chinese philosophy, showing you how these ancient ideas can guide you on the path to a good life today. The lessons taught by ancient Chinese philosophers surprisingly still apply, and they challenge our fundamental assumptions about how to lead a fulfilled, happy, and successful life.

***Picture Us in the Light* by Kelly Loy Gilbert (Fiction)**

Danny Cheng has always known his parents have secrets. But when he discovers a taped-up box in his father's closet filled with old letters and a file on a powerful Bay Area family, he realizes there's much more to his family's past than he ever imagined.

***Pipe Dreams: a Surfer's Journey* by Kelly Slater with Jason Borte (Biography)**

Six-time world surfing champion, actor, and American heartthrob Kelly Slater tells his inspiring story of triumph over adversity.

***The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo (Fiction in verse)**

Xiomara Batista feels unheard and unable to hide in her Harlem neighborhood. But Xiomara has plenty she wants to say, and she pours all her frustration and passion onto the pages of a leather notebook. Because in the face of a world that may not want to hear her, Xiomara refuses to be silent.

***The Power of Broke : How Empty Pockets, a Tight budget, and a Hunger for Success can Become Your Greatest Competitive Advantage* by Daymond John with Daniel Paisner (Non-fiction)**

The star of ABC's "Shark Tank" demonstrates how starting a business on a shoestring can provide significant competitive advantages for entrepreneurs by forcing them to think creatively, use resources efficiently, and connect more authentically with customers.

***Rap Yearbook : the most important rap song from every year since 1979, discussed, debated, and deconstructed* by Shea Serrano (Non-fiction)**

Complete with infographics, lyric maps, hilarious and informative footnotes, portraits of the artists, and short essays by other prominent music writers, The Rap Year Book is both a narrative and illustrated guide to the most iconic and influential rap songs ever created.

***Red Rising* by Pierce Brown (Science Fiction)**

Darrow, a Red, which is the lowest caste in the color-coded society of the future, joins a revolutionary cell and attempts to infiltrate an elite military academy after witnessing the execution of his wife.

***The Rose that Grew From Concrete* by Tupac Amaru Shakur (Poetry)**

A collection of verse by the late hip hop star Tupac Shakur includes more than one hundred poems confronting such wide ranging topics as poverty, motherhood, Van Gogh, and Mandela.

***The Serpent King* by Jeff Zentner (Fiction)**

In the summer before their senior year, friends Dill, Lydia and Travis deal with conflicting emotions and attitudes as they face the prospect of going their own way after high school. This is a compelling, award-winning novel about "the importance of pursuing individual passions and forging one's own path" (Julie Smith, Booklist Online).

***Speak Like Churchill, Stand Like Lincoln: 21 Powerful Secret of History's Greatest Speakers* by James C. Hume (Non-fiction)**

Explains how great leaders throughout history have used simple yet very effective tricks to speak, persuade, and win throngs of fans and followers; includes examples from historical speeches.

***Stories of Your Life and Others* by Ted Chiang (Short stories, Sci-Fi)**

Delivers dual delights of the very, very strange and the heartbreakingly familiar, often presenting characters who must confront sudden change—the inevitable rise of automatons or the appearance of aliens—with some

sense of normalcy. Chiang examines what it means to be alive in a world marked by uncertainty, but also by beauty and wonder.

***Tales of Mystery and Imagination* by Edgar Allan Poe (Horror, Mystery)**

Presents a selection of stories by American writer Edgar Allan Poe, including tales of horror, mystery, and science fiction, including "The Pit and the Pendulum," "The Tell-Tale Heart," and "The Murders in the Rue Morgue. Or read stories for free online @<http://poestories.com/stories.php>

***Tales of the Tikongs* by Epeli Hau'ofa (Short stories, Satire)**

Banned in Tonga for a time, these twelve very short stories are set in a fictional South Pacific nation that has recently gained independence. Using humor the author highlights the missteps in government, religion and other aspects of island life.

***We the Animals* by Justin Torres (Fiction)**

Follows the intense family life of three brothers living in the shadow of their parents' passionate love, and their own profound sense of family unity and belonging.