

Hello Class of 2023 and Parents,

Welcome to high school!! We are so excited to meet you all in August, and we hope you enjoy your summer. The goal for your summer reading assignment is to find a book that you truly enjoy reading; thus, look over this list carefully and choose a book that fits your interests. Look on Amazon.com or Goodreads.com for further book reviews and information. It would be best if you can obtain your own copy of the book, if not, the Montgomery County Library may have copies, or if you need assistance, please let us know. Read it carefully, and be ready to discuss characters, theme, conflict and some of the major literary elements of the book. There truly is a book on this list for everyone! Below each title are some key words that indicate what the book is about. Look carefully and enjoy!

***If you enrolled in Pre-AP English I, you will read Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury in addition to a book of your choice from the following list

During the first few weeks of school, your teachers will give you an assignment over your summer reading. This assignment will count for a **quiz** grade and might include an essay, a visual representation, or other activity provided by your teacher.

Our goals for this assignment are:

- To establish a reading habit in the busy lives of high school students.
- To alleviate the “summer slide” where students lose much of the progress they made during the school year by not engaging in anything academic for three months (“[The Importance of Summer Reading](#)”).

Although **annotating is not a requirement**, it can certainly be beneficial. Students also can share their thoughts about books in a reading journal by writing, by drawing pictures, or by keeping track of what they read on a Google Doc. Again, this is not a requirement, but it might help students to better remember what they have read. Students should choose a format that meets their needs and should be excited to share book ideas with their peers once school convenes in August.

The best books challenge our beliefs by helping us see through different eyes—to live a different life. While we won’t know the details of every book students read, what we seek for all of our students is a compulsion to read—for pleasure—for knowledge—for a passion—for a story or information that will keep them in the pages of a book past their assigned reading.

Reading has tremendous benefits. Here are just a few:

- **Reading relieves stress.** Freshman year is stressful. Reading takes you out of the present and into another place and time; it is a perfect escape.
- **Reading builds stamina** to prepare students for high school and college. Reading for an hour or two in one sitting is a basic expectation in college. In freshman English classes, we will exercise muscles soon to be strained in the coming years. Reading for fluency and stamina has been proven to improve the reading rate for students. Fast reading develops confidence and an appetite for books as well as teaches vocabulary in context, which improves writing, but it only happens when students find books they *want* to read.

- There is a lot of talk in the media that ‘students today won’t read,’ but we believe students substitute all of those other distractions (the internet, social media, TV, etc.) if they feel no passion for the book assigned to them. In our experience, students who haven’t been readers since elementary school will suddenly become quite passionate about reading with **the right book** in their hands, but those books might challenge your values. Is that okay with you?

Our hope is that students and parents alike will enjoy the pleasure of reading this summer. Try new genres, read a book together, or listen to an audio book while traveling. Most importantly, find time to validate and honor the reading choices your student makes throughout the summer. We are convinced that such reading will become its own reward and that our Highlanders will be life-long readers.

We believe we have to trust these young adults more. We have to trust that books won’t corrupt them anymore than movies, music, television, or social media might. It is more important that they are reading! One of the great benefits of Young Adult literature is that it can provide an avenue for conversations with teenagers that might be difficult to start but are worthy, relevant, and important. If you are concerned about the content of a book your student chooses, we certainly understand and respect you asking him or her to choose another title from the list. However, we also encourage you to use this as an opportunity to read along with your student and start those conversations! If you have any questions, please contact the school, and they will put you in touch with one of the 9th grade English teachers.

Thank you for your support,

TWHS 9th grade English Teachers

Conroe ISD Summer Reading Purpose Statement:

In Conroe ISD, we encourage all students to read over the summer in order to enrich learning and provoke thought. Summer reading strengthens reading skills, increases academic achievement, fosters a love for reading, and empowers students to become life-long learners.

Additionally, students who enroll in a Pre AP or AP English course are expected to engage in summer reading as it prepares students for the upcoming school year and creates an initial common framework for classroom discussion and instruction.

