

## Summer Reading Mission Statement

The intent of the Valley Regional High School summer reading program is to challenge students to become life-long readers and learners by encouraging them to read during non-instructional time. Through this reading program, the school promotes intellectual stimulation, social awareness, diversity of viewpoints, and independent thinking.

**Successful (passing standard) Summer Reading completion all four years is a graduation requirement.**

**Link to the VRHS Academic Expectations:**  
Students will comprehend written language  
Students will speak effectively

Books are available at VRHS, local libraries and bookstores including:  
Essex Books – Centerbrook and R.J. Julia Booksellers – Madison  
BAM- Waterford and Barnes and Noble - West Hartford

Books may also be purchased from online sellers such as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).  
Most are available in paperback.

### 2014 Faculty and Student Committee

Scarlet Bott  
Rachel Breault  
Eme Carlson  
Avery Carlson  
Indigo Carlson  
Leslie Clapp  
Teresa Cobb  
Carolyn Crehan  
Cindy Downie

McCaffrey Corbett  
Mateo Escobar  
Josef Lenz  
Claire Madden  
Cindy Maiolo  
Sarah McKinney  
Mia Marasco  
Elias Mueller  
Beth Nischan

Graham Rider  
Jordan Sack  
Kristie Schmidt  
Kyra Streck  
Jessica Tommaselli  
Kelsey Ward  
Abby Wolff  
Julie Zablocki

The faculty would like to thank students on the summer reading committee for their time, insight, and reviews. We appreciate your commitment to VRHS's summer reading program.

***Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley has been chosen by Chester Public Library  
as their summer discussion book: August 2014.**

**Valley Regional High School  
Chester—Deep River--Essex**

**“The books that help you most are those which make you think the most...a great book that comes from a great thinker is a ship of thought, deep freighted with truth and beauty.”--Pablo Neruda**

Dear Parent or Guardian:

We start with suggestions of over 75 books spontaneously generated by teachers and students. The committee attempts to select books encompassing multiple points of view, different cultures, and a myriad of experiences with a wide range of appeal. After many enthusiastic and engaging conversations, a well-rounded list emerges.

This booklet reviews the available books and explains in detail the summer reading process. Please know that summer reading is a graduation requirement and as such *must be passed all four years*. Encourage your student to get the required first book early in the summer and to choose a book that will keep him or her engaged or perhaps present a new idea or different perspective. Books are available for previewing in the library during the month of June and later in the main office for borrowing. Summer reading projects will be presented the second and third days of the first week of school in your student's CORE group.

We are pleased that the Chester Public Library will again be offering a book discussion for credit during the month of August for one of our required list summer reading books, *Brave New World*.

**The second book**, which is also a required part of summer reading, may be of your student's choice. This “free read” should challenge your student and provide insight for meaningful conversation when we return to school in the fall.

Please call the school if you have any questions. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Kristina Martineau  
Principal

Carolyn Crehan  
English Teacher  
Coordinator, Summer Reading Committee 2014

## Summer Reading Instructions for First Book

### Required first book- Choose from the approved list - Oral presentation with visual aid

1. Preview your book selection. Review the summer reading booklet, including reading the reviews of each book, before making your decision.
2. Choose one book for your level from the Summer Reading list. Your level is the English class you will be in for the 2014-2015 school year. For example, if you will be in a level 2/3 English class, you should choose a level 2/3 book or one labeled all. If you would like to read up and choose a level 1 book, you may do so. If, however, you will be in a level 1 English class, you may NOT read a level 2/3 book for your required first book but you may read one labeled all.
3. Read the School-wide Oral Presentation Rubric to understand how you will be assessed.
4. Review the list of ideas for projects and select one lending itself to your particular book.
5. Keep in mind you must explain why you chose each image or event to present. Your choices should reflect the following:
  - Plot
  - Characters
  - Setting
  - Theme (What message is the author trying to convey?)
  - Significance (How does this connect to your own life and personal experiences?)

## Summer Reading Instructions for Second Book (book of choice)

### Required Second Book- Any appropriate high school level book- Book Talk

*Direct any questions about appropriate choices to a summer reading committee member*

1. Please review the summer reading **second book** section of the rubric. You will be assessed using the summer reading rubric and **MUST** meet the requirement in order to pass.
2. Be prepared to participate in a "Book Talk". For the book talk, provide the author and title of the book as well as a brief summary of the plot, characters, setting, theme and significance. State your opinion of the

book, whether or not you would recommend it to someone else, and reasons why or why not.

### **Options for Summer Reading Oral Presentation Visual Aid Projects**

**Soundtrack/Playlist-** Think about the main character(s) in your book, the situations they have been through, and the changes that occur in their lives. What songs do you think would be on their iPods/playlist? You should choose five songs and print out the lyrics. In a full paragraph for EACH song, explain how the song directly relates to the main character(s). You must show you fully understand the main character, plot, theme, and significance.

