

The Bay School
Summer Reading List 2009
Grades 10-12

You are required to read ONE book from this list. We encourage you to read as many enjoyable books as possible this summer. You will discuss this book during Book Bridge in the fall. Email Rachel Shaw, Bay School Librarian at rshaw@bayschoolsf.org if you have questions or would like more recommendations.

CLASSICS

***A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, Betty Smith**

In turn-of-the-century Brooklyn, young Francie Nolan describes her family life in Williamsburg's slums.

***The Age of Innocence*, Edith Wharton**

A look at upper class New York in the 1870s.

***Madame Bovary*, Gustave Flaubert**

Emma Bovary finds married life unsatisfying. A shocking book when published in France in 1857.

MEMOIRS

***Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life*, Barbara Kingsolver**

Chronicles the year the author and her family ate only locally grown foods.

***Tweak: Growing Up on Methamphetamines*, Nic Sheff**

Sheff relates his personal struggle with drugs and alcohol in this poignant and often disturbing memoir. – *Publisher's Weekly*

***A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*, Ishmael Beah**

A gripping account of a child soldier during the civil war in Sierra Leone.

***The Glass Castle*, Jeannette Walls**

A memoir of growing up in chaos and poverty with a family that prized freedom and unconventionality over comfort and safety. - *Outstanding Books for the College Bound*

***Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, Barack Obama**

Our president's memoir of his early years.

***Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time*, Greg Mortenson**

A mountain climber takes a wrong turn after a failed K2 summit attempt in Pakistan and ends up building a school in the mountain village that took him in.

TEEN FICTION

***Elsewhere*, Gabrielle Zevin**

Killed as a teenager, Lizzie discovers that after you die, you start living your life backwards.

***Empress of the World*, Sara Ryan**

Two teen girls fall in love at summer camp.

***Evolution, Me & Other Freaks of Nature*, Robin Brande**

Mena stands up for her belief in equality and fairness despite pressure from her parents, friends, and community.

***Ball Don't Lie*, Matt de la Peña**

A white foster-kid plays street basketball in order to escape from his life.

SCIENCE & MATH

***Animals in Translation: Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behavior*, Temple Grandin**

An autistic professor writes about her research on the connections between humans and animals.

***The Primal Teen: What the New Discoveries about the Teenage Brain Tell Us about Our Kids*, Barbara Strauch**

A fascinating look at the connection between teen behavior and brain development.

***Your Inner Fish: A Journey into the 3.5 Billion-Year History of the Human Body*, Neil Shubin**

A compelling scientific adventure story that will change forever how you understand what it means to be human. - Oliver Sacks

***Damned Lies and Statistics: Untangling Numbers from the Media, Politicians, and Activists*, Joel Best**

A guide to spotting bad statistics thinking critically numbers.

SHORT FICTION

The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven, Sherman Alexie

Poetically describes modern life on the Spokane Indian Reservation. – *Library Journal*

Barefoot Heart: Stories of a Migrant Child, Elva Trevino Hart

A woman reflects on her childhood and her Mexican-American family's impoverished years with stark dignity. – *Library Journal*

Different Seasons, Stephen King

Four stories about journeys and transitions.

NATURE

A Dangerous Place: California's Unsettling Fate, Marc Reisner

This narrative describes our earthquake-prone geology and offers a lurid scenario of what the San Francisco Bay Area will look like after the "Big One".

Walden, Henry David Thoreau

Thoreau's account of his time spent communing with nature in 1845.

FICTION

Purple Hibiscus, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Set in modern Nigeria, this novel follows a fifteen-year old girl who goes to live with her aunt during a military coup.

My Name is Asher Lev, Chaim Potok

Asher Lev is an orthodox Jew trying to reconcile his artist vision with his religious convictions.

Caucasia, Danzy Senna

Separated when their parents' interracial marriage ends in divorce, light-skinned Birdie and her dark-skinned sister Cole lead very different lives while hoping for a reunion with one another. - *More Outstanding Books for the College Bound*.

Brick Lane, Monica Ali

A young Bangladeshi woman moves to London for an arranged marriage.

Shortcomings, Adrian Tomine

A graphic novel about modern love and Asian-American identity.

Fight Club, Chuck Palahniuk

A dark, bleakly funny satirical novel about an insomniac who starts a secret club.

HISTORICAL FICTION

The Other Boleyn Girl, Philippa Gregory

A compelling tale of love and betrayal in 16th century England.

Mudbound, Hilary Jordan

A suspenseful story of a white family's experience with racial inequality in 1940s Mississippi.

Palace Walk, Naguib Mahfouz

A Muslim family endures during Egypt's occupation of Cairo by British forces in the early 1900s. – Publisher

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan, Lisa See

A woman looks back on her life in 19th-century rural China.

MORE NON-FICTION

A Short History of Myth, Karen Armstrong

A readable and concise explanation of the role of myth from ancient history to today.

Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking, Malcolm Gladwell

Filled with anecdotes and research, this book helps explain how we make snap judgments.

Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things, William McDonough and Michael Braungart

A manifesto written by a chemist and an architect that calls for a new kind of ecological consciousness. – *Publisher's Weekly*

SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY

A Wizard of Earthsea, Ursula K. Le Guin

The story of a reckless youth, hungry for power and knowledge, who tampered with long-held secrets and loosed a terrible shadow upon the world. - Publisher

Thinner Than Thou, Kit Reed

A look at a future society where youth, perfection, and beauty is the only religion.

The Book Thief, Markus Zusak

Death narrates this story of a book-stealing foster child living in Germany during World War II.

POETRY

Poetry 180: A Turning Back to Poetry, Billy Collins, ed.

A wonderfully accessible anthology of contemporary poetry.