The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo

*personal identity, growing up in a culturally challenging environment, poetry

Winner of the National Book Award for Young People’s Literature, the Michael L. Printz Award, and the Pura Belpré Award!

Xiomara Batista feels unheard and unable to hide in her Harlem neighborhood. Ever since her body grew into curves, she has learned to let her fists and her fierceness do the talking. But Xiomara has plenty she wants to say, and she pours all her frustration and passion onto the pages of a leather notebook, reciting the words to herself like prayers – especially after she catches feelings for a boy in her bio class named Aman, who her family can never know about.

With Mami’s determination to force her daughter to obey the laws of the church, Xiomara understands that her thoughts are best kept to herself. So when she is invited to join her school’s slam poetry club, she doesn’t know how she could ever attend without her mami finding out. But she still can’t stop thinking about performing her poems. Because in the face of a world that may not want to hear her, Xiomara refuses to be silent.

Booked by Kwame Alexander

* all poetry told from the story of a boy obsessed with soccer, parental problems

*Like lightning/you strike/fast and free/legs zoom/down field/eyes fixed/on the checkered ball/on the goal/ten yards to go/can’t nobody stop you/
can’t nobody cop you...*

In this follow-up to the Newbery-winning novel *THE CROSSOVER*, soccer, family, love, and friendship, take center stage as twelve-year-old Nick learns the power of words as he wrestles with problems at home, stands up to a bully, and tries to impress the girl of his dreams. Helping him along are his best friend and sometimes teammate Coby, and The Mac, a rapping librarian who gives Nick inspiring books to read.

This electric and heartfelt novel-in-verse by poet Kwame Alexander bends and breaks as it captures all the thrills and setbacks, action and emotion of a World Cup match!

Absolutely True Story of a Part-time Indian by Sherman Alexie

* Native American culture, cartoons/drawing

Bestselling author Sherman Alexie tells the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the rez to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.

Heartbreaking, funny, and beautifully written, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, which is based on the author's own experiences, coupled with poignant drawings by Ellen Forney that reflect the character's art, chronicles the contemporary adolescence of one Native American boy as he attempts to break away from the life he was destined to live.

Me & Earl & the Dying Girl by Jesse Andrews

*friendship, high school social scene, cancer, death of a friend

Socially awkward seventeen-year-old Greg has managed to become part of every social group at his Pittsburgh high school while only still having one true friend. He gains another when his mother forces him to befriend Rachel, a girl he once knew in Hebrew school who now has terminal leukemia. This is a story of a powerful bond and a heartwarming and hilarious tale of true friendship

The Nazi Hunters: How a Team of Spies and Survivors Captured the World's Most Notorious Nazis by Neal Bascomb

*WWII, Nazis, history, non-fiction

In 1945, at the end of World War II, Adolf Eichmann, the head of operations for the Nazis' Final Solution, walked into the mountains of Germany and vanished from view. Sixteen years later, an elite team of spies captured him at a bus stop in Argentina and smuggled him to Israel, resulting in one of the century's most important trials -- one that cemented the Holocaust in the public imagination.

This is the thrilling and fascinating story of what happened between these two events. Illustrated with powerful photos throughout, impeccably researched, and told with powerful precision, THE NAZI HUNTERS is a can't-miss work of narrative nonfiction for middle-grade and YA readers.

We'll Fly Away by Bryan Bliss

*friendship between two boys, small towns, problems with parents, hope for the future

National Book Award Longlist Title * Booklist Editors' Choice * CYBILS Young Adult Fiction Finalist * Nerdy Book Club Award for Best Young Adult Fiction * Paste Magazine Best Book *YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults

Luke and Toby have always had each other's backs. **But then one choice — or maybe it is a series of choices — sets them down an irrevocable path.** *We'll Fly Away* weaves together Luke and Toby's senior year of high school with letters Luke writes to Toby later — from death row. Best friends since childhood, Luke and Toby have dreamed of one thing: getting out of their dead-end town. Soon they finally will, riding the tails of Luke's wrestling scholarship, never looking back. If they don't drift apart first. If Toby's abusive dad, or Luke's unreliable mom, or anything else their complicated lives throw at them doesn't get in the way.