**Letter to an Unknown Reader-** Write a letter that explains why people should read the book you chose. In your letter, you should explain why this book is valuable, what readers can learn from it, why it is a page-turner, etc. Your letter should be at least one full page, single-spaced, 12-pt font, with 1" margins. Your letter must portray the characters, plot, setting, theme, and significance of your book.

**Children's Book-** For the creative at heart, turn your book into a children's picture book. Create a children's story of your book that shows the characters, plot, setting, theme and significance of your book. You should draw the pictures (not print them from your computer), and you should write the story as if a young child were going to read it. Your children's book should be at least ten pages and it should clearly represent your book. Anyone (especially a child) should be able to pick up your creation and be able to understand it.

**Addition to the Book –** Choose one of the following to add to your book: an introduction, a chapter in the middle of the book, or a chapter at the end of the book. You might feel the book you read needs an introduction, or maybe something is missing in the middle, or maybe you think the ending needs to be extended. In the voice of the author, write one of the pieces (intro, middle or end) you feel is needed to make the book stronger. Your addition should be at least two pages, double-spaced, 12-pt font. At the end of your addition, give a one-paragraph explanation of why you made the change. Be sure to reference the characters, theme and significance of the book.

## Options for Summer Reading Oral Presentation Visual Aid Projects

(continued)

**Resume and Business Cards-** Research the proper format of a resume; in this case, a chronological resume will probably work best. Then choose two characters for whom you will prepare typed one-page resumes. For unknown information or for younger characters, you should create plausible entries based on your reading and be creative. You will also create five business cards for supporting characters. Through these pieces, you must show knowledge of plot, character, setting, theme, and significance. Business cards typically show name, job title, address and phone, email, fax, etc.

**Guide to (insert name of book here) for the Uninformed-** Create a guide to your book intended for those who have not read it. You must have the following five entries as a minimum: **Here's What Happened** (plot), **Here's Where It Happened** (setting, setting map), **Here's Who It Happened To** (character profiles), **Here's What It's All About** (theme), and lastly **Here's What I Think** (advice and/or personal connection). Design the booklet to look like a real guide, with illustrations, color, font, and text designed to grab the reader's interest and highlight information clearly.

**Diary-** Present a diary as if you were one of the characters in your book. In addition to other information, select a minimum of five quotes to explain in writing and/or act out the events you witness and experience. Diary presentations should also relate to five specific events minimum, taken from the beginning, middle, and end of the book. Language used should reflect the culture and age of the character.

**T. V. Guide-** Turn your book into a five or six-part miniseries. Prepare the TV guide entry for each night's episode. Episode entries must cover events from your entire book, beginning to end. Each synopsis must contain at least five exciting sentences designed to entice viewers without giving away spoilers. You must design a cover for your T.V. Guide. This should depict the characters, plot, setting, theme and significance of the book and should look like a real T.V. Guide cover.

## **Options for Summer Reading Oral Presentation Visual Aid Projects**

(continued)

**Movie Trailer or filmed Key Scene-** You must turn in a script to accompany your movie trailer or filmed key scene, and you may choose a few of your friends to assist you in filming this project but each is responsible for his/her own Summer Reading project. Your movie should follow your script exactly. Be sure you portray the characters, plot, setting, theme, and significance of your book. Add a soundtrack if necessary plus credits. Your trailer or key scene must be longer than three minutes and shorter than seven. Save on a DVD or laptop file. Mac users will need a converter to show their film on the classroom LCD.

**SUMMER READING Projects are presented in CORE  
during the first week of school.**

**Alternate Presentation Option:**

**We'll discuss *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley at the Chester Public Library in August. Check the library for date and time. This discussion *will* count towards your summer reading requirement.**