Tense and emotional, this hard-hitting novel explores family abuse, sex, love, and friendship, and how far people will go to protect those they love.

Tell Me Three Things by Julie Buxbaum

*love, family conflict, personal identity, relationship through email, mystery

Everything about Jessie is wrong. At least that's what it feels like during her first week of junior year at her new ultra-intimidating prep school in Los Angeles. Just when she's thinking about hightailing it back to Chicago, she gets an email from a person calling themselves Somebody/Nobody (SN for short), offering to help her navigate the wilds of Wood Valley High School. Is it an elaborate hoax? Or can she rely on SN for some much-needed help?

It's been barely two years since her mother's death, and because her father eloped with a woman he met online, Jessie has been forced to move across the country to live with her stepmonster and her pretentious teenage son. In a leap of faith - or an act of complete desperation - Jessie begins to rely on SN, and SN quickly becomes her lifeline and closest ally. Jessie can't help wanting to meet SN in person. But are some mysteries better left unsolved?

The Selection (any in the series) by Kierra Cass

*Hunger Games meets the Bachelorette

For thirty-five girls, the Selection is the chance of a lifetime. The opportunity to escape the life laid out for them since birth. To be swept up in a world of glittering gowns and priceless jewels. To live in a palace and compete for the heart of gorgeous Prince Maxon.

But for America Singer, being Selected is a nightmare. It means turning her back on her secret love with Aspen, who is a caste below her. Leaving her home to enter a fierce competition for a crown she doesn't want. Living in a palace that is constantly threatened by violent rebel attacks.

Then America meets Prince Maxon. Gradually, she starts to question all the plans she's made for herself – and realizes that the life she's always dreamed of may not compare to a future she never imagined.

Ready Player One by Ernest Cline

*fantasy, computers, gaming, the future

In 2012, the book received an Alex Award from the Young Adult Library Services Association division of the American Library Association and won the 2012 Prometheus Award.

In the year 2044, reality is an ugly place. The only time teenage Wade Watts really feels alive is when he's jacked into the virtual utopia known as the OASIS. Wade's devoted his life to studying the puzzles hidden within this world's digital confines, puzzles that are based on their creator's obsession with the pop culture of decades past and that promise massive power and fortune to whoever can unlock them. When Wade stumbles upon the first clue, he finds himself beset by players willing to kill to take this ultimate prize. The race is on, and if Wade's going to survive, he'll have to win – and confront the real world he's always been so desperate to escape.

Refugee by Alan Gratz

* connections across generations, refugees, Nazi Germany, Cuban culture, Syrian culture

A New York Times bestseller!

JOSEF is a Jewish boy living in 1930s Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps looming, he and his family board a ship bound for the other side of the world . . .

ISABEL is a Cuban girl in 1994. With riots and unrest plaguing her country, she and her family set out on a raft, hoping to find safety in America . . .

MAHMOUD is a Syrian boy in 2015. With his homeland torn apart by violence and destruction, he and his family begin a long trek toward Europe . . .

All three kids go on harrowing journeys in search of refuge. All will face unimaginable dangers -- from drownings to bombings to betrayals. But there is always the hope of *tomorrow*. And although Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud are separated by continents and decades, shocking connections will tie their stories together in the end.

This action-packed novel tackles topics both timely and timeless: courage, survival, and the quest for home.

When Dimple Met Rishi by Sandhya Menon

*love, romance, cultural expectations, Indian culture

Dimple Shah has it all figured out. With graduation behind her, she's more than ready for a break from her family, from Mamma's inexplicable obsession with her finding the "Ideal Indian Husband." Ugh. Dimple knows they must respect her principles on some level, though. If they truly believed she needed a husband *right now*, they wouldn't have paid for her to attend a summer program for aspiring web developers...right?

Rishi Patel is a hopeless romantic. So when his parents tell him that his future wife will be attending the same summer program as him – wherein he'll have to woo her – he's totally on board. Because as silly as it sounds to most people in his life, Rishi *wants* to be arranged, *believes* in the power of tradition, stability, and being a part of something much bigger than himself.

The Shahs and Patels didn't mean to start turning the wheels on this "suggested arrangement" so early in their children's lives, but when they noticed them both gravitate toward the same summer program, they figured, *Why not?*

Dimple and Rishi may think they have each other figured out. But when opposites clash, love works hard to prove itself in the most unexpected ways.

Flat-Out Love by Jessica Park

*love, romance, family relationships, friendship, personal identity, emotional disturbance of a child

Chosen as a 2014 YALSA Amazing Audiobook for Young Adults

He was tall, at least six feet, with dirty blond hair that hung over his eyes. His T-shirt read **Nietzsche Is My Homeboy**.

So, that was Matt. Who Julie Seagle likes. A lot. But there is also Finn. Who she flat out loves. Complicated? Awkward? Completely.

But really, how was this freshly-minted Boston transplant and newbie college freshman supposed to know that she would end up living with the family of an old friend of her mother's? This was all supposed to be temporary. Julie wasn't supposed to be important to the Watkins family, or to fall in love with one of the brothers. Especially the one she's never quite met. But what does that really matter? Finn *gets* her, like no one ever has before. They have *connection*.

But here's the thing about love, in all its twisty, bumpy permutations – it always throws you a few curves. And no one ever escapes unscathed.

New York Times best-selling author Jessica Park mines the territory of love's growing pains with wit, sharp insights, and a discernible heat and heartbeat.

Boy 21 by Matthew Quick

* A boy's love of basketball, cultural identity (Irish, African-American), friendship between two boys

"The answers here are satisfying but never simple...A story that, like Finley, expresses a lot in relatively few words."

—*Kirkus, starred review*

"Beautiful...It is this depth that makes "Boy21" more than a first-rate novel fueled by basketball; it's a first-rate work of art." – *The New York Time Book Review*

You can lose yourself in repetition--quiet your thoughts; I learned the value of this at a very young age.

Basketball has always been an escape for Finley. He lives in broken-down Belmont, a town ruled by the Irish mob, drugs, violence, and racially charged rivalries. At home, his dad works nights, and Finley is left to take care of his disabled grandfather alone. He's always dreamed of getting out someday, but until he can, putting on that number 21 jersey makes everything seem okay.

Russ has just moved to the neighborhood, and the life of this teen basketball phenom has been turned upside down by tragedy. Cut off from everyone he knows, he won't pick up a basketball, but answers only to the name Boy21--taken from his former jersey number. As their final year of high school brings these two boys together, a unique friendship may turn out to be the answer they both need.

Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock by Matthew Quick

* struggle to survive, depression, reconciliation with friends and family

In addition to the P-38, there are four gifts, one for each of my friends. I want to say good-bye to them properly. I want to give them each something to remember me by. To let them know I really cared about them and I'm sorry I couldn't be more than I was--that I couldn't stick around--and that what's going to happen today isn't their fault.

Today is Leonard Peacock's birthday. It is also the day he will kill his former best friend, and then himself, with his grandfather's P-38 pistol.

Maybe one day he'll believe that being different is okay, important even.

But not today.

All American Boys by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely

* football, racial tensions, police brutality, friendship between boys

In an unforgettable new novel from award-winning authors Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely, two teens – one black, one white – grapple with the repercussions of a single violent act that leaves their school, their community, and, ultimately, the country bitterly divided by racial tension.