## Summer VRHS Reading Selections 2014

Author	Title	Genre	Level
Alvear-Schecter, Vicky	Cleopatra's Moon	Fiction	1, 2
Brown, Jennifer	Thousand Words	Fiction	All
Brown, Jennifer	Hate List	Fiction	2
Cooner, Donna	Skinny	Fiction	All
Cline, Ernest	Ready Player One	Fiction	1, 2
Dashner, James	The Eye of Minds	Fiction	2, 3
Deraniyagala, Sonali	Wave	NF	All
Finkel, David	Thank You for Your Service	NF	All
Gladwell, Malcolm	David and Goliath	NF	1, 2
Gottschall, Jonathan	The Storytelling Animal	NF	1
Grant, Michael	Gone	Fiction	1, 2
Greitens, Eric	The Warrior's Heart	NF	1, 2
Hall, Shyima	Hidden Girl: The True Story of a Modern-Day Child Slave	NF	2, 3
Harden, Blaine	Escape from Camp 14	NF	1, 2
Higashida, Naoki (with David Mitchell)	The Reason I Jump	NF	2, 3
Hingson, Michael	Thunder Dog	NF	2, 3
Huxley, Aldous	Brave New World	Fiction	1
Koertge, Ron	Stoner and Spaz	Fiction	2, 3
Kronn-Mills, Kristin	Beautiful Music for Ugly Children	Fiction	All
Lewis, John	March (must choose this OR Persepolis – CANNOT report on both)	NF	1, 2
Lewis, Marc	Memoirs of an Addicted Brain	NF	1, 2
McCormick, Patricia	Never Fall Down (based on a true story)	Fiction	All
Menzie, Morgan	Diary of an Anorexic Girl (based on a true story)	Fiction	2, 3
Mitchell, David	Black Swan Green	Fiction	1
Quick, Matthew	Boy 21	Fiction	2, 3
Riggs, Ransom	Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children	Fiction	All
Roach, Mary	Gulp	NF	1
Rowell, Rainbow	Eleanor and Park	Fiction	2, 3
Saenz, Benjamin Alire	Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe	Fiction	1, 2
Satrapi, Marjane	Persepolis (must choose this OR March – CANNOT report on both)	NF	1, 2
Yancey, Rick	The Fifth Wave	Fiction	All
Yousafzai, Malala	I am Malala	NF	1, 2



## 2014 VRHS Summer Reading List – Faculty, Student, and Amazon Reviews

**Alvear-Schechter, Vicky.** *Cleopatra's Moon* - *Cleopatra's Moon* is the tragic tale of Cleopatra Selene, daughter of the legendary Queen Cleopatra of Egypt and Roman general Mark Antony. At just 11 years old, Selene and her two brothers are forced to bear not only the loss of their parents, but their entire kingdom after Roman Emperor Octavianus conquers Egypt. They're forced to move to Rome on the Emperor's estate, where Selene must decide where she stands. Will she let herself be married off and forgotten, or will she follow in her mother's footsteps and try to take back the Egyptian throne? This captivating story will warm your heart, and maybe even bring tears to your eyes. You don't have to be a historian to appreciate it. Whether you're looking for an adventure, a love story, or a tale that gets you thinking, this book has it all! But don't just take my word for it - *Booklist* calls it, "A fascinating take on a neglected historical figure." *The Wall Street Journal* says it's, "Absorbing ... Cleopatra Selene becomes a woman with a tenacity and heart that would have made her famous mother proud." Not only that, but the book made it on *Entertainment Weekly's* annual 'Must Read List' of young adult romance novels. So be sure to pick this book up - once you get started, you won't be able to put it down!

**Brown, Jennifer.** *Thousand Words* – A picture's worth a thousand words but they don't tell the whole story." Soon to be Junior Ashleigh Maynard's college bound boyfriend, Kaleb, hasn't been paying much attention to her all summer. Ashleigh decides she needs to give him something to remember her by and under the influence of her friends, sends a not so innocent to Kaleb. But when the picture goes viral, her whole life is turned upside down. From the author of *Hate List*, Jennifer Brown delivers a "gripping novel about honesty and betrayal, redemption and friendship, attraction and integrity."(goodreads.com) With the help of an unlikely new friend, will Ashleigh be able to conquer her battle against difficult obstacles and gain back her good reputation?

**Brown, Jennifer.** *Hate List* – At the end of their junior year, Valerie Leftman's boyfriend pulls a gun in the Commons, leaving six students and a teacher dead and many others wounded. Valerie is hit by a bullet in the leg trying to stop him, just before he ends his own life. Until that point, Valerie had no idea that the "hate list" that she and Nick created would be used to target victims in a vengeful shooting spree. For her, the list of tormentors was a way to ease the pain of being bullied and an outlet against the constant fighting between her parents. Although the police investigation reveals that Valerie had nothing to do with the actual shootings, many people in her community, including her parents, have a hard time believing that she is not at fault, too. With the help of a patient and insightful therapist, Valerie bravely returns to school after the summer to face the challenges before her. Told by Valerie in then-and-now chapters, with a few "excerpts" from local newspaper articles added for perspective, this is a startling, powerful, and poignant account of the incidents leading up to, immediately following, and continuing through the teen's senior year of realization and recovery. Valerie is stronger than she knows—a beautifully drawn character who has suffered pain, guilt, and incredible stress as she heals from the shooting, the loss of a troubled boyfriend she deeply loved, and difficult family circumstances.

**Cline, Ernest.** *Ready Player One* - The year is 2044 and the world has fallen to pieces, the Earth is massively over populated and resources have been completely exhausted. But no one really cares. Nearly everyone on the planet spends their free time on OASIS a virtual reality

online MMO game. This game allows people to do anything from fight aliens and trolls, or even go to work and school. OASIS has become synonymous with the Internet. Wade is one of the many hunters for the hidden Easter egg inside this game, When the creator of OASIS, James Halliday died, he left a clue leading to the start of a treasure hunt through classic video game, movie, and music trivia. And who ever finds the final Easter egg earns ownership of the game effectively making them one of the most powerful people on the planet. So when Wade is the first person in the world to discover the first clue, he is catapulted onto the front lines of this competition.

**Cooner, Donna. *Skinny*** – Hopeless. Freak. Elephant. Pitiful. These are the words of Skinny, the vicious voice that lives in fifteen-year-old Ever Davies head. Skinny voices what all of the kids in school are hiding through whispers. Ever knows that she is over 300 pounds, and knows that she'll probably never be loved, and Skinny makes sure that Ever will never forget it. But Skinny is not the only voice: there's Ever's singing voice. She knows that she has a talent, but her voice is silenced by Skinny. In hopes of not only trying out for the school play, but also in hopes to save her own life, Ever decides to undergo a risky weight surgery. With the support of her best friend, Ever begins the long upward battle towards change. Ever will realize that her demons may not be so easy to shake. She will have to confront Skinny before she can truly sing out and find her own voice. Follow Ever on the journey to find hope, love, and courage.

**Dashner, James. *The Eye of Minds*** – *The Eye of Minds* is a glimpse into a world where video game immersion technology has advanced to the point of complete virtual reality. It follows the story of Michael a top ranked gamer in the virtnet, the central hub of this virtual world. Michael is sent to save a girl from jumping off a bridge, a relatively simple task for him, which goes horribly wrong. He is sent into the dark corners of the virtnet to uncover an ever changing puzzle. Anyone into video games or sci-fi will find this book interesting, but its elements of mystery and idea over morality will keep anyone reading.

**Deraniyagala, Sonali. *Wave*** – **An Amazon Best Book of the Month, March 2013:** In an unblinking act of storytelling, Sonali Deraniyagala ruthlessly chronicles the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami that horrifically snatched from her all that mattered. Throughout this fierce and furious book, I kept wondering how someone who lost so much could write about it with such power, economy and grace. At first, she shrieks and grieves openly, angrily; for years she remains stunned and staggered, shamed by “the outlandish truth of me.” Then, slowly, she allows herself to remember, sharing vivid glimpses of her past. We see, hear, and smell two rowdy little boys, their brotherly scuffling, their muddy shoes and grass stains. By confronting and recreating moments that make us laugh and weep, we accept their absence and root for the author not to quit. Difficult to describe, tricky to recommend, this is a bold and wondrous book. In a wounded voice that manages to convey the snide, sarcastic, funny, and fatalistic personality that survives beneath the pain, Deraniyagala slowly pieces together the elements that represent the life--the lives--she lost. And she brings them back. For us, for her, for them. So brave, so beautiful, in these pages Deraniyagala’s family is brilliantly alive. And so is she.

**Finkel, David. *Thank You for Your Service*** – Some books just sneak up on you and you're never the same after. I'd heard very little about David Finkel's *Thank You For Your Service* before reading it, and I hadn't read his previous book, *The Good Soldiers*, so my expectations were muted going into it. That changed quickly. This book is so personal, so *moving*, that I devoured it. Although the subject matter is difficult, you grow with the book as you read. One might even expect it to be a little dry and boring—it is not. David Finkel's nonfiction account of soldiers returning from combat is one of the best books I've read in a long time. I'll leave you with this blurb from author Katherine Boo, who couldn't have summarized my reading of the

book (and hopefully yours) any better: "I'm urging everyone I know to give *Thank You For Your Service* just a few pages, a few minutes out of their busy lives. The families honored in this urgent, important book will take it from there." - Katherine Boo, National Book Award-winning author of *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*.

**Gladwell, Malcolm. *David and Goliath*** – Have you ever realized that often the things we think of as advantages turn out to set us back? Has it ever come to your mind that disadvantages drive people into positions of advantage? In his non-fiction bestseller *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants*, Malcolm Gladwell explores the powerful roles advantages and disadvantages play in every person's daily life. Gladwell opens up the eyes of his readers to how the commonly known story of David and Goliath is evident in aspects of life one would ever suspect it to be found in such as sports, parenting, class sizes, dyslexia, and trauma victims. This book fascinates the reader with insight on how one can turn set-backs into benefits, and the ways in which an "underdog" can rise to the top no matter what the situation is.

**Gottschall, Jonathan. *The Storytelling Animal*** – "Human minds yield helplessly to the suction of story. No matter how hard we concentrate, no matter how deep we dig in our heels, we just can't resist the gravity of alternate worlds." Have you read a book or an article today? Have you watched a TV show, the news, a movie, or maybe played a video game recently? Do you enjoy hearing your family's anecdotes, or gossip from your friends? It is impossible to deny that as humans, we thrive on stories. They encompass every aspect of our daily lives, whether in written form, on television or spoken, among hundreds of other forms. This is where *The Storytelling Animal* arrives: an investigation of imagination, daydreams, memories, and psychology. Jonathan Gottschall weaves an exploration of the human mind with *The Storytelling Animal*, asking the question that defines our personalities, histories, and societies: Why do humans love stories?