A bag of chips. That's all sixteen-year-old Rashad is looking for at the corner bodega. What he finds instead is a fist-happy cop, Paul Galluzzo, who mistakes Rashad for a shoplifter, mistakes Rashad's pleadings that he's stolen nothing for belligerence, mistakes Rashad's resistance to leave the bodega as resisting arrest, mistakes Rashad's every flinch at every punch the cop throws as further resistance and refusal to STAY STILL as ordered. But how can you stay still when someone is pounding your face into the concrete pavement?

But there were witnesses: Quinn Collins – a varsity basketball player and Rashad's classmate who has been raised by Paul since his own father died in Afghanistan – and a video camera. Soon the beating is all over the news and Paul is getting threatened with accusations of prejudice and racial brutality. Quinn refuses to believe that the man who has basically been his savior could possibly be guilty. But then Rashad is absent. And absent again. And again. And the basketball team – half of whom are Rashad's best friends – start to take sides. As does the school. And the town. Simmering tensions threaten to

explode as Rashad and Quinn are forced to face decisions and consequences they had never considered before.

Eleanor & Park by Rainbow Rowell

*love, friendships between diverse cultures, step-parent problems

#1 New York Times Best Seller! "*Eleanor & Park* reminded me not just what it's like to be young and in love with a girl, but also what it's like to be young and in love with a book." -John Green, *The New York Times Book Review*

Set over the course of one school year in 1986, this is the story of two star-crossed misfits-smart enough to know that first love almost never lasts, but brave and desperate enough to try. When Eleanor meets Park, you'll remember your own first love-and just how hard it pulled you under.

Revolver by Marcus Sedgwick

* turn of the century setting, Arctic Circle, a boy and a father and a gun

Revolver is a 2011 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.
2011 Printz Award Honor Book – Young Adult Literature

Razor-sharp, psychological thriller set in a snowy Arctic wilderness.
"They say that dead men tell no tales, but they're wrong. Even the dead tell stories."

It's 1910. In a cabin north of the Arctic Circle, in a place murderously cold and desolate, Sig Andersson is alone. Except for the corpse of his father, frozen to death that morning when he fell through the ice on the lake.

The cabin is silent, so silent, and then there's a knock at the door. It's a stranger, and as his extraordinary story of gold dust and gold lust unwinds, Sig's thoughts turn more and more to his father's prized possession, a Colt revolver, hidden in the storeroom.
A revolver just waiting to be used...but should Sig use it, or not?

Scythe by Neil Shusterman

* fantasy, futuristic, dystopian society, death

Two teens must learn the "art of killing" in this Printz Honor-winning book, the first in a chilling new series from Neal Shusterman, author of the *New York Times* bestselling *Unwind* dystology.

A world with no hunger, no disease, no war, no misery: humanity has conquered all those things, and has even conquered death. Now Scythes are the only ones who can end life – and they are commanded to do so, in order to keep the size of the population under control.

Citra and Rowan are chosen to apprentice to a scythe – a role that neither wants. These teens must master the "art" of taking life, knowing that the consequence of failure could mean losing their own.

Scythe is the first novel of a thrilling new series by National Book Award-winning author Neal Shusterman in which Citra and Rowan learn that a perfect world comes only with a heavy price.

*May read [Thunderhead](#), sequel to *Scythe*.

The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives by Dashka Slater

* non-fiction, diverse cultures, true story in Oakland, California of black/white relations

One teenager in a skirt.

One teenager with a lighter.

One moment that changes both of their lives forever.

If it weren't for the 57 bus, Sasha and Richard never would have met. Both were high school students from Oakland, California, one of the most diverse cities in the country, but they inhabited different worlds. Sasha, a white teen, lived in the middle-class foothills and attended a small private school. Richard, a black teen, lived in the crime-plagued flatlands and attended a large public one.

Each day, their paths overlapped for a mere eight minutes. But one afternoon on the bus ride home from school, a single reckless act left Sasha severely burned, and Richard charged with two hate crimes and facing life imprisonment. The case garnered international attention, thrusting both teenagers into the spotlight.