**Grant, Michael. *Gone*** – Sam Temple never thought himself important, one time he saved everyone on his bus by steering it to the curb after the driver had a heart attack, but that was nothing special. Now one day in the middle of class the teacher right out vanishes, good thing? Wrong. Everyone above the age of 15 is gone and Sam's town of Perdido Beach and surrounding area is trapped inside a weird dome. There is no way in or out. The center of the dome is the nuclear power plant powering the town- coincidence? On top of that Sam discovers that he is developing an almost mutant power, and so are some of the other kids. Now Sam, his best friend Quinn, and school brains Astrid try to find out what is happening to the town while struggling to keep order in a society now run by kids.

**Greitens, Eric. *The Warrior's Heart*** – A former Navy SEAL describes his journey from aiding victims of violence to protecting people and, now, living a life of service. Modeling parts of his engaging memoir on the "Choose Your Own Adventure" stories he loved as a child, Greitens describes events along his path, preceding each with a short "You" segment presenting a moral dilemma taken from his own life. As a college student he began seeing the results of violence in the world with summers in China, Bosnia, and Rwanda. At home, he trained as a boxer to build his strength. After graduation he worked with Bolivian street children. At this point, halfway through the narrative, there is a series of black-and-white photographs. After a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford, realizing that "courage and compassion are two sides of the same coin," and determined to become someone who protected those in need, he joined the Navy SEALs. That difficult training takes up most of the second half of the book, which concludes with a few scenes from his service in Iraq; a description of *The Mission Continues*, his nonprofit organization; and an exhortation to readers to live lives of service as well. Adapted from the

adult title *The Heart and the Fist* (Houghton, 2011), this volume has been rearranged, shortened, and streamlined in ways sure to appeal its new audience. -Kathleen Isaacs, Children's Literature Specialist, Pasadena, MDα(c) Copyright 2011.

**Hall, Shyima.** *Hidden Girl: The True Story of a Modern-Day Child Slave* – Hall was eight years old when her impoverished Egyptian parents sold her to a wealthy couple. The life of domestic slavery that followed was one of endless labor and physical and verbal abuse. Her experiences don't improve when her captors immigrate to the U.S., smuggling her in with them. Almost two years pass before her plight is discovered, and she is freed. But her difficulties don't end there. As a result of never having been educated, she is illiterate, can't speak English, and can't even tell time. Accordingly, school is an ordeal and the foster homes in which she lives are often problematic. The balance of this affecting and enlightening memoir tells the story of how she survived and, ultimately, thrived. Unfortunately, her story is not unique. She points out that there are almost 43,000 slaves in the U.S. at any given time. By giving a face to one hidden girl, Hall has given a face to many.

**Harden, Blaine.** *Escape from Camp 14* – In *Escape from Camp 14*, Blaine Harden tells the true story of Shin Dong-Hyuk, who knew very little of the world outside the prison “camps” of North Korea. These camps have existed for twice as long as Stalin's gulags and twelve times as long as Hitler's concentration camps. Men and women are born here and die here every day suffering brutal beatings, torture chambers and public executions. Since, Shin had no loving family, in the camp he saw his mother as a competitor for food and told guards when she and his brother were planning to escape. He then watched as they were executed in front of him. During his time in the camp, a guard tortured the young Shin. Communist North Korea, known to be ruthless to its people, had never had an escape from its camps, until now. Read on to discover more about Shin's incredible journey.

**Higashida, Naoki (with David Mitchell).** *The Reason I Jump* – *The Reason I Jump* is an exhilarating memoir of Naoki Higashida, a charming thirteen year old boy with autism. He was born in 1992 and at age 5, was diagnosed with autism. Naoki has been a motivational speaker and writer, explaining the daily obstacles that those with autism face and proves that just because one is diagnosed with autism does not mean your life is ruined. His moving memoir answers all the questions you have about autism such as why autistic people talk so loudly to why they are always memorizing train schedules and calendars. His way of communicating by an alphabet grid opens a new door that explains the mysterious life of autism and will keep you flipping the pages to the end. As author of *Parallel Play* Tim Page writes, “*The Reason I Jump* is a wise, beautiful, intimate, and courageous explanation of autism as it is lived every day by one remarkable boy”. Naoki's New York Times best seller has provided people a way of communication for families with autistic children and a way for them to finally understand the complex challenges that life brings to those with autism each day.

**Hingson, Michael.** *Thunder Dog* – On September 11, 2001, Michael and his seeing eye dog, Roselle, walked down 78 flights of stairs in the North Tower of the World Trade Center and survived. The story of this day is told throughout the book, interspersed with the story of the author's life. As the author states, "The real story, in my mind, isn't how I got out of the World Trade Center...it's how I got there in the first place." (p. xiv.) Michael never saw himself as disabled, just different. He rode his bicycle around the neighborhood, excelled at math and competed for a job with an office in the World Trade Center. Even as a youth, his audacity led to his receiving his first seeing eye two years below the minimum age to enter the program. This book holds not only the story of one man and his dog on one day; it is the story of a blind

community, the story of Guide Dogs for the Blind, a story of technology and a story of friendships and love. In these stories we learn of courage, teamwork, patience and faith.

**Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*** – If you enjoy reading utopian or dystopian novels, try *Brave New World*! Published in 1931, it is one of the original books in today's hottest young adult genre. Full of drama, satire, and philosophy, it tells the story of our world in 632 AF-- as in "After Ford", which is full of fun, drugs, sex, and little responsibility, unless you're a member of a lower caste, of course. Love is forbidden because it leads to heartbreak, but Bernard Marx looks for greater meaning in his life through his adoration of Lenina Crowne. Eventually, a savage named John comes into play the couple visit New Mexico, turning their worlds upside down. If you enjoy science, psychology, social studies, and/or classic literature, you will love *BNW* because it goes into great depth about their society. If you do not like science, the first fifty pages or so may seem kind of dull because it fully explains their futuristic scientific processes, but keep reading because it becomes more eventful. "Brave New World explores the negatives of a ostensibly successful world in which everyone appears to be content and satisfied, with excessive carnal pleasures yet really, this stability is only achieved by sacrificing freedom in its true sense and the idea of personal responsibility" (*The Guardian*).

**Koertge, Ron. *Stoner and Spaz*** – Colleen Minou is a hard-core stoner, a girl whose motto is, "I'll get high and do anything." Ben Bancroft is a movie-addicted preppie who suffers from cerebral palsy, "the resident spaz, invisible as the sign that says NO RUNNING, the one no one pays attention to." Together, they form the most unlikely couple since Dharma and Greg. He's Brooks Brothers, she's Salvation Army. He's never even smoked a cigarette, she's got 20 different chemicals running through her veins. But when these two lonely teens meet one night at Ben's favorite hang, the Rialto (a classic film theatre that "smells like butter from the Paleozoic"), sparks fly. At least for Ben they do. Maybe it's because Colleen's the first girl to ever really notice him, to have the nerve to tease him about his disability instead of pretend it's not there. For once, Ben is actually more interested in his real life than a movie. Colleen takes him clubbing, lights his first joint, even challenges him to direct his own movie. But when Ben, in turn, dares her to stay straight, Colleen admits that, despite his devotion, she still needs the drugs to "smooth out the edges." Is Ben capable of convincing her otherwise? If not, how will he ever be cured of his Colleen addiction?

**Kronn-Mills, Kristin. *Beautiful Music for Ugly Children*** – Elizabeth Williams knows he has always been a guy, and if he can only get through graduation in a few weeks, he can begin his new life as Gabe. He is transitioning, but his family refuses to acknowledge him, and his classmates bully him. The only person who supports him is his BFF, Paige, and, predictably, he has a crush on her but can't take a chance on ruining their friendship. Gabe is a music geek, and his ultra-cool, grandfatherly neighbor John, a former DJ, lands him a community radio show, Beautiful Music for Ugly Children. Gabe DJs as himself, and after working up the courage to tell John, who is fine with him being a "triangle," they put together a show about A sides and B sides, which becomes popular with the Ugly Children Brigade fan club and a running theme in the book. But when Gabe has a date with one of his fans, and she recognizes him as Liz, word spreads and some fans drop out of the Facebook club, while others get violent. When John is critically hurt defending Gabe at an Ugly Children event, the offenders are arrested, John's long-lost daughter shows up, Gabe's parents have a change of heart, and Paige and Gabe may have a chance together. While this transgender coming-of-age tale wraps up a bit too quickly, the quirky relationship between Gabe and John and their shared music obsession elevates this story above the average problem novel.-Betty S. Evans, Missouri State University, Springfield(a) Copyright 2011

**Lewis, John. *March*** – (Must choose this or *Persepolis* – cannot report on both for summer reading required book project/book discussion) – John Lewis is an American hero. Who, you ask? There lies the problem. At age 23, Lewis was an architect and one of six keynote speaker at the historic March on Washington in August 1963. (He is the only one still living.) At age 25, Lewis led over 600 protesters on a march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, on what is now known as “Bloody Sunday.” One minute and five seconds after a two-minute warning was announced, state troopers advanced on the protesters, wielding clubs, bullwhips, and tear gas. Lewis suffered a skull fracture. This first in a planned graphic novel trilogy begins at that historic moment, flashes forward to 2009, and then flashes back to the years leading up to his work as a civil rights icon. In the name of racial equality, John Lewis has organized sit-ins, attended Freedom Rides, and been arrested more than 40 times. He now serves as a Congressman for the state of Georgia where even in 2010, after leaving a hearing on the Affordable Care Act, Lewis was at the receiving end of a tirade of racial slurs from protesters. Read this graphic novel to find out more about this national treasure who despite personal injury and risk, keeps on marching for justice.