Mr. 60% by Clete Barrett Smith

* absent parents, a deathly ill relative, dealing with drugs, a boy's struggle to survive high school

Matt Nolan is the high school drug dealer, deadbeat, and soon-to-be dropout according to everyone at his school. His vice principal is counting down the days until Mr. 60% (aka Matt) finally flunks out and is no longer his problem. What no one knows is the only reason Matt sells drugs is to take care of his uncle Jack, who is dying of cancer.

Meet Amanda. The overly cheerful social outcast whose optimism makes Matt want to hurl. Stuck as partners during an after-school club (mandatory for Matt), it's only a matter of time until Amanda discovers Matt's secret. But Amanda is used to dealing with heartbreak, and she's determined to help Matt find a way to give life 100 percent.

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

*racial tensions, police brutality, personal identity, friendship

Goodreads Choice Awards Best of the Best · William C. Morris Award Winner · National Book Award Longlist · Printz Honor Book · Coretta Scott King Honor Book · #1 *New York Times* Bestseller!

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what *really* went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does — or does not — say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

On the Come Up by Angie Thomas

*racial tensions, the music industry/rap music, personal identity

Sixteen-year-old Bri wants to be one of the greatest rappers of all time. Or at least get some streams on her mixtape.

As the daughter of an underground rap legend who died right before he hit big, Bri's got massive shoes to fill. But when her mom unexpectedly loses her job, food banks and shut-off notices become as much a part of Bri's life as beats and rhymes.

With bills piling up and homelessness staring her family down, Bri no longer just wants to make it - she has to make it.

Uglies by Scott Westerfeld

* futuristic dystopian society, the concept of what is “ugly” and “pretty”, society’s obsessions with beauty

The first installment of Scott Westerfeld’s *New York Times* bestselling and award-winning *Uglies* series – a global phenomenon that started the dystopian trend.

Tally is about to turn sixteen, and she can’t wait. In just a few weeks she’ll have the operation that will turn her from a repellent ugly into a stunningly attractive pretty. And as a pretty, she’ll be catapulted into a high-tech paradise where her only job is to have fun.

But Tally’s new friend Shay isn’t sure she wants to become a pretty. When Shay runs away, Tally learns about a whole new side of the pretty world – and it isn’t very pretty. The authorities offer Tally a choice: find her friend and turn her in, or never turn pretty at all. Tally’s choice will change her world forever.

The Sun is Also a Star by Nicola Yoon

* love, romance, parental tensions, hope for the future, cultural identity

Natasha: I’m a girl who believes in science and facts. Not fate. Not destiny. Or dreams that will never come true. I’m definitely not the kind of girl who meets a cute boy on a crowded New York City street and falls in love with him. Not when my family is twelve hours away from being deported to Jamaica. Falling in love with him won’t be my story.

Daniel: I’ve always been the good son, the good student, living up to my parents’ high expectations. Never the poet. Or the dreamer. But when I see her, I forget about all that. Something about Natasha makes me think that fate has something much more extraordinary in store – for both of us.

The Universe: Every moment in our lives has brought us to this single moment. A million futures lie before us. Which one will come true?

The Program (any in the series) by Suzanne Young

* futuristic dystopian society, depression, romance

In this “gripping tale for lovers of dystopian romance” (*Kirkus Reviews*), true feelings are forbidden, teen suicide is an epidemic, and the only solution is The Program.

Sloane knows better than to cry in front of anyone. With suicide now an international epidemic, one outburst could land her in The Program, the only proven course of treatment. Sloane's parents have already lost one child; Sloane knows they'll do anything to keep her alive. She also knows that everyone who's been through The Program returns as a blank slate. Because their depression is gone – but so are their memories.

Under constant surveillance at home and at school, Sloane puts on a brave face and keeps her feelings buried as deep as she can. The only person Sloane can be herself with is James. He's promised to keep them both safe and out of treatment, and Sloane knows their love is strong enough to withstand anything. But despite the promises they made to each other, it's getting harder to hide the truth. They are both growing weaker. Depression is setting in.

And The Program is coming for them.