**Lewis, Marc. *Memoirs of an Addicted Brain*** – *Addiction Treatment Magazine* says, “as an addict turned neuroscientist, Lewis has a unique take on the who, what, when, where and why and how of drug addiction. Mark Lewis began his roller-coaster journey through drugs at only 15 year’s old. He escaped reality by using drugs such as alcohol and marijuana until his move to Berkley California where the hippie side of him was bolding brought forward and his drug experience hit its peak. Drugs led him to a life of risk and desperation he did not care where he ended up as long as he was high on heroine, methamphetamine or LSD. Mark Lewis was not like most addicts; when he retired from his life of drugs, he became a neuroscientist with the goal to inform the world what his drug journey entailed and what actually happens to the brain while on drugs.

**McCormick, Patricia. *Never Fall Down (based on a true story)*** – If you like suspenseful stories about teens, music, survival, and war, this book is for you. Arn is a typical kid hanging out with friends and family when everything changes. As soldiers draw nearer to his hometown, Arn is forced to flee. Separated from his family, Arn is captured and forced to work in a labor camp, but not just any labor camp. In Cambodia, these camps became known as The Killing Fields. (You can guess why. The details are pretty horrific.) Here Arn learns that he if he is to survive, deprived of food, sleep, companionship, he must never fall down. Arn learns to play music, which saves his life until he is handed a gun and forced to become a child soldier. Read on to find out what happens to Arn and to Cambodia.

**Menzie, Morgan. *Diary of an Anorexic Girl (based on a true story)*** – *Diary of an Anorexic Girl* by Morgan Menzie is a novel, but it is based on the author's own life and the journal she kept as she struggled and finally succeeded in beating the addiction. I know the intended audience is young adults, but I think adults will gain a lot of understanding from hearing what anorexia is like from someone who has it. The best part of the story is the strength that Blythe draws from her faith in God and how that faith ultimately leads to her triumph. If you are anorexic, or have a family member or friend who is, or simply want to know more about what it is like to have this disorder, this book can open your eyes.

**Mitchell, David. *Black Swan Green*** – Thirteen chapters provide a monthly snapshot of Jason Taylor's life in small-town England from January 1982 to January 1983. Whether the 13-year-old narrator is battling his stammer or trying to navigate the social hierarchy of his schoolmates or watching the slow disintegration of his parents' marriage, he relates his story in a voice that is

achingly true to life. Each chapter becomes a skillfully drawn creation that can stand on its own, but is subtly interwoven with the others. While readers may not see the connectedness in the first two thirds of the book, the final three sections skillfully bring the threads together. The author does not pull any punches when it comes to the casual cruelty that adolescent boys can inflict on one another, but it is this very brutality that underscores the sweetness of which they are also capable. With its British slang and complex twists and turns, this title is not a selection for reluctant readers, but teens who enjoy multifaceted coming-of-age stories will be richly rewarded. The chapter entitled Rocks, which centers around the British conflict in the Falkland Islands in May 1982, is especially compelling as Jason and his peers deal with the death of one of their own. Mitchell has been hailed as one of the great new authors of the 21st century; with *Black Swan Green*, he shows again how the best books challenge readers' complacency.—*Kim Dare, Chantilly Regional Library, Fairfax County, VA*

**Quick, Matthew.** *Boy 21* – 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.

**Riggs, Ransom.** *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* – “I used to dream about escaping my ordinary life, but my life was never ordinary. I had simply failed to notice how extraordinary it was.” Filled with mystery, drama and some interesting, illustrated photographs, New York Time's Best Seller, *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*, is a fiction book that will suck you in instantly. Sixteen year old Jacob travels to Wales after his grandfather mysteriously dies, from what Jacob believes to be monsters. There, Jacob meets a group of children with “peculiar” powers from who he uncovers some surprising secrets. Are you into the Marvel Universe? Similar to the way Charles Xavier houses mutants in the X-men trilogy, Miss Peregrine's children showcase many unique and unusual talents. Don't be afraid to lose yourself in the extraordinary world of dark adventures. After all, “Sometimes it's better not to look back.”

**Roach, Mary.** *Gulp* – Could you survive being swallowed alive? Would you want to? Do you every take the time to ponder the questions of life like, for instance, how do you name a flavor of ice cream? How would you describe the smell of roses? What does a meal of dead bacteria taste like? And, is it healthy? If you take the time of day to ponder these types of questions, or are now interested, you should read *Gulp!*. Written by Mary Roach of *Stiff* and *Packing for Mars*, this book questions and explains the workings of the mouth, digestive track, and anything in between. This book ranges on a mass of topics including the question, did constipation kill rocker Elvis Presley? You will discover, devour and divulge many different topics in Roach's *Gulp!*, sure to give you a crazed stomach and better understanding of your second brain!

**Rowell, Rainbow.** *Eleanor and Park* – Question: is it permissible to change yourself completely just so you can love someone? Answer: Park. Park is an Asian high schooler who doesn't want to be involved with anyone. He blocks out the world with his loud music, isolating himself from his shallow peers. But, his disregarding attitude is changed and re-thought when someone comes into his life. Eleanor. The big red head who has no sense of style--the weird new kid. Their relationship starts out rocky, but through bus rides, comics and music, it turns into a confusing, strangely beautiful love. But, it's not all kittens and rainbows. Family issues, harsh

criticism, and choppy mood swings constantly get in the way. It's the kind of quirky romance that'll have you wanting more.

**Saenz, Benjamin Alire. *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* – "Who are you?"**

A simple, yet powerful question that many people struggle with during adolescent life. Such is the case for the characters in "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe" by Benjamin Alire Sáenz. This is a tale of two friends whose relationship alters and morphs as they grow from boys into adults, and discover what makes them who they are, and discover what they want, and how they will shape their lives through good times and bad. The characters are sure to entertain, with a variety of personalities and traits, the interaction of which causes both conflict and joy. Sáenz's style is a perfect fit for this novel, as he takes you inside the mind of the narrator, and depicts the world from his sarcastic, stark point of view. "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe" is a perfect book for those who wish to delve into the intricacies of personal development and friendship, and discover what it means to uncover one's true self.

**Satrapı, Marjane. *Persepolis* – (Must choose this or *March* – cannot report on both for summer reading required book project/book discussion) – This is the memoir of Marjane Satrapı who was a young girl living in Iran during the Islamic Revolution and her resulting struggles and triumphs. She views the downfall of the Shah's rule, and the rising of the Islamic Revolution, and the tragic aftermath of the war with Iraq with a child's eyes, putting a unique perspective on the history. Her struggle between the state and her heart is displayed throughout, as she tries to find her place in the world. She tells her story through black-and-white comic strips in a funny and wise yet heart-wrenching way. Satrapı's personal touch on the history makes the novel very accessible. If you enjoyed "Girl Rising", you will love *Persepolis*. It is a *New York Times* Notable Book, a *Time Magazine* "Best Comix of the Year", and *Los Angeles Times* and *San Francisco Chronicle* best-seller.**

**Yancey, Rick. *The Fifth Wave* – Cassie travels with just the essentials. First on the list: Luger, M-16, ammo, Bowie knife. Incidentals like food, water, sleeping bag, and nail clippers come further down. A nondescript 16-year-old, she is one of the very few people left alive on Earth. Aliens sent waves of destructive forces to eradicate humans: Cassie's family survived the 1st and 2nd Waves. Her mother died in the 3rd Wave (Pestilence) and her father in the 4th (Silencers). Her little brother may still be alive; he may even be safe in a military compound, as Cassie deals with the 5th Wave- a carefully orchestrated survival dance of kill or be killed. The aliens are never described in detail, and their reasons for wanting the humans gone are not clear. But they are ruthless and determined, and their methods for gaining control mean readers will never again see owls as the friendly, mail-delivering avians portrayed in the world of Harry Potter. The compelling story is told from the viewpoints of Cassie and Ben, who is now a soldier known as Zombie. Cassie crushed on Ben at school, but he never particularly noticed her. Now he has transformed from handsome high school sports star to focused paramilitary killer. Yancey's story is full of violent twists and turns, but character development continues along with nonstop action. Cassie and Ben grow out of high school self-centeredness and find leadership qualities. Cassie's interactions with an alien elevate him from a one-dimensional "bad guy" role. While the big body counts (billions die) happen largely offscreen, there are numerous more personal instances in which teens are both killers and killed. The ending has enough planned loose ends to practically guarantee a *sequel*.-Maggie Knapp, Trinity Valley School, Fort Worth, TXa(c) Copyright 2011.**



**Yousafzai, Malala. *I am Malala*** – Imagine this. It is Tuesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012. You're sitting on a school bus surrounded by your friends, when suddenly the bus stops. Two men are standing in front of it, and you hear your name. They come on the bus, and all of a sudden, your world goes dark. This is the true story of Malala Yousafzai, the girl from Pakistan who wanted nothing more than to be able to go to school like her brothers. According to Matthew Love from *Time Out New York* magazine, "The touching story will not only inform you of changing conditions in Pakistan, but inspire your rebellious spirit." This book will leave readers wanting to know more, and it is truly an inspirational tale about why we shouldn't take what we have for granted, and cherish our